

2. www.youtube.com/watch?v=XR2vhySi6i0&list=PLWYsilp17m-GU7rzSmWhh5nWA7vsdCx0I&index=12&t=724s&ab_channel=TheEconomyofFrancescoOfficialchannel

3. www.avvenire.it/Search/the%20economy%20of%20francesco

4. Idem.

5. www.finanze.it/laudato-si-economia-e-finanza-etica/

RECENSIONI / REVIEWS

Charles C. Camosy, *Resisting Throwaway Culture*. How a Consistent Life Ethic can unite a fractured people, News City Press, NY, 2019.

This book is a well-documented review of some of the major ills that affect American society today, and gives suggestions for remedies taking inspiration from Catholic social teaching. In particular, it makes use of some contrasting concepts often expressed by Pope Francis during his pontificate such as, “throwaway culture” versus a “culture of encounter”.

The Book is divided into eight chapters plus an introduction, a conclusion and an appendix.

The introduction mainly expresses the alienation and dissatisfaction of a consistent portion of the American population who no longer recognize themselves within the traditional political and ideological binary system, split between democrats and republicans, left and right, progressive and conservative. This frustration may well explain the outcome of the 2016 presidential election, which saw the unexpected victory of Donald Trump without being clearly liberal or conservative, as well as the riots that have taken place in several American cities in 2020 related to the Black Lives Matter (BLM) protests and, most recently, the assault on the Capitol Hill in Washington on January 6, 2021.

The first chapter proposes the model which has inspired the author in developing his analysis and which is called a Consistent Life Ethic (CLE). It follows Christian moral principles formulated by Pope Francis in accord with his predecessors, St. John Paul II and Benedict XVI in particular.

The subsequent chapters describe the different forms of the present throwaway culture. These include a violent and selfish sexual culture including pornography, reproductive biotechnology aimed at the manipulation of life, abortion, indifference to the poor and rejection of the stranger, such as refugees and immigrants, the abuse of natural resources, euthanasia, and State sponsored violence

including the war on terror, the death penalty and mass incarceration. For each of these topics the author describes how vulnerable people are reduced to a product in the marketplace, instead of being recognized for their human dignity.

The existence of the throwaway attitude that negatively affects many human beings is partly due to the present socio-political system but also to a diffused culture based on individualism and consumerism that results in the so-called “globalization of indifference”, as often stated by Pope Francis, making us insensible to the sufferings of others. One common factor favoring this indifference towards our neighbor is the use of language that hides the horrors perpetuated against vulnerable and silent victims. This is especially the case regarding the terminology used in describing abortion and euthanasia. “Fetus” is used instead of “baby”, “reproductive rights” and “termination of pregnancy” instead of “suppressing a life”, “vegetative state” instead of “unconscious state” and so on. Very often medical terminology hides tragic and cruel practices such as dismembering the fetus (a baby) and the “suction evacuation” (an other cruel way of killing a baby in the womb).

The book’s conclusion mainly deals with possible solutions to the above problems by adopting the aforementioned method of a Consistent Life Ethic, an active defense of life as opposed to a culture of death. This is best realized and developed by “cultivating a genuine encounter and hospitality, not just towards our family, friends and neighbors, but also to many kinds of vulnerable populations on the margins of our communities” (p.301), taking into account, as stated by Pope Francis in *Laudato si* (n. 128), “that political efforts or the force of law will not be sufficient to create authentic, robust, life giving social change”(p.305).

Ultimately, this book may be consid-

ered a valid analysis, and an answer to the question: “What is happening to America?” in the light of recent upheavals such as the aforementioned 2020 riots related to the BLM movement and the January 6 assault on the Capitol Hill, as well as the Covid-19 pandemic, by far the most devastating in the world of any recent epidemic, both in terms of infections and deaths. The book may explain the underlying problems that have caused the explosions of such protests and health disruptions. Consider that the United States, as compared with the rest of the Western world and industrialized nations, does not have a universal system of healthcare, in spite of the Obama reform, which particularly impacts mid-west forgotten rural America; it has the highest incarceration rate in the world, both in absolute and relative terms, which affects especially the male Black population, as the book mentions: “Disturbingly, many more African American men are now in US jails and prisons than were enslaved in 1850!” (p.286); its gap between the rich and the poor has been progressively increasing in recent decades, whereas the middle class is put under pressure and in debt; it has lost more than 60 million babies through surgical abortion since 1973. And, last but not least, the progressive abandonment of the Judeo-Christian values typical of the traditional middle class American family and epitomized in the motto “God-family-country”, has severely shaken the basic consensus which had historically held American society together and kept it strong.

A final contribution of the book is the message that there are reasons for hope by creating a culture of life and encounter, as often encouraged and promoted by Pope Francis, especially in his encyclicals *Laudato si*’ (2015) and *Fratelli Tutti* (2020).



Charles C. Camosy, *Resisting Throwaway Culture*

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