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Commentary

A Theological View, Apologetic and Critical, of the Social Phenomenon “Kardashians”

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Exacerbated consumerist lifestyles damage the social and environmental fabric. In times of crisis, socio-cultural phenomena such as the reality show “Keeping Up with the Kardashians” have the potential to numb socio-environmental awareness and feed the “consumerist culture” of the global North and the “throwaway culture” of the global South. Television and other media could build bridges between such opposing realities. However, socio-environmental suffering is made invisible in order to make opulence and excess visible. Through an apologetic and critical theological essay, this article aims to highlight unsustainable vicarious and virtual consumption patterns in the context of the unprecedented socio-environmental crisis we are experiencing. It also presents different types of responses of the Catholic Church maintained over time or rescued from the Holy Scriptures, the magisterium of the Church, ecotheology and the spirituality and contemplation of the mystics. All this is at the service of pro-environmentalist actions within the framework of Integral Ecology.

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“... the best way to transmit an idea is to live it. And it is done, moreover, with explicit announcement and denunciation”.

Una Vida Sobria, Honrada y Religiosa [A Sober, Honorable, and Religious Life], Eizaguirre J. (2010)

1. Introduction

U.S. society offers its citizens an exorbitant consumption horizon. Each year, Americans waste \$165 billion of food and spend \$100 billion on shoes, watches, and jewelry. It is estimated that each house in the USA has three working television sets, and Americans use 100 billion plastic bags every year (see Shahghasemi, 2021). These inappropriate behaviors are

shamelessly exposed to the world through social media. Shahghasemi (2021) describes the hashtag #RichKids, where poor Iranian children engage in virtual consumption of what rich children consume, a kind of personal alienation in the face of misery, living in a mixed state of mind between frustration and contentment.

The reality TV show “Keeping Up with the Kardashians” (KUWTK), starring the Kardashian family, has become a social phenomenon. It is another model of vicarious virtual consumption of material goods and affection through the internet, which also triggers the actual consumption. It first aired in 2007, showing the family’s day-to-day life on live TV. The penultimate season ended in 2021, but numerous spin-offs are associated with the series. The last episode had 2.4 million live viewers. A new season premiered in May 2023.

The family became famous following the publication of a pornographic video starring Kim Kardashian and commercially managed by her mother. From then on,

the program shows the details of the family's private life, including love conflicts and toxic relationships, and high levels of material consumption, highlighting Kim Kardashian as the "goddess Venus", a fashion idol. Kim Kardashian has built an empire and has become a myth with the sale of her sexual image and her subsequent business deals (Cashmore, 2019; Englund, 2023). According to McClain (2015), the Kardashian clan "is a contemporary cultural touchstone, recognizable around the world, connoting unwarranted celebrity, voluptuous beauty, and multiple fleeting marriages."

The social response to this type of phenomenon in the media does not leave indifferent, showing at least two molar dispositions towards the product. Viewers with a positive affective disposition. It includes those who think they can live this kind of life, even virtually. It illuminates their daily life with a point of humor "that doesn't hurt anyone". It also includes those who want to live that way and do everything possible to achieve and maintain that profane, consumerist and chrematistic ideal of life. On the other extreme, viewers with a negative affective disposition to this type of show. For them, the program is immoral, and irreconcilable with a healthy and sustainable lifestyle. A significant number of viewers are positioned in "hate-watching", where they derive pleasure from mocking its contents and characters. These people are not, however, exempt from the influence of the communicative medium on their own ethos (Cohen et al., 2021). Since 2011, the show has become a product of interest, even for the academic world, with 27 articles published in journals indexed in the SCOPUS database, where any member of the Kardashian family is named or studied in detail. Figure 1 shows the disciplines or areas of study in which these articles can be circumscribed, where 56% of the articles have been published in academic North American journals.

There is particular interest in the social sciences, arts and humanities, business and marketing, management and accounting. According to some of these studies, the "Kardashian communicative model" is often associated with unconstructive social dialogue. Ramdhany & Ambelegin (2023) have described the frequent use in KUWTK of negative impoliteness. Bousfield & Locher (2008) explain impoliteness as a "behavior that is aggravating to the face in a specific and certain context". More specifically, negative impoliteness is defined by Culpeper (2005) as a communicative model in which it is intended to frighten, invade, belittle, and ridicule the interlocutor. Thus, verbal and physical aggressions between the Kardashian sisters are frequent. Moreover, these types of shows reinforce the

idea that a thin body is a basis for an adequate and full life (Ritter, 2023). The public behaviors of celebrities like the Kardashian clan significantly influence public health and plastic surgery trends (Ward et al., 2018; Tijerina et al., 2019). Kim Kardashian and her interest in criminal justice is not new; however, Jensen (2021) shows that the media cater to this type of political discourse more for celebrity than for justice, diverting the political attention and the interests of affected communities. Kim Kardashian, the banner of worldliness, has become a personal brand. Currently, her fashion aims to do "social justice" with a more inclusive model (ethnic diversity, age, size). However, the prices of her creations are neither modest nor inclusive. The interest is always oriented towards expanding the sales market. The goal is to produce, through consumption, more money (Sastre, 2014).

The success of the Kardashian cultural phenomenon is linked to the Western diffusion of the media active (Canniford, 2011), social networks (McCain et al., 2018) and to the rise of consumer culture when "the expansion of demand for consumer goods and the continual revision of the criteria of luxury and necessity are products of a market economy and a culture in which the ethic of individualism prevailed" (Cashmore 2006, pg. 71). The Kardashian emporium knows, as market research has confirmed, that consumption is no longer static, producer-consumer, but rather follows a dynamic model, where consumers interact with consumable resources. Kardashian consumers could be considered a "brand community" unconditionally loyal to the singular Kardashian brand if it is sufficiently attractive (Canniford, 2011). This worldly response is sharpened and fed back by social networks (McCain et al., 2018). The social influence of such lifestyles is extended through other consumer products such as video games. (Harvey 2018). Kardashian culture could be considered an element of the culture of narcissism. The term narcissism is polysemous. I will stick with the vision of Lasch (2018), who coined the concept of narcissism culture in which the human being likes himself without measure precisely so as not to have to face the world and be forced to assume his eventual failures. Larsh (2018) himself advised a return to simplicity, family, nature and protestant work ethics. McCain & Campbell (2018), in a meta-analysis study, show how narcissistic attitude is positively related to social networks.

As we have been, the KUWTK phenomenon has been evaluated from different social, humanistic, financial, and even psychological and neurological perspectives (Figure 1); however, there is no critical discourse from a

Christian theological perspective. The aim of this article is to elaborate an apologetic theological argumentation (defense of the catholic contributions to the socio-environmental crisis) and to criticize or denounce socio-cultural models that could threaten the environmental balance, such as the reality show starring the Kardashian clan. It is an attempt at critical and constructive dialogue between society and faith. I also intend to show socially and environmentally friendly lifestyles born of Christian humanism. The development of the argument is not intended to demonize anyone or to establish Catholic environmental values as the only way to confront the socio-environmental crisis. Rather, it is intended as a contribution and an invitation to a change of behavior that preserves our “Common House” as a healthy, safe and sustainable meeting place. I am not unaware of the obscene and immoral behavior of some members of the Catholic community in matters of finance, environment, or abuse. I would like the recipient of this article to be the whole social community without distinction, also (or perhaps especially) the believing communities. It is a matter of informing society as a whole about the ever-renewing message of Jesus Christ, in terms of social criticism and theological apologetics. To show, at least partially, how the Catholic Church responds to current socio-environmental challenges. While the critique and apologetics of Christian theology are, in my view, necessary, I am aware that it is totally insufficient and cannot replace (but only contribute to) the necessary international legal and political measures as well as proper environmental education.

2. Method

Theology is the discipline that deals with the knowledge of God, his attributes and his cosmic relationship, with special emphasis on the relationship with human beings. It specializes in different branches depending on the object of study on which it focuses. Critical and apologetic theology can be considered two styles of dialogue between faith and culture. The former shows an attitude of judgment or revision of inadequate social attitudes. The second focuses on the exposition and defense of arguments, which are born out of the Christian tradition and may eventually be valid for the challenges of today's society. According to Oviedo (2002), it is the task of the Church and its theological work to explain the dangers of the absolutization of the market, of materialism or the reduction of the economy to finance, of individualism or the loss of community reference, of inequality, of the devaluation of work, of moral disarmament and the loss of ecological

awareness. This article intends to be part of that dialogue using the apologetic-critical theological method of Vanhoozer (2007) and the methodology proposed by John XXIII, in *Mater et Magister* (1961), which consists of see-play-act. I will look for the *hypothesis of the world* and the *metaphorical root* that underlies these attitudes and ways of life, the type of human being that Kardashian “sell as a product” and the “god” they worship. The discussion is supported by the magisterium of the Church, the exegesis of the Holy Scriptures, the Catholic mystic and the ecotheology.

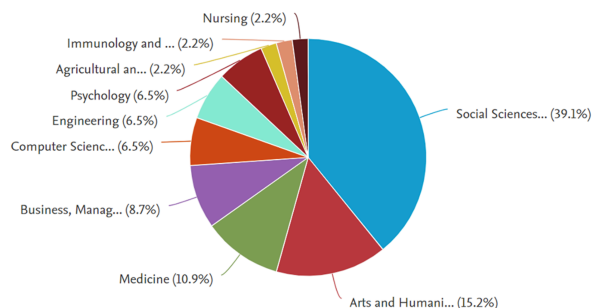


Figure 1. Distribution of scholarly articles related to the Kardashians clan by area or discipline of study. Descriptors used in the SCOPUS database: “Kardashian family” or “Kardashian clan” or “Kim Jenner” or “Kim Kardashian” or “Kourtney Kardashian” or “Khloé Kardashian” or “Kylie Kardashian” or “Kendall Jenner” or “Kylie Jenner” or “Kris Jenner” or “Robert Kardashian Junior”. Thirty-two articles were published in the period 2011-2022. Five of them were eliminated from the analysis because they did not fit in the article’s score.

3. Discussion

Let us focus on the pernicious effects of the “Kardashian model” lifestyle on the socio-environmental crisis we are experiencing. Each year, Americans waste \$165 billion of food and spend \$100 billion on shoes, watches, and jewelry. This lifestyle denies or ignores that natural resources are limited and that 20% of the population consumes 80% of the resources. Nor does it consider that according to a new UNICEF analysis, one in five children in the world lacks sufficient water to meet their daily needs or that, in the United States, each year, the poorest 50% of the U.S. population emits about 10 tons of CO₂ per person, while the richest 10% emits 75 tons per person. This difference is almost eight to one (see the World Inequality Database).

Generally, it is widely accepted in the scientific community that a large part of total greenhouse gas emissions is related to personal consumption habits and that a change, of course, is required (e.g., Moberg et al., 2019). If we all followed the lifestyle proclaimed by KUWTK, we would need “several planet Earths” to maintain the system. The textile industry, so overexpressed in KUWTK, presents a production pattern that is very threatening to global environmental impact. Some of the most worrying components are the use of toxic chemicals, the generation of large amounts of solid and liquid waste, high water consumption, CO₂ emissions into the atmosphere and the use of non-biodegradable fibers. In addition, fast fashion especially affects the environment by producing poor quality and short-lived garments, which, in turn, further increases textile waste (Janaina et al., 2020). As an example, each pair of jeans produced contributes 33.4 kg of CO₂ to the atmosphere, consumes 3781 L of water and occupies 12 m² of land for its production (Asmi et al., 2022). In addition, the environmental costs due to the private flights of these and other “celebrities” are significant in the overall sources of pollution (Strohmeier et al., 2022). Additional data reveals that Kim Kardashian has recently received notices for exceeding the monthly limit on household water use by at least four times and surpassing it by over 150%. This limit was established at the end of the year 2021 following the declaration of a drought emergency situation in California. The limit set by authorities was 80 gallons (302 liters) per person per day, which equates to approximately 2,500 gallons (9,465 liters) per person per month. Kim Kardashian’s two properties used 232,000 gallons (approximately 880,000 liters) in June, nearly 95 times more than allowed (Smith and Greene, 2022). Intuitively, it is easy to understand that the Kardashian family and other “celebrities” contribute significantly to the “northern culture” exceeding planetary boundaries (the ability of the biosphere to recover from anthropogenic disturbances and return to a stable state, Rockström et al., 2009). All this while selling the elixir of eternal youth wrapped in the mantra: the more you consume, the happier you will be.

There is a complex marketing industry interested in promoting the consumption of material goods of any kind (e.g., Canniford, 2011). However, pro-environmental behaviors, such as saving energy and water and using public transportation, using seasonal, local and organic food products, reducing food and textile waste, etc., are beneficial to protect the environment and human rights. All of us, believers and

non-believers, should share that the daily development of these goals will have environmental compensation.

3.1. Socio-environmental Theological Critique

I do not intend to make value judgments about the members of the Kardashian family. However, their lifestyle has a greater share of social and environmental responsibility by placing them in the media spotlight with strong psychological and social, individual and collective effects, as we saw earlier (Cohen et al., 2021; Shahghasemi, 2021).

The *world hypothesis* underlying the KUWTK cultural context holds that narcissism, ostentation, the voluptuousness of the senses, and satisfied sexual desires achieve happiness, all based on a consumerist system, greed for money and emotional and sensory experiences. It is the claim of the

“golden calf”, something tangible that satisfies and can be worshipped, where people, things, and nature have a fundamentally chrematistic value. Where a relationship is established between happiness and “popular hedonism”, linked to the selfish pursuit of short-term gratification, indulging in sensory pleasure without considering the consequences on oneself, society and the environment. Lasch, in line with Christian theology, prophesied in 1979 (see Lasch 2018) an unlimited expansion of the narcissistic, anxious and greedy self in all spheres of life. Lasch postulates that the social evolution of the 20th century will give rise to individuals with a fear of social engagement, lasting relationships and stable institutions such as the family, a fear of growing old, and boundless admiration for fame and celebrity fueled by the film industry and fostered by television. Lasch was unaware of the effect of social media, but his description fits more than well with 21st-century society, a description very close to the culture that KUWTK represents. The thinking of Max Weber (1905) is also entirely relevant to this argument. Weber exalted the values of education and family for a balanced society. For him, the social basis could not be materialism (although it helped to establish capitalism) but religious tradition. The logical behavior is to achieve maximum profit with minimum effort, with no incentive to continue working when one has achieved enough to lead a modest life. It was not a question of making wealth an obsession, but rather of generating a virtuous circle around it. This investment in values generates KUWTK models against economies of common good or circular economies that we need to recover and implement.

Although some authors have pointed out the negative influence of these types of shows on society, others consider that KUWTK is not responsible for the destruction of the social fabric, but rather, it acts as a mirror of the 21st-century media (fast news, repeated, entangled, fake news that are later disproved, humor, superficiality). These reality shows are a social reflection. A circular dialogue where reality society and virtual reality feedback with each other (Asseraf 2018; Bettini 2021).

The *root metaphor* is simple: “Money brings happiness”. Therefore, the type of human being it presents is narcissistic, egocentric, dissatisfied with their personal life, with a bland type of life or, perhaps, with a need to evade, mock or alienate themselves from their reality. A human being who is driven by his desires and sometimes enslaved by them. People who lack fortitude and temperance, with little empathy for those who suffer and for the environmental crisis. People with low Environmental Identity (Clayton, 2003).

This highly consumerist model of life betrays a profound confusion about the human person. The model that has arisen with the market economy is a distinctive cultural distortion of human freedom that departs considerably from the Gospel message (Beabout & Echeverria, 2002). Let us see what values and attitudes the Catholic Church offers in the face of this narcissistic and consumerist culture. Let us see what values and attitudes the Catholic Church offers in the face of this narcissistic and consumerist culture.

3.2. Contributions of apologetic theology

What are the identity responses of Catholics and Christians in general? Faced with the hedonistic, consumerist, and predatory lifestyle to achieve happiness, the Catholic Church offers other projects, all of which are interrelated.

- *Personal and community development of human virtues.*

Personality traits (human virtues), environment-related values (environmental virtues), beliefs, affect, and norms are antecedents of pro-environmental behavior. The pursuit of virtue (as an antidote to consumerism as vice) should lead to balance with oneself, other humans and ecosystems. For Catholics, as well as for Stoics, to look after the interests of the world community is to look after individual interests and vice versa (see Molina and Whiting, 2023). This “conversion” or “metanoia” towards more pro-environmental habits should not be related to a meaningless sacrifice that

could even position us before a dissatisfied and tormented life and could lead to mental disorders and eco-anxiety (Boluda-Verdu et al., 2022). Instead, it should be related to human Faith and Hope and, above all, in the theological sense. A reflection that deserves an independent analysis.

Environmental protection is not fashionable, probably because it is not related in the short term to well-being and happiness. In general, there are three different types of well-being in positive psychology: hedonic, eudaemonia, and psychological wealth. Based on different conceptions of well-being, research has shown that hedonic values (well represented in KUWTK) are negatively related to pro-environmental behavior. Eudaimonism values (prosperity or life worth living, based on virtue) are related to environmental values, but cannot directly predict pro-environmental behavior. According to Wei et al. (2013), psychological richness (open personality traits, sense of wonder, and self-expansion) are good predictors of environmental thinking and a fulfilled life. Parameters of eudaimonic well-being, such as autonomy, vitality, meaning, and personal growth, are associated with a connection to nature (Pritchard et al., 2020). Thus, of the three, hedonism is the least virtuous behavioral response in environmental virtue ethics. It is, however, the most associated with Western life and also the least ecologically sustainable. Christian churches and Stoic philosophy proposed the cardinal virtues (fortitude, justice, temperance and prudence) and others aligned as environmental virtues. (e.g., Molina and Whiting, 2023).

- *Magisterium of the Catholic Church*

St. John Paul II repeatedly called for individual and collective ecological conversion (see Francis 2015 art. 5). Benedict XVI, in his encyclical letter *Caritas in Veritate* (2009, art. 66), confronted consumerist lifestyles: “It is good for people to realize that shopping is always a moral act and not only an economic one. The consumer has a specific social responsibility, which is added to the company’s social responsibility. Consumers must be constantly educated about the role they play daily and which they can play by respecting moral principles, without diminishing the intrinsic economic rationality in the act of buying”. Pope Francis, in his encyclical *Laudato si’* (2015, art. 108) warns about lifestyles based on consumption, globalization and technocracy: “It has become countercultural to choose a lifestyle whose goals are even partially independent of technology, its costs and its power to globalize and make us all equal. Technology tends to absorb everything in its iron logic, and those who are surrounded by technology know

very well that it ultimately advances neither for the benefit nor for the welfare of the human race, that in the most radical sense of the term power is its motive: a lordship over everything. Consequently, man takes over the bare elements of both nature and human nature. It diminishes our capacity for decision, a more authentic freedom and the space for the alternative creativity of each one". The Magisterium of the Church is coherent with what science suggests in a crisis like the present one. This encyclical letter is written to Catholics, not only to them but also, specifically, to all people of goodwill. Why, however, does the message not permeate to believers and non-believers? The question is complex and deserves separate analysis, but it seems that, although the message increased the pro-environmentalist views of the wide range of Catholic interpretations, it did not change the political intentions of all. Furthermore, Francis' involvement in climate debates may exacerbate internal divisions within the Church and, finally, the disposition of local leaders (bishops, priests, deacons and laity) towards the Pope's message on care for the common home may be important (Buckley 2022).

- *Biblical Exegesis*

For a fruitful ecological reading of the Bible, it must be admitted that the context in which these texts were written was not immersed in a socio-environmental crisis like the present one, nor in technocracy, artificial intelligence, nuclear energy or the expansion of multiverses. This, however, does not invalidate it but rather surprises us with the torrent of new ideas that the texts give off in these dialogues with the present reality. In biblical exegesis or interpretation in the 21st century, there is an apologetic tendency to defend biblical traditions by underlining their positive ecological implications (Kavusa 2019). There are many biblical references that could be associated with unbalanced consumption patterns: "You cannot serve God and money" (Lk 16,13) or "He who does not work, let him not eat" (2 Thess 3,10). I would like to make a somewhat deeper interpretation of the Genesis proposal (Gen 4, 9-16). When 20% of the population consumes 80% of the natural resources, 1 in 5 children have no water and the "celebrities" we admire are significantly responsible for exceeding the planetary limits, God asks us: What about your brother for whom you are responsible? What about the creatures of my creation? Questions for Abrahamic believers who share faith in a Creator God and intergenerational brotherhood (5.000 million people) The Bishops' Conference of the West Indies recently pointed out our responsibility to the poor and vulnerable who are facing

increasing problems due to global change. The bishops challenge us to look at "Abel", who desperately does whatever it takes, environmentally sustainable or unsustainable, in order to survive. The inequality between certain Western models of life and these highly vulnerable social realities is scandalous (Perkins 2021).

- *Spirituality and Contemplation*

Spirituality, which is not exclusive to believers, attains an essential value in all religions (Newman, 2004). For Catholics, spirituality is the incorporation into the inner and outer affective world of values, in this case, environmental values, visualized by intelligence, moral law and will. Catholicism does not cancel desires as a solution but orients them towards liberation from unnecessary material attachments. Spirituality helps to live a full, satisfying and balanced life. It is not about "levitating", but about not "living in chains". It is, so to speak, at the antipodes of the KUWTK model. Spirituality is not static; it is the engine of change towards an "integral ecology" (Francis 2015, arts. 137-155) that can be developed through a contemplative path.

Contemplation is not seeing, observing, feeling and describing a declining eco-social reality. It is not a resigned, sad, hopeless posture where one contemplates reality and becoming from the serenity offered by failure. It has more to do with the prayer of encounters and the transformation of reality through spirituality. To contemplate is to encounter God through his creation. A powerful tool developed by the mystics of all times. St. John of the Cross would perfectly understand a "Kardashian culture" with all the characteristics mentioned above. This Carmelite mystic knew that "the human heart is not satisfied with less than the Infinite". Only by finding a more excellent and better love, i.e., the experience of God, will it be possible to positively renounce other goods that are so attractive and immediate that they prevent us from embarking on a path of mystical union (see Agosta 2021). To use a metaphor of St. John of the Cross, contemplation aims to seek God through creatures, but without dwelling on them. It is achieved by discovering personal motivations, desires, talents and weaknesses, in order to finally transcend oneself and establish harmonious relationships with other human beings, creation and God.

- *Ecotheology*

Integral ecology and associated spirituality can be understood as eco-theological categories that offer a

framework for thinking, looking carefully and acting from positions of faith (Agosta 2021). Ecotheology is a branch of theology that has developed mainly in the 21st century as a response to the socio-environmental crisis. Simplistically, we could say that it is rationally based on concepts such as transparency, stewardship of creation and interrelation in the Whole. The concept of custodians of creation stems from the fact that the earth does not belong to us (Levi 25, 23-25). We can take the goods of the earth to survive in dignity, but the fertility of the earth must also be protected for future generations (Francis 2015, art. 67). The human being does not own the earth because it belongs only to God. The theologian Leonardo Boff embraced the term transparency. Divine transcendence becomes transparent in worldly immanence. The world is no longer opaque since it allows God to be seen through it. God is present in everything and everyone (Pérez Prieto, 2023). The interrelation or connection of all things within the Whole is a concept that finds frequent repetition in the encyclical “Laudato si” (Francis 2015, articles 91, 92, 117, 240). This concept is presented not only from an ecological perspective but also, more fundamentally in line with Catholic thought, from a theological standpoint: God is present in all creatures, and they are all interconnected with one another and with the Trinitarian mystery (Francis, 2015, art 238-240). On this tripod of transparency, guardianship and interrelation, a KUWTK, consumerist and wasteful lifestyle is not possible.

An important part of eco-theology is the eschatological aspect. According to theologian Haught (2014): “By taking on human flesh God incorporates the whole universe into the divine life; and since both Christ and we are inseparable from this universe, personal liberation from the cosmos cannot occur, but only with the cosmos. Salvation, therefore, must mean much more than a mere harvest of souls liberated from the material world. If Christianity is true, the physical universe must also be saved”.

- *Social action*

According to St. John XXIII (1961) and his encyclical *Mater et Magistra*, after seeing, contemplating and judging, one must act. Despite the diversity of interpretations of environmental issues within the Catholic Church (Buckley 2022) and the fact that religious affiliation cannot be said to be related to more sustainable behavior (Orellano & Chuvieco 2022), global change mitigation actions within the Catholic Church at different ecclesiastical levels are considerable: The Vatican’s commitment to reduce the carbon footprint,

the development of the dicastery for integral human development and environmental commissions under the dioceses, actions to protect the common home by religious orders, divestments in banking assets associated with highly polluted companies or the social work of countless associations (e.g. the *Laudato si’* Movement) around the world (Ostheimer & Blanc 2021). I would like to highlight here a proposal that is as avant-garde as it is risky. Eizaguirre (2010, p. 78) proposes the development of a “society of sufficiency”, with consecrated or lay communities living a radical message: “living simply so that others can simply, live”. A phrase attributed to Gandhi and institutionalized by Caritas (the official organization of the Catholic Church for social action) in 2011. Eizaguirre suggests going as far as “environmental exaggeration”. In the United States, water consumption per person per day is more than 500 L; as mentioned for the Kardashian family, even in a drought emergency situation, this consumption is far exceeded. In Zimbabwe, 10 liters per person per day! With this amount, a family in Spain decided to live for a week. They describe the experience as both enriching and distressing, even with all the other resources and comforts that a European society can offer. This family did not become famous; the news only appeared in a local Spanish newspaper (Rego, 2005). Is this an out-of-context and useless action? asks Eizaguirre. Perhaps what it is, without a doubt, is the antithesis of KUWTK. In the face of consumerist exaggeration, “environmental exaggeration” can be a “prophetic act” that activates environmental, social and personal ethics. Citizens are “agents of change” individually and collectively (Hadjichambis 2022), and we must seek our motivations to do the right thing and live a full and sustainable life. Faith motivations can be the driving force for millions of people (62% of humanity will be Christian, Muslim or Jewish in 2050, see Pew Research Center, 2015).

- Family as a stabilizing social structure

The secular or Christian family is, if there are no distortions, a place of humanization of the person, an irreplaceable place of reference for the person and for society. It is the first safe environment. Marriage and kinship networks are at the basis of the development of states (Wang 2022). The specific contributions of the Christian family have to do with its nature as a believing entity, as a domestic Church. It has to do with the fact that “being in Christ” implies “being with others, with the family, the Christian community and society as a whole”. The family thus becomes a place of encounter with respect and selfless love, with oneself, with others and with God. A place where self-esteem,

otherness and transcendence are nurtured. A place to foster a culture where spiritual, moral and ethical values are not eclipsed or even destroyed by the voracity of material and hedonistic values. An environment that favors the culture of life in all its stages, charity and justice, avoiding discrimination, educating in the care of the environment and, obviously, transmitting the faith (Pulido, 2009). A family model that is far from the one shown by the Kardashian clan, where the figure of Kim loses her privacy to become a socio-cultural phenomenon that traces a complex relationship between her body as a mass communication device and the construction of a hypersexualised and hypermediatised femininity as a way of working (Valencia and Olvera, 2019).

Family businesses differ from other types of businesses in their ethical values, including the protection of all parties involved. In this sense, they provide a set of principles that guide everyday practices and relationships, including those with employees, customers, the community, suppliers and, of course, the environment (Balog et al., 2014). Religious values and family ethics influence decision-making and business organization within entrepreneurial families (Vazquez et al., 2016). Likewise, believing families supported by their particular environmental and social ethics are a reference framework for the environmental education of their children and, by extension, also of society (Payne, 2005; Astrachan et al., 2020).

4. Conclusion

The Kardashian socio-cultural phenomenon could fit into the environment of narcissistic culture and popular hedonism. An example of vicarious and virtual consumption. From a market and commercial management perspective, the users of the Kardashian product can be understood as a “brand community” loyal to the product if it is sufficiently stimulating. KUWTK also conforms to deconstructive communicative models with negative implications for ethos, whether viewers are for or against the show. From an environmental perspective, the Kardashian clan and other “celebrities” have a greater burden of environmental responsibility than other collectives in such critical factors as abuses in water consumption in states of water emergency, carbon footprint or pollution with solid and liquid toxins. The number of followers on social networks is indicative of the amplifying effect of these behaviors. With this case study, I understand that the lifestyle of this family alone can contribute greatly to overcoming some planetary limits.

In this essay, I have also presented and defended the richness of the Christian tradition in the face of consumerists: criticism of unacceptable behaviors that conform to the throwaway culture and environmental deterioration, presentation of the cardinal virtues and others aligned as environmental virtues, the teachings of the Magisterium of the Church, the contributions of eco-theology, spirituality and contemplation at the service of integral ecology, the family as a stabilizing and educating institution or the innumerable social works that are developed from long before the crisis to the current and most innovative ones.

Catholic beliefs are not just individual choices that guide one's daily life. They have a high component of otherness, of encounter and commitment with “the other” and, therefore, a social mission where immoral acts, such as war, injustice, social deterioration, or environmental degradation, are denounced. Christians, with criteria supported by scientific and sociological studies and guided by their leaders, must offer their response to the world. No one said it would be easy. Christ is ultimately counter-cultural.

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