

Unveiling the Economic Potential of Universal Destination of Goods

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ABSTRACT: When Pope Francis sharply criticized the dominant economic model, he opened a wide public debate on justice, sustainability, and human dignity. This debate, though now more moderate, can help us recognize the narrative capital, as described by Luigino Bruni, that the Church offers to enrich economic thought. This narrative is the principle of the universal destination of goods, one of the key foundations of Catholic social teaching. This principle highlights that the legitimate right to private ownership is not absolute but always oriented toward the common good. Within this transcendent framework, ownership, private or collective, finds its true meaning and purpose in service to all. In recent decades, the economy itself has been seeking new, more just and sustainable structures. Among them, impact entrepreneurship and steward ownership can be understood, through the theology of the signs of the times, as concrete applications of the principle of the universal destination of goods. This article therefore outlines Pope Francis's critique of contemporary capitalism, traces the continuity of Catholic social teaching, and explores how these emerging economic models embody its ethical insights. The purpose of the economy, ultimately, is not the accumulation of wealth but the fair and life-giving circulation of capital, goods, and services in the service of the common good.

Keywords: *universal destination of goods, Catholic social teaching, economy, ownership, narrative capital.*

Critique of the Economic System: Pope Francis

From its very beginning, the pontificate of Pope Francis has been marked by a dynamic tension that might best be described in terms of the tension between conservative and the progressive perspectives. His first public appearance, just a few hours after being elected the 266th successor of Saint Peter, and his first words set the tone for this interplay between conservative and progressive approaches, providing a key to understanding his official documents, personal convictions, and his way of relating to people and the media. And this approach, spontaneous, open, and pastorally attuned, reflects a desire for a Church that listens, accompanies, and faithfully interprets the signs of the times in the light of the Gospel. One of the central, and indeed theological, focal points of this tension is the question of the economy. In his apostolic exhortation *Evangelii gaudium* (no. 53–58), Pope Francis offers a powerful critique of contemporary economic models driven by the logic of profit at any cost. His analysis leads to the conclusion that the global economy, rather than serving the human person, often gives rise to a system of exclusion and inequality that, as the Pope explicitly states, *kills* (EG 53). Such a system functions according to the principle of the survival of the strongest, where the powerful exploit the weak and human beings are treated as disposable commodities. The result is the emergence and spread of a culture of waste and exclusion, in which the marginalized are no longer merely pushed to the periphery (excluded) but entirely cast out of society, stripped of recognition of their intrinsic worth and inalienable dignity (treated as a waste). According to Pope Francis, this reality endures because evident facts are ignored. Although experience has proven its ineffectiveness, many continue to defend the so-called *trickle-down theories* guided by the naïve conviction that the free market, left to itself, will bring about greater justice and a more humane society. In the meantime, what Pope Francis calls the *globalization of indifference* has taken root, and it represent a culture of comfort that numbs us and renders us incapable of compassion toward the suffering of the poor. Their lives, marked by deprivation and injustice, become nothing more than a distant spectacle (EG 54). At the heart of the problem, according to the Pope, lies humanity's relationship to money. When money

and profit (possessions) become the ultimate goals of economic activity, society loses its moral center. The financial crisis thus emerges as a symptom of a deeper, anthropological crisis, the denial of the primacy and centrality of the human person.

The Pope also warns against the idolatry of money and the dictatorship of an impersonal economy devoid of human purpose, in which the human being is reduced merely to a consumer (EG 55). As a minority grows ever wealthier, the gap of inequality widens. This is the consequence of ideologies that absolutize market autonomy and reject any form of state regulation. In this way, an invisible tyranny is born, one before which even the natural environment remains defenseless, subordinated to the interests of the idolized market (EG 56). Such a mentality, Pope Francis emphasizes, conceals a rejection of ethics and of God, or even of any attempt to place limits on the free market. Within such a system, ethics that relativize power and money are perceived as a threat, as something counterproductive to economic growth (EG 57). Yet it is precisely an ethical renewal that is needed to restore balance and to establish a more just social order. From the very beginning of his pontificate, the Pope has consistently called for an urgent ethical reform of the financial system, so that money may once again serve the human person rather than rule over them. Ultimately, the call to generous solidarity is addressed to all, both rich and poor, as the path toward an economy that places the human person, not profit, at the heart of social life (EG 58).

Such a stance and critique of the prevailing capitalist economic system did not go unnoticed. Many authors, economists, and even ordinary people, both believers and non-believers, found it impossible to overlook what the Pope had established as his fundamental approach to the economy, an approach he would later elaborate in the encyclicals *Laudato si'* and *Fratelli tutti*. While some applauded Pope Francis for his courage in challenging the idealization of the free market, one that aspires to absolute autonomy and elevates profit (money) unjustifiably to the center of the economic paradigm, others dismissed his critique as factually unfounded and unjustified in its basic premises. Some went even further, suggesting that it might represent a drastic rupture within Catholic social teaching. For instance, Norgaard, Mead Kling, and Wenzel (2022) argue that through his critique and position, Pope Francis departs

from the traditional continuity of Catholic social teaching, which, according to these authors, maintains views contrary to those expressed by Pope Francis regarding the economy, the free market, and capitalism in general. As they write: „ This article has argued that there is a clear break between Pope Francis and one hundred years of CST.“ (Norgaard, Mead Kling i Wenzel, 197)

But is that truly the case? Does Pope Francis, in fact, stand in opposition to the content of Catholic social teaching and the magisterium of his predecessors?

To answer this question, we must consider the development of Francis's thought and his critique of the contemporary economic model, perhaps most clearly articulated in paragraphs 118–127 of the encyclical *Fratelli tutti*. In this section, Pope Francis reflects on the social dimension of ownership, directly invoking the Patristic Fathers and Doctors of the Church (St. John Chrysostom and St. Gregory the Great), as well as his immediate predecessors, in order to further ground his critique and position. It is precisely here, in paragraph 120, that Pope Francis draws upon the principle of the *universal destination of goods* as it is understood in Catholic social teaching, thereby rooting his critique of capitalism not in opposition to that teaching, but in full continuity and harmony with it. By citing St. John Chrysostom and St. Gregory the Great, Pope Francis recalls the *preferential option for the poor*, a principle deeply rooted in Scripture, tradition, and theology, which emphasizes the responsibility of those who possess material goods. They are accountable for the well-being of the poor; if that well-being is absent, it signifies that the rich have, in effect, stolen from the poor and are morally bound to restore what has been taken. (FT 119) At the same time, by referencing John Paul II and Paul VI, Pope Francis underscores that the Christian tradition has never regarded private property as something absolute and untouchable. Rather, while affirming the right to private ownership, it has always highlighted its social dimension. In Catholic social teaching, this social dimension of private property is understood precisely through the principle of the universal destination of goods.

Therefore, one cannot criticize Pope Francis without simultaneously criticizing the Church and her social doctrine, for in this particular instance the Pope articulates nothing contrary to what his predecessors or the Church's social teaching as a whole

have maintained. As observed by some authors the „criticisms directed towards the Pope (primarily aimed at justifying contemporary global capitalism by labeling Pope Francis a socialist) must simultaneously be directed at the entire Church and all his predecessors who, through the clear articulation of Catholic social teaching, have led the Church to take a stance on the economy and everything that it entails. Thus, the Church's position cannot be labeled as either capitalist (in the sense of the prevailing capitalism today) or socialist, but rather as the rightful position of the Church which, through a supernatural perspective, sees and understands the nature of humanity and the nature of human society (hence economy).“ (Petrušić, 2024a, 949) That this is indeed the case is confirmed by Catholic social teaching itself and by its treatment of the relationship between private ownership, recognized as a human right grounded in human nature and natural law, and the principle of the universal destination of goods. Therefore, it seems important to briefly outline the key elements in the understanding of this relationship between a human right and one of the fundamental principle of social and economic life.

What is CST and what does it say about the economy?

Catholic social teaching developed in the late nineteenth century as the Church's response to the social and economic challenges brought about by industrialization and the emerging capitalist order. Pope Leo XIII's encyclical *Rerum Novarum* (1891) marked its beginning, laying down fundamental principles concerning the dignity of work, just wages, and the relationship between workers and employers. Although the historical development of Catholic social teaching has involved a series of documents and extensions, the Church has, from the very beginning, emphasized that the economy must serve the human person, and not the other way around. Throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, up to the pontificate of Pope Francis, the Church has consistently upheld this position, expanding Catholic social teaching to address issues such as ecology, global inequality, and the culture of rejection. In doing so, Catholic social teaching has not abandoned its roots but has rather deepened and adapted them to contemporary circumstances. It advocates neither capitalism nor socialism but instead proposes a *third way*, a supernatural theological vision of the human person and society in the light of the Gospel and the

call to justice. „It is intended to be an integrated treatment of social life which has morality and ethics, and not just politics, at its heart.“ (Booth, 8)

Therefore, Catholic social teaching cannot be understood as an ideology or a specific economic program, but rather as a pastoral instrument of the Church, whose purpose is to serve humanity and promote the integral development of both the person and the community. Its mission is to articulate a Christian anthropology and to offer a moral compass to a society in which the economic, cultural, and spiritual dimensions of the human person are inseparably connected. Grounded in the method *look – judge – act*, Catholic social teaching calls believers to recognize the signs of the times and interpret them in the light of faith, so that the values of the Gospel may be embodied in real social, and even economic, structures and processes. In this context, contemporary economist and theologian Luigino Bruni offers a new hermeneutical approach to understanding Catholic social teaching: the concept of narrative capital (Bruni, 2021). Bruni starts with the conviction that the modern world suffers from a crisis of narrative. Economic systems, as well as the Church's interpretations of the economy, often lack a positive and creative account of the human person and of community life. His concept of narrative capital refers to a collection of stories, symbols, and experiences that shape a community's moral imagination and generate the spiritual strength necessary for societal renewal. It is, therefore, real capital because such narratives, much like economic capital, yield tangible effects and can transform the *status quo*. Seen in this light, Catholic social teaching can be understood as the Church's (narrative) capital, which it offers to society and to people of goodwill. The Gospel, encyclicals, the lives of the saints, and concrete examples of solidarity represent stories that inspire courage to believe, hope, and love. Bruni maintains that the fundamental principles of Catholic social teaching (the dignity of the human person, solidarity, subsidiarity, and the common good) are not merely moral guidelines, but positive narratives that provide an alternative perspective on the economy. He therefore calls for the renewal of narratives, grafting new stories onto the existing tradition of teaching, while also warning of the danger of a *parasitic syndrome*, in which a community survives on the stories of the past without generating new ones.

For Catholic social teaching to remain relevant, its stories must be continually renewed through concrete examples that embody its values in the contemporary world. In this way, Catholic social teaching becomes a dynamic narrative. It is not merely a set of abstract principles, but a living story of the Church, continuously written through concrete lives, projects, and relationships. Bruni demonstrates that it is precisely this narrative capital that can restore social trust, overcome the crisis of meaning, and reinstate the economy's humanistic dimension. Viewed through the lens of narrative capital, Catholic social teaching is ultimately not just a moral framework but a story that generates a world of possibilities. It can be understood as a narrative about the human person as a being of dignity and relationality, about a community founded on solidarity and generosity, and about an economy that rediscovers its original vocation which is to serve the common good. In this sense, the debate that arose after Pope Francis declared that *this economy kills* proved to be a pivotal moment for the social revitalization of the narrative of Catholic social teaching. This debate, which transcended the boundaries of the Church and entered the wider public sphere, underscores the need to reaffirm the Gospel narrative of the economy, one that approaches economic activity not solely through the lens of efficiency, profit, or market mechanisms, but through the call to service, solidarity, and the common good. This moment is not merely an occasion for polemic, but an opportunity for a *metanoia* of economic thought, a chance to rediscover the power and relevance of Catholic social teaching as a living narrative, capable of shaping a more just society and a more humane economy.

Reviving the narrative of Catholic social teaching means restoring its central role in reflections on contemporary economic relations, positioning it as an inspiring and creative principle that gives meaning to economic structures and practices. In this sense, Pope Francis's call poses a hermeneutical challenge: how can the Church's moral and spiritual capital be reintegrated into economic discourse, which all too often lacks an ethical horizon? This question naturally leads to one of the most important, yet frequently overlooked, aspects of Catholic social teaching: the relationship between private ownership and the principle of the universal destination of goods. It is precisely within this relationship, at the intersection of personal responsibility and the common good, that the economic potential of theological

thought becomes evident. Accordingly, the following chapter will examine how this principle, deeply rooted in Christian tradition, can be concretely applied to the contemporary economic context, offering a renewed vision of ownership, management, and distribution of goods that genuinely serves both the human person and the broader community.

Private Ownership and the Universal Destination of Goods

Catholic social teaching regards the relationship between private ownership and the universal destination of goods as a permanent yet fruitful hierarchical tension. Within this hierarchy, the universal destination of goods takes precedence because it is a principle, while private ownership is a derived right that stems from it and must serve it. (Booth, 21) This relationship is not merely a theological assertion but also a systematic anthropological and legal framework that determines the place and purpose of material goods, means of production, and labor within human society. The development of Church teaching, from *Rerum Novarum* to *Fratelli tutti*, demonstrates a clear shift: from defending ownership as a fundamental natural right toward emphasizing the universal destination of goods as a moral and theological principle that gives ownership both meaning and limits. The Church does not abolish private property; rather, it transforms it from an absolute and unquestionable possession into a call for responsible stewardship in service of the entire human community. The underlying reason for this hierarchy lies in the principled distinction between rights and principles. A right, whether positive law (proclaimed by state) or natural law grounded in human nature, pertains to the norms and obligations that regulate human behavior within a community. Its purpose is to establish order, protect individual rights, and ensure justice in society. According to St. Thomas Aquinas, law is „an ordinance of reason for the common good, promulgated by him who has care of the community” (Summa Theologiae, I-II, q.90, a.4). A principle, by contrast, is not a command but a foundational truth or value that inspires, directs, and legitimizes every law. A principle does not prescribe specific actions; rather, it provides meaning to all that is done. It animates law from within, furnishing it with a moral foundation. Accordingly, the Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church emphasizes that the enduring principles of the social doctrine, the dignity of

the person, the common good, subsidiarity, and solidarity, are the true foundations of moral and social order (no. 161). Law therefore obliges externally, while a principle inspires internally. Without principles, law becomes mechanical and without law, principles remain an abstract ideal without operative force.

In this light, the universal destination of goods is not merely a legal or social norm but an original moral and theological principle. It expresses the theological truth of God's intention that all created goods are given for the benefit of all people and all nations. This principle provides the ontological and moral foundation for any right to ownership, trade, and economic activity. Private ownership, by contrast, is a right, a concrete and binding mechanism that allows the principle of the universal destination of goods to be realized in practice, but always within its limits and in an instrumental manner. The Church therefore does not reject private ownership but normatively subordinates it to a higher principle. Theologically, the universal destination of goods determines why ownership exists (defining its ultimate purpose: the common good), whereas private ownership defines how that purpose is concretely realized. This distinction between principle and right is clearly reflected in the development of Catholic social teaching through three historical phases. In the first phase (from *Rerum Novarum* to *Quadragesimo Anno*), the Church defended private ownership as the foundation of freedom and human dignity, while already introducing the moral duty of its use. Leo XIII distinguished the possession of a right from the moral obligation of its exercise, asserting that a person must not hold goods as solely their own, but as universal, to share with others in times of need (RN 22). Pius XI formalized this duty through the concept of the social function of property, transforming the moral requirement into an intrinsic characteristic of the right itself. With this step, the Church for the first time integrated the universal destination of goods into the legal framework, considering ownership not merely permissible and desirable, but also conditional. In the second phase (from *Populorum Progressio* to *Centesimus Annus*), a theological shift occurs. The universal destination of goods is no longer merely an implicit moral obligation but an explicitly proclaimed primary principle. Paul VI states that „God intended the earth and everything in it for the use of all human beings and peoples. Thus, under the leadership of justice and in the company of charity, created goods should flow fairly to all.” (PP 19) John Paul II

introduces the notion of a *social mortgage*, defining ownership as a right that carries a burden and responsibility toward the community. Through this, ownership acquires a permanent obligation to serve the common good, not merely the personal, private interest of an individual. Legally, a mortgage indicates a debt to a third party; morally, it signifies an obligation to the human family, i.e., the common good. The third phase brings the culmination and ecological expansion of teaching on the relationship between private ownership and the universal destination of goods. Pope Francis places the universal destination of goods at the top of the ethical and social order, calling it the *primary and prior principle*. (FT 123) In *Laudato Si'*, the universal destination of goods acquires a broader meaning, encompassing not only material and economic goods but also the ecological resources: water, climate, and biodiversity (what we would call public goods). Pope Francis thus extends the concept of goods from an economic to a global-ethical and ecological horizon, making the universal destination of goods a principle of integral ecology.

This interpretation challenges contemporary economic systems that absolutize ownership and profit, demonstrating that secondary rights cannot override primary principles without losing moral justification (FT 120). Private ownership remains recognized, desirable, and justified, but only as an instrument for achieving the common good. (Rhonheimer, 5) In light of this development and distinction, Catholic social teaching can be said to offer a dual anthropological-legal vision: the right to private ownership governs concrete relationships, while the principle of the universal destination of goods determines their meaning, direction, and ultimate purpose. Rights without principles risk becoming formal mechanisms devoid of ethical content (as partially occurs), whereas principles without rights remain mere moral aspirations without practical force. In Catholic social teaching, the synthesis of both forms the foundation of a just social order, in which the principle of the universal destination of goods inspires laws and policies, and ownership actualizes and renders them effective. As the Compendium notes, these principles „indicate the paths possible for building a good, authentic and renewed social life.” (no. 162) The development of Catholic social teaching demonstrates an organic continuity. It is not a rupture, but a deepening of the understanding of ownership in light of justice and solidarity oriented towards the common good. The Church thus offers a path between

extremes. On one hand, it rejects the individualistic absolutism of capitalism and the free market, on the other, it rejects the collectivist determinism of socialism. Private ownership remains recognized and justified, but only as a conditional and morally responsible right, always encumbered with a social mortgage reminding us that the land and its fruits belong to all. Theologically, the universal destination of goods functions as a guiding light, illuminating the limits of rights. It demonstrates that ownership and accumulation is not the ultimate goal of economic activity but a means to achieve the common good. In this spirit, the Church calls for a reinterpretation of the economy through a hierarchy of principles and rights. If the universal destination of goods is the governing principle, then economic structures cannot be neutral or ultimately independent. They must be oriented toward justice and the equitable accessibility of resources for all. This opens space for a renewed dialogue between theology and economy on how the relationship between private ownership and the universal destination of goods can be concretely translated into contemporary policies and economic models.

The Universal Destination of Goods Today

As an introduction to a possible understanding and exploration of the economic potential of the principle of the universal destination of goods, I would like to briefly draw attention to another principle of Catholic social teaching that is often difficult to concretize and fully comprehend: the common good. The common good is one of the fundamental, yet also deepest, principles of Catholic social teaching, due to its transcendent character (Petrušić, 2024b). It is not exhausted within political, economic, or social frameworks, but rather denotes a theological and ontological, one might even say metaphysical, horizon in which every community finds its origin, meaning, and ultimate purpose. In a social and institutional context, the common good is concretized through the notion of public goods, which represents its instrumental expression. While the common good is a normative principle, public goods constitute its practical, operative form, which each political community can independently define and implement through public policies. Public goods manifest in institutions and systems that serve the shared needs of society like education, healthcare, transportation infrastructure, the environment, and justice. Public goods,

therefore, are not an independent category, but a concrete application of a higher theological principle within the framework of a particular social order.

In a similar vein, the principle of the universal destination of goods can be understood as appropriately concretized in the right to private ownership (Spieker, 337). Through this lens, we can uncover the economic potential of the principle and explore additional ways to concretely apply it in contemporary economic processes, models, and structures. And this contemporary global economic context, as Pope Francis has also observed, is characterized by growing social inequality, ecological crises, and the excessive extraction of dividends justified precisely by private ownership. There is an increasing need for models that reconnect the economy with ethics, and rights with principles. While traditional capitalism has been based on the logic of maximizing shareholder value, a new paradigm, grounded in the concepts of impact entrepreneurship and steward ownership, represents an attempt at institutional renewal of the economic system, in which value is measured by purpose rather than profit alone. These models provide a concrete framework through which the principle of the universal destination of goods, which together with the common good, serves as a foundational guide of Catholic social teaching, can be *translated* into economic and legal structures of action. In this way, predominantly secular economic initiatives, as well as those motivated by a religious sense of community and fraternity, can be integrated with the content of Catholic social teaching into a motivating and inspiring narrative for a better and more just global economy. It is therefore necessary to examine whether impact entrepreneurship and the steward ownership model can be understood as a possible operationalization of the principle of the universal destination of goods, without the intention of denying or diminishing the right to private ownership.

Impact entrepreneurship is defined as an integrative concept referring to entrepreneurial endeavors aimed at creating positive impact, preserving existing beneficial conditions, or mitigating current negative consequences (Vogel et al., 3). It combines financial sustainability with moral responsibility, making purpose and measurable impact the central criteria of entrepreneurial success. The *Global Impact Investing Network* defines such ventures as investments „with the intention of

generating positive, measurable social and environmental impact alongside a financial return.” Thus, profit is necessary but not the ultimate goal. It becomes a means to achieve a broader social purpose. In this way, impact entrepreneurship represents an economic articulation of the principle that goods are created for all, and that economic activity should serve collective progress. It seeks to reshape the market into a space of solidarity and cooperation, rather than mere competition and accumulation. However, the central challenge of the impact economy remains the question of integrity which asks how it can be ensured that purpose remains the priority and does not become merely a rhetorical label, impact washing? Here, the steward ownership model plays a crucial role. This ownership and governance structure legally ensures that a company remains faithful to its mission in the long term. Steward ownership embeds two fundamental principles into its legal DNA, separating economic rights (to profit) from governance rights (which define the organization’s purpose and mission): profits serving purpose and self-governance. The later principle means that control over the company belongs to those existentially connected to its mission, rather than to external investors whose interest is purely financial. The first principle defines profit not as a goal, but as a means, a resource used to support the company’s mission, either reinvested into further business development or directly contributing to the community through donations or other forms of support. Legal mechanisms such as the asset lock and decoupling (separating voting and economic rights) form the foundation of this model. They prevent the sale of the company for quick profit and preclude the extraction of value outside the purpose of the business. In this way, steward ownership institutionalizes what Catholic social teaching calls the *social function of property*. Ownership thus becomes a form of responsible stewardship of material and economic goods for the benefit of the wider social community. In this sense, this model is not merely a legal innovation, but an expression of an ethical and anthropological understanding of the economy as a space for managing entrusted resources in the service of the integral development of the human person and society, precisely what the principle of universal destination of goods articulates regarding (private) ownership.

Therefore, the synergy of impact entrepreneurship and steward ownership functions as a complementary economic response to the challenges of contemporary

capitalism. Impact entrepreneurship embodies the operational dimension of the principle of the common good, demonstrating how purposeful business can be both efficient and solidaristic. Steward ownership, in turn, provides the structural dimension for applying the universal destination of goods, offering a legal and institutional framework that ensures the social dimension of private ownership is permanently protected and does not succumb to market pressures. Together, these models offer the possibility of an economy guided not solely by capital interests but by a purpose that transcends individual gain. In these models, the principle of the universal destination of goods is not treated as an abstract moral concept, but as an institutional design and a means of organizing ownership, profit, and decision-making that embeds ethical social stewardship and responsible resource management at the core of economic life. Such an economy maintains the efficiency mechanisms of the free market while restoring their moral content and imparting a nearly transcendent orientation toward the realization of the common good.

Theological Conclusion on Economic Themes

If Catholic social teaching is *the Church's best-kept secret*, then the principle of the universal destination of goods represents its very core, in sense that it is even better-kept secret. Yet, principle reminds us that all resources, natural, social, and economic, are by their nature a shared gift, intended for all humanity. Theologically then, the economy can be understood as the stewardship of this gift. Its purpose is not accumulation or hoarding for oneself, but the circulation of goods and the creation of just relationships. Gospel images illustrate this vividly. In the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves and fishes, Jesus begins not from scarcity, but from sharing. (John 6,1-14) A change of perspective occurs: the common good emerges when the individual stops hoarding and starts giving. In the parable of the Good Samaritan, we see a concrete application of the ethics of responsibility. (Luke 10,29-37) The Samaritan uses his resources not to increase personal gain for himself and thus become foolish (Luke 12,20), but to restore the dignity of another. This exemplifies social action that transcends the logic of market interest and exclusive focus on private ownership.

A similar theological insight can be drawn from the contrast between the Dead Sea and the Sea of Galilee. Both receive water from the same source, the Jordan River, but their destinies differ entirely. The Sea of Galilee receives water and gives it further. Because of it, the life flourishes within and around it: fishermen work, communities gather, society thrives, and biodiversity abounds. The Dead Sea, by contrast, only receives and gives nothing back. Everything is retained there, the water that enters becomes trapped, evaporates, and leaves salt and sterility behind. This is a powerful metaphor for an economy that merely accumulates and hoards, one that measures success by wealth amassed rather than by contribution to the common good. It illustrates how an economy can become dead, even destructive, if it abandons the principle of universal destination and becomes trapped in cold, sterile rights and external legal structures. In this context, contemporary models such as impact entrepreneurship and steward ownership can be seen as institutional applications of the principle of the universal destination of goods. They do not treat ownership as an absolute right, but as a responsibility and a service to the community. In doing so, they offer a framework that transcends the dichotomy of capitalism and socialism, restoring the ethical dimension to the heart of economic activity. Such an economy, like the Sea of Galilee, thrives because it freely receives and gives. Its purpose is not to hoard, but to share and serve life.

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