

**RECONSTRUCTING TRUTH IN MODERN SOCIETY: JOHN PAUL II AND THE  
FALLIBILITY OF NIETZSCHE**

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I declare that RECONSTRUCTING TRUTH IN MODERN SOCIETY: JOHN PAUL II AND THE FALLIBILITY OF NIETZSCHE is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

NOVEMBER 5, 2007

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## SUMMARY

This thesis examines the intellectual environment in which Pope John Paul II's thought operates, especially as it pertains to his writings on the truth. The pontiff's thinking faces open hostility toward Christianity, as exemplified by Friedrich Nietzsche and Michel Foucault. The pope's theology pays attention and builds links to modern thought through its positive engagement with phenomenology and personalism, as well as through its opposition to materialism. Despite these connections, this theology fails to fit well with (post)modern thinking, as it takes a wider view of things in two ways: (1) By offering a spiritual sense of things, it goes beyond thought and takes into account supernatural sources of knowledge, sources which are both a one-time event (the Resurrection of Jesus Christ) and part of the ongoing journey of the Christian community; (2) By boldly referring to traditional, outmoded language, as with the words *obedience* and *humility*, with the same level of reverence and fullness of their sense as they were used before the secular-feminist era condemned these virtues. The strange and unique qualities of John Paul II's thinking issues from these two practices. It also arises from his bold ability to engage with modern thought without becoming defensive and without hiding behind the Bible or Catholic piety, though he uses both of these generously.

John Paul II offers a clear alternative to the chaos and confusion of post-Enlightenment thought, in both his thought's style and substance. The Holy Father's words cause us to reflect more deeply than those of modern or postmodern thinkers, and call us away from the relativism of Richard Rorty, Foucault, and so many others. The pope's thought succeeds in part because he takes a much wider vista of things, in that he digs more deeply into Western and Christian thought and that he enters this heritage as an inheritor rather than as a skeptical scientist-researcher as in Foucault's case. The pope's thought also succeeds because he assigns spiritual meaning to this journey of Christian and world people. In this sense, his thought is also radically inclusive.

## KEY TERMS

John Paul II; Friedrich Nietzsche; Michel Foucault; philosophy; truth; Catholic Church; theology; postmodernism; deconstruction; personalism

### **Abbreviations for Pope John Paul's encyclicals:**

CA	Centesimus annus
DM	Dives en misericordia
DV	Dominum et vivificantum
EE	Ecclesia eucharistia
EV	Evangelium vitae
FR	Fides et ratio
LE	Laborem exercens
RH	Redemptor hominis
RM	Redemptor mater
Rmiss	Redemptoris missio
SA	Slavorum apostoli
SRS	Sollicitudo rei socialis
UUS	Ut Unum sint
VS	Veritatis splendor

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## PROLEGOMENA

In Veritatis splendor (57) (1993), John Paul II warns that modern Western thought has confused the conscience, and that in particular we have lost the biblical sense of things. The pontiff roots the conscience in natural and divine law, both of which he acknowledges have fallen out of favor with secular society. Post-Christian, Western culture, not the Church and the revelation that it proclaims, informs modern notions of right and wrong. Conscience now operates in terms of immature ideas of freedom and autonomy, based on placing humans at the center of things. John Paul points to the loss of a sense of the metaphysical and transcendent as a primary reason for this wound. Modern philosophy has turned almost uniquely to the sensory world, and to human interpretation of this sensory world, and refers to no higher revelation or truth. (Veritatis splendor, 32)

John Paul's encyclicals, particularly Fides et ratio (1998), Veritatis splendor and Centesimus annis (1991), and his personal publications, offer an alternative to the visions of thinkers such as Friedrich Nietzsche and Michel Foucault, whose writings have played such an important role in Western secularization. The pontiff accepts much of modern philosophy, especially its concerns for the individual. But he challenges post-Enlightenment thought by putting metaphysics and the transcendent--and a resulting reference point for the truth--back on the public agenda. He engages modern thought not through argumentation first and foremost but through an irenic call to faith that supposes metaphysical realities.

Nietzsche proclaimed the death of God, and many, such as Richard Rorty and Foucault, have advanced their own agendas by helping their civilization navigate through the resulting confusion. The pontiff has a keen way of evaluating this landscape and the West's current direction. He repeatedly brings together, in an overwhelmingly non-polemical way, something Rorty, Foucault, *et al* had untied: A truth that contains moral ideals of the good that can motivate and transform people. At the beginning of his encyclical on bioethics, Evangelium vitae (1995), the pontiff writes that "Man is called to a fullness of life which far exceeds the dimensions of his earthly existence, because it consists in sharing the very life of God." (2) Identifying personal, human dimensions in this connection between truth and morality, and a personal God who relates intimately with humans and offers us full existence, underscores the pope's message. He takes issue with feminists, Foucault, Nietzsche, and all others who see the world according to power and not according to truth and related virtues such as love, obedience, and humility. The attacks of these people have almost completely silenced Christianity's voice; the Church often seems unable to speak to society. In this vacuum, false and harmful beliefs and spiritual practices have developed, as French Jesuit theologian Jean Daniélou (1905-74) notes: "It is the intrusion of mystical attitudes into political questions that leads to fanaticism and to ideological wars, which are conflicts between false gods."<sup>1</sup>

From a Catholic perspective, modern humans have a diminished awareness of their own limitations, and are suffering from that condition, as Gabriel Marcel's words, cited by Daniélou, attest: "[T]he danger of the cult of technological progress lies in its tendency to restrict and confine mankind

within the adoring contemplation of his own creative power...Technique, in itself a thing indifferent, neither good nor evil, becomes a 'technique of sins'.<sup>2</sup> This lack of awareness has led modern humans towards a series of terrible moral errors, particularly in the twentieth century. Daniélou points one such error in discussing Butterfield's Christianity and History:

[T]here is a great deal of truth in the Marxist view of the importance of social conditions as a factor of human life. But he [Butterfield] detects an illusion, common to all systems which presuppose a direct relationship between technical and moral progress, namely, the erroneous belief that living conditions modify the nature of man...No technical advance or social progress has any effect on human nature. 'No man has yet invented a form of political machinery which the ingenuity of the devil would not find a way of exploiting for evil ends.'<sup>3</sup>

The lack of an awareness of the transcendent, including of the spiritual nature of sin, has narrowed the modern conscience from Catholicism's all-encompassing view.

## I. The Loss of the Transcendental

### P.1 Comte and Positivism

#### 1) *Metaphysics and God*

In the post-Enlightenment nineteenth century, philosophy tends to place humans at the center of life and knowledge, the root of being and the highest goal of existence. Nineteenth-century thinkers use this view to attack traditional Christian theology and philosophy. For instance, early sociologist Auguste Comte (1798-1857) rejects metaphysics and God, and considers humans as the highest being. He aims to establish a true, systematic religion based on science and a rational philosophy. As French Jesuit Henri De Lubac (1896-1991) notes, secularizers tend to attack Christianity and build their own thinking by adopting the moral high ground and rejecting Christian spirituality and ethics as backwards and anti-human: "Contemporary atheism wishes to be positive, holistic, and constructive. It wants to unite an immanent nature-mysticism with a clear sense of human becoming."<sup>4</sup> Modernism not only adopts a spiritual and ethical outlook independent of Christianity, but claims its superiority over religion.

Comte expresses the popular opinion of his time that human thought progresses through various phases, from theological and metaphysical world-views to scientific explanations and positivism as the final and most progressive stage. He claims that each of these steps represents a different way to reflect philosophically.<sup>5</sup> Daniélou's following Christian words reflect the contrast between Christianity and Comte's way of thinking: "The real measure of history is not to be sought in the level of technical attainment, but in the more or less effective production of personalities, 'which represent the highest things we know in the mundane realm.'<sup>6</sup> Conversely, Comte's Cours de Philosophie Positive characterizes the last stage as the most mature step. Humans have at this point given up searching for a meaning to life and history, and have turned their thoughts entirely to developing scientific knowledge and properly ordering their society for the good of Humanity,

Comte's new god.<sup>7</sup> Given the lack of a metaphysical reality or higher being, this third stage concerns itself uniquely with the nature of this world, without any deeper meaning or purpose to this development.<sup>8</sup>

Comte's solipsistic philosophy asserts the sufficiency of this world and humans' ability to develop their own society and "truths." Science progresses for science's and humanity's sake, and takes over religion's role of finding meaning in life.<sup>9</sup> Comte's view disallows scientific-religious co-existence. The religious nature of humans does not indicate the reality or even possibility of a higher divinity, but reflects the immaturity of the believing individual or society. Science inevitably pushes God and Christian metaphysics out of society, and replaces it with the holistic condition of the *science positiviste*. Science in the nineteenth century takes on a holistic world view. It answers all our problems, as Christianity once did. Positivism possesses a "caractère d'universalité."<sup>10</sup>

## **2) Positive knowledge**

Absolutizing science or the scientific method leads to attacks against other certitudes, especially any connected with Christianity. Comte warns that positive knowledge, the new absolute (though he would not call it as such), negates any place for dogmatism; knowledge about our world, from how our world appears to us, remains relative knowledge.<sup>11</sup> Humans should freely experiment with their own intellectual and value systems. With Comte we have an early instance of modern thinkers denying that, in their skepticism, they are actually setting up new moral or philosophical certainties.<sup>12</sup> Traditional Christian or Greek insights into human nature can no longer explain morality. Comte subordinates humans to order and science by calling us to discard that entire tradition and build one based on science.

The Frenchman sets up certain replacements to Christianity. For instance, his secular priesthood plays a central, indispensable role.<sup>13</sup> He calls for a secular, non-Catholic, non-religious utopia that divinizes humanity.<sup>14</sup> Comte places his faith in humans. His eschatology, if one can name it as such, envisions a human-ending with human-oriented designs; humanity provides its own end. Human providence means that women and men, responsible only to themselves, control their own destiny. We cannot refer to any higher spiritual, providential, or moral power. Humanity becomes its own reference, and we cannot escape our material condition. We have only positivism and its spirituality, which Comte sums up as "the principle of Love, the foundation of Order, and the goal of Progress" "*l'Amour pour principe, l'Ordre pour base et le Progrès pour but.*"<sup>15</sup> His *Amour* lacks divine aspects. This thinking, preceding Nietzsche by several decades, puts absolute faith in humans and totally rejects personal and impersonal divinity, judging such religious thought as rising from lesser societies and people. In Comte's somewhat Nietzschean outlook, God's Death leads to *all* of Humanity being upgraded to *Übermensch*.



## P.2 Schopenhauer: Love without God

### 1) *Philosophy and theology*

Even apparently mystical or metaphysical currents of philosophy in the nineteenth century become indifferent to God, something unthinkable in Christian centuries. Idealist German philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860) demonstrates the loss of the relationship between philosophy and theology, and between metaphysics and Christianity. Without mentioning God, his analysis of life and death concludes that both are simply illusions of time and space on our brain functions.<sup>16</sup> We cannot know the true nature of things. Death returns us to a primitive state, from which wider perspective we can understand earthly life as an unimportant episode with no apparent divine or teleologically-important values or moral significance. Schopenhauer does not actively deny God, but makes his system indifferent to a divinity by investigating the most important aspects of human life without mentioning or needing a first cause or creator. He does criticize the *Weltanschauung* bequeathed to his time by the Judeo-Christian world (and developed in post-Christian ways by Kant, Hegel, and others).<sup>17</sup>

### 2) *The Will*

Schopenhauer begins Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung with the following image of the centrality of the will to his thinking:

'The world is my conception—this is the truth which operates in relation to each living and knowing being. Humans alone can bring this to an abstract awareness, and they do this indeed. Philosophical prudence operates in this way. It is clear to such thinkers that they do not know any sun or earth, but only the eye that sees the sun and the hands that feel the earth. It is clear then that the world that surrounds these thinkers exists only as a conception, that is, as a way to connect to Another, the conceptor that these thinkers themselves are.'<sup>18</sup>

The above words oppose Christian dogma, which teaches the world's materiality and goodness, both of which issue from a good Creator who loves it enough to redeem humanity and creation. These above words also betray the intensive and growing egoism of modern, post-Cartesian--and especially post-Enlightenment--philosophy. Schopenhauer's fantastic cosmology, which is a cosmology of the human soul, does not envision a reality to which all of humanity is bound and united; it outlines as many worlds or realities as there are people, at least on this side of the material divide. Individuals, a world unto themselves, can rightfully assert their opinion, at least theoretically, freely of all others.

No overarching tradition can legitimately exist, since nothing in the material world exists outside of each individual. "Christianity" is only real inside each individual's experience and interpretation of the religion; such single visions only occur as long as that person lives, so the religion has no reality, life, or tradition outside of people. The trinity's theological reality is specific in its existence to each woman or man. Schopenhauer's system disallows a Providential God who demands a common reality or meta-ideal such as love and justice. Schopenhauer's godless metaphysics confronts the suffering of the world and the reality of the material, human, and spiritual worlds from the vantage

point of atheism and divine-like roles for each individual. Individuals independently create their own material worlds. Schopenhauer confines truth to the person's truth, at least from the vantage point of this world.<sup>19</sup>

A new eschatology replaces the old Christian one. "In every case, the only thing to be abstracted... is the will, that which alone makes up the other world. For it occurs in the following way: as in this side idea, so on the other side will."<sup>20</sup> At death, Schopenhauer writes, while the conscience dies, the will remains as the primary and primitive good.<sup>21</sup> In fact, the will, devoid of any divine or teleological purpose or significance, defines humans and gives meaning to life, since "the organism itself is nothing but the will expressing itself clearly and objectively in the brain and by consequence in its forms of space and time."<sup>22</sup> The conscience contrasts with this empowering will as weaker and, more of an object than anything, simply a tool of nature that aids animals in their survival.<sup>23</sup>

### ***3) Post-Christianity***

Schopenhauer's indifference to God undermines Christian tradition in many ways, as regarding the Church's teaching on the primary importance of the conscience. He denies the primacy of the conscience by denying any eternal purpose or place for it and by placing the will above it. The conscience simply serves a higher, though not-divine good, the will. As a second instance of undermining Christian teachings, Schopenhauer portrays love and art as playing vital roles in his philosophy, but he denies that they hold any transcendental or divine aspect in a traditional Christian sense. Art, love, will, and conscience all move out from under Christianity's spell with Schopenhauer's thinking; philosophy can freely decide the relative place, meaning, and importance of each of these, without turning to Christian teachings. We do not need to refer to religion when we seek life's meaning. By retaining but de-Christianizing the virtues, Schopenhauer speeds up the making of post-Christian culture. As a third instance of undermining Christianity, Schopenhauer offers his admiration for certain of its teachings for their moral value rather than for the deeper truth of revelation to which those teachings witness. He strips Christian values of their spiritual heritage, taking what he wants from the tradition: He admires the New Testament rather than the Hebrew writings because of its method of redeeming the world from evil which, Schopenhauer claims, happens through the denial of the will.<sup>24</sup>

Schopenhauer's pessimism to life presents an alternative to Christian hope.<sup>25</sup> One doubts Schopenhauer's true indifference to Christianity, since he incorporates its symbols, such as hell, the devil, and the soul, into his pessimism.<sup>26</sup> Schopenhauer manufactures his own pessimistic-based hope, claiming that while a happy life is impossible, a heroic one is the highest aspiration.<sup>27</sup> The hero, by suffering through life with great dignity, gives suffering dignity: "A noble character would not easily lament over his/her destiny; so much more would apply to him, as what Hamlet praised in Horatio: /for thou hast been / As one, in suffering all, that suffers nothing."<sup>28</sup> Schopenhauer's anthropology is as

depressing as the rest of his outlook on life, and again seems to be a reaction against Christian hope and joy, and the meaning the religion grants to history.<sup>29</sup>

The spirituality of the nineteenth-century, whether its outer form is Marxism, Comtism, or anarchism, often clothes the same inner dynamic. Nineteenth-century philosophy plays a significant role in the anti-Christian, anti-spiritual movement of Western civilization, as Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger (1927--), the present Pope Benedict XVI, points out:

[T]he two great philosophical creations of modern consciousness, both the liberal and the Marxist image of the world, are ultimately shaped by the idea of progress, which, of course, connects them with a strange eschatological consciousness: Finally at some point in the dialectic of human history, society's perfected state will inevitably arise, in which nature and freedom are wholly reconciled, freedom will have become human beings' natural state, as it were, and thus moral excellence and a fulfilled life will be shared by all. One need not think of an end time here.<sup>30</sup>

Contemporary Italian philosopher Rocco Buttiglione contrasts the new spirituality of history with the former one, still prevalent in Poland: “Toward the end of the nineteenth century, the West came to understand the notion of revolution as implying a complete break with the past, whereas in Poland the idea of revolution continued to be understood as the resurrection of a forgotten value underlying the principles of the country's history. The central value is the vital community to which the nation had originally belonged.”<sup>31</sup> The new spirituality, which expressed itself often through a ground-breaking understanding of history, makes humans into the highest ideal; nothing beyond humans holds importance or idealization, as Jean Daniélou's words reflect: For Marxists, “man creates himself through history”; and again: “The compulsive force of this position [Marxism] comes from the fact that it is not simply an intellectual account of reality presented for men's acceptance, but invites an engagement of the will by exhibiting a morally valid reason for activism. ...[I]t is in fact a religion, or cult, of man. As such it is the absolute contradiction of Christianity; it finds man's highest good in man himself; it posits man as his own creator.”<sup>32</sup> This is a world at odds with Christianity not only over the existence and nature of God, but over the nature of humans.

### **P.3 Marx and Materialism**

Some nineteenth-century philosophers such as Karl Marx (1818-83) believe that the construction of this post-Christian culture necessitates a direct attack on Christianity, since the religion's place in society retards the new society's full development. Marx accuses Christianity of warping and attacking human nature and dignity through its inventions of the supernatural. Borrowing from Ludwig Feuerbach, Marx regards religion as the expression of political, economic, and social distortions in this life.<sup>33</sup>

Marx is too clever to try to destroy Christianity without replacing or changing its well-entrenched virtues into new meanings for the post-Christian civilization. Therefore his direct attack on

religion offers only a partial view of his anti-Christianity; he leaves no psychological vacuum. He demonstrates that secular, atheist systems can offer everything to individuals and societies that Christianity does. He makes religion redundant in his industrial, materialistic, and secular world. For example, historical determinism replaces Providence; determinism exerts itself above humans, and possesses its own ontological reality. While individuals can freely choose their own destiny, humanity is inevitably moving within a godless salvation history towards a godless eschaton. Marxist theodicy, and good and evil hold meaning only when viewed from this determinism.

For decades, Christianity has had to compete with Marxism in social and individual ethics, and in offering an explanation for the meaning of life. Christianity's failure to successfully turn society against Marxism reflects the reduced nature of the faith's voice in culture. In fact, the entire world, beginning with the Christian West, has frequently been seduced by Marxism, even though the Christian perspective identifies the system's shortcomings as obvious. Thomas Merton identifies the spiritual flaw in Marx:

Marx himself sought to bring about a condition, no less ideal [than those espoused by other ideologies and religions], almost celestial, a paradise on earth in which the inner contradictions on man—particularly the inner contradictions of Karl Marx—would be resolved. Hence his philosophy lent itself very readily to pseudoreligious manifestation. Russian communism is in fact an ersatz for religion.<sup>34</sup>

Nonetheless, Merton does understand Marx's temptation for modern thinkers and politics and the reduced role for real religion: "He [Marx] saw the disease of modern man, who has come to be ruled by things and by money, and by machines."<sup>35</sup> Marxism has competed with Christianity in calling humans flawed and offering a solution much more successfully than most other systems from the nineteenth century. Daniélou observes the irony that Marxism and Comtianism still require an act of faith, since they each are "a hybrid between the positive analysis of facts, and a value-judgement, an act of faith."<sup>36</sup> Marxism, as "an ersatz for religion" and through its confrontation with the Judeo-Christian tradition, has helped speed up the de-Christianizing of Western civilization.

## **P.4 John Dewey's Epistemology and Metaphysics**

### ***1) Epistemology***

American pragmatism has attacked or at least competed with Christianity from another angle than the above-mentioned systems. Consistent with modern philosophy, it places humans at the center. It also rejects or ignores God, echoing Comte in judging God as issuing from immature individuals or societies. Lastly, it regards modern science as superior to Christian or even non-Christian metaphysics. John Dewey (1859-1952) proclaims a "new method and ideal," centered on humans and their science, over religious ideals which (again paralleling Comte's view) cannot survive the confrontation and must necessarily, in the name of human progress, bow out of history.<sup>37</sup> Dewey does not allow for a Christian vision of things that changes or matures along with changes or maturation in science,

industry, or thought. Progress includes the progress away from religion—first from the more superstitious elements and then finally from all thought of God.

Dewey condemns religion as frozen because its dogma, which can change with the times, is not the fundamental issue. Instead, he condemns religion's entire (and never-changing) world-view or disposition, which its erroneous method simply reflects.<sup>38</sup> As an alternative to this disposition, Dewey outlines a wholly utilitarian place for knowledge since it develops, he asserts, through humans responding to their environment, rather than through revelation or from within the long Western tradition of metaphysical speculation:

In reality, the only thing that can be said to be 'proved' is the existence of some complex of conditions that have operated to effect an adjustment in life, an orientation, that brings with it a sense of security and peace. The particular interpretation given to this complex of conditions is not inherent in the experience itself. It is derived from the culture with which a particular person has been imbued.<sup>39</sup>

Humans use knowledge to interact with and manipulate their environment, and the so-called truth of such knowledge holds sense when it helps people succeed in this manipulation.

## **2) *Metaphysics***

As the above citation shows, for Dewey metaphysical ideas remain valid only if they pass higher scientific tests--if they can conform, in other words, to scientific laws. Dewey *scientifizes* metaphysics: Metaphysics falls under the dominion of science. The philosophical subject possesses no independent ontological or psychological foundations.<sup>40</sup> Humans have no otherworldly or eschatological exit or escape hatch from this world and our human problems, and certainly no higher divine authority to which to appeal for grace. Instead, Dewey finds scientific, empirical reasons for religious experience: "The actual religious quality in the experience described is the *effect* produced, the better adjustment in life and its conditions, not the manner and cause of its production. The way in which the experience operated, its function, determines its religious value."<sup>41</sup> Stable or supposedly secure aspects of reality provide insufficient grounds for metaphysics, and any reification of metaphysical principles eventually harms people and society because they no longer have the freedom to respond to their environment, which seems to be the highest good in Dewey's philosophy.<sup>42</sup> The American forbids us from holding onto and further developing our treasures of tradition that depend on a vantage point higher than that of humans.

## **3) *Morality***

The changing events of life take precedence, for Dewey, over solutions--static or simplistic, Christian or non-Christian--to ethical problems. Such solutions must cope with changing events or be discarded. Moral issues must face empirical testing that uses imagination, flexibility, and experimentation. We must ask whether any given ideal or value inhibits or promotes social progress, and deal with it accordingly.<sup>43</sup> Ideals will indeed arise again, as will religious impulses, but Dewey,

regarding these from the viewpoint of their usefulness, separates such religious feeling from religion *per se*. Dewey accords great responsibility and power to the individual, claiming that her or his religious power arises and works independently of religious traditions that lay claim to those religious impulses. This philosophy takes religious power and reverence from religious tradition, and gives it (back) to the person. Religion must serve the interests of religious impulses of individuals, rather than the inverse. Dewey casts a hermeneutics of suspicion over religion—a reversal of the previous case, where religion held such a posture over the individual's spirituality. He declares human independence over religion in the spiritual, ethical, and metaphysical spheres.

Dewey's belief in the superiority of change over tradition leads him to emphasize and prefer the demands of change—including religious change—over religious tradition.<sup>44</sup> Dewey seems to hold out no hope to the future of traditional religion, and ridicules the “romantic optimism” of traditional and recent (to his day) religious piety that follows traditional practices of faith in Providence and a personal savior. Such practice, he warns from his demanding anthropo-centrism, prevents us from finding genuine solutions.<sup>45</sup> In this sense, religious tradition plays no part of the solution to modern living, and becomes the obstacle. The sooner we eliminate it the faster we can get on with things.

He offers the image, then, of sloughing off the old tradition--as a snake sloughs off its dead skin--in the name of endless change and progress, centered on the power of the individual and of the advancement of humanity. As mentioned, he decries the attempt to harmonize religion and science, and believes that the sooner we shed the old paradigm, the more energy we will have for building the future: “It is probably impossible to imagine the amount of intellectual energy that has been diverted from normal processes of arriving at intellectual conclusions because it has gone into rationalization of the doctrines entertained by historic religions.”<sup>46</sup>

Marx, Comte, Schopenhauer, and, as exemplified with these above words, Dewey trample on Christianity from countless angles. Therefore if one does not agree with one view, one can always adopt another.

## **II. The Result of the Loss of the Transcendental: Attacks on the Truth**

### **P.5 Richard Rorty and Moral Relativism in American Postmodern Pragmatism**

After all the violence created by the post-Christian ideals of reason (the Wars of the French Revolution), modernity (World War One), tribal fascism (World War Two), and materialistic economics (the Cold War), the basic disposition of modern Westerners has not changed at the deepest levels, but has undergone only superficial modification. This is so probably because we have a smorgasboard of reasons for hating and opposing Christianity; if one stance produces violence, rather than giving Christianity a second look, we can adopt another anti-religious position. Ratzinger notes one path for this:

Robert Spaeman has spoken of the fact that after the fall of the idea of utopia today a banal nihilism has begun to spread, that in its result is no less dangerous as utopia. He takes the example of the American philosopher Richard Rorty, who has formulated a new utopia of the banal. Rorty's ideal is of a liberal society in which the absolute worths and criteria will no longer exist. Happiness would be the sole thing worthy of our striving.<sup>47</sup>

Contemporary American Catholic thinker Michael Novak reminds us that great ideals and spiritual energy have been replaced by superficial courteous virtues and intellectual-spiritual banality: “Richard Rorty has propounded a 'cheerful nihilism,' in which any claim to 'truth' independent of pragmatic social preference is to be joshingly brushed aside...Rorty would have us be kind and tolerant to one another, while happily refusing to offer an intellectual ('metaphysical') defense of our system.”<sup>48</sup> Novak's words remind us that we have failed to replace the greatness of Christianity with a comparably great spirituality; we have settled for something infinitely less. We “joshingly brush aside” a higher plan or spiritual life in our fear of the transcendent.

### *1) Systems*

American pragmatism attacks or ridicules religious systems because it regards those systems' higher values as at best meaningless and at worst responsible for untold death and destruction. Richard Rorty (1931-2007) regards Christianity as just another of the troublesome systems that include Marxism, Nazism, and less evil constructions, that inhibit peace and progress. His condescension targets Christianity, judging the religion according to the pragmatism of peace, advancement, and prosperity, and he makes no effort to give this pragmatism any higher significance.

Rorty focuses on the utility of particular systems, ethical or otherwise, for humans, and believes that these systems are fluid and unstable, noting in “Postmodernist bourgeois liberalism” that “Most moral dilemmas are thus reflections of the fact that most of us identify with a number of different communities and are equally reluctant to marginalize ourselves in relation to any of them. This diversity of identifications increases with education, just as the number of communities with which a person may identify increases with civilization.”<sup>49</sup> Networks take over centralizing paradigms, and non-hierarchy replaces patriarchy, at least in theory. Rorty replaces a metaphysical or meta-theoretical drama with practicality and good ol' fashioned American know-how and ingenuity.

Values clash not because humans are discovering, expressing, or searching for any truth, but only as an ongoing process of dialogue whereby we are constantly recreating our values for our shifting needs; whereby we are constantly refining our self-revelation and human-centered teleology; whereby we are creating, as Marx and Comte, our own Providence; and whereby, like Schopenhauer, we are depending on our own wills and responsible to ourselves or at best to some vague metaphysics for our own suffering or happiness.<sup>50</sup> Human needs, however determined, define the values of the day: “The utilitarians were right when they coalesced the moral and the useful.”<sup>51</sup> Rorty reiterates Dewey's equating the “useful” as the “moral.”

## 2) *The highest goal*

American pragmatism holds simple, practical values that portray Marxism or Christianity as hopeless, abstract romanticism. Rorty makes avoiding cruelty our highest goal, replacing the Marxist and Christian eschatons. His relativism rejects any search for the truth as counterproductive to what philosophical inquiry should really target, the improvement of our current situation: “Unsurprisingly, I see the best parts of Heidegger and Derrida as the parts which help us to see how things look under nonrepresentationalist, nonlogocentrist descriptions—how they look when one begins to take the relativity of thinghood to choice of description for granted, and so starts asking how to be useful rather than how to be right.”<sup>52</sup> “Useful” does not take on ontological functions previously performed by “being” or a religious sense of “time and space.” Language itself, under Rorty, becomes a tool of the need to find the best way forward in the present: “I see the worst parts of Heidegger and Derrida as the parts which suggest that they themselves have finally gotten language right, represented it accurately, as it really is.”<sup>53</sup> Even here language seems to refer back to “useful,” as its function seems simply to represent things correctly in our daily tasks and relationships. One doubts, however, that Rorty would grant anything an ontological status, even something as central to his philosophy as language.

Rorty's evolutionary system rejects teleological ends:

Consider sentences as strings of marks and noises emitted by organisms, strings capable of being paired off with the strings we ourselves utter (in the way we call 'translating'). Consider beliefs, desires, and intentions—sentential attitudes generally—as entities posited to help predict the behavior of these organisms. Now think of those organisms as gradually evolving as a result of producing longer and more complicated strings, strings which enable them to do things they had been unable to do with the aid of shorter and simpler strings. Now think of *us* as examples of such highly evolved organisms, of our highest hopes and deepest fears as made possible by, among other things, our ability to produce the peculiar strings we do. Then think of the four sentences that precede this one as further examples of such strings. Penultimately, think of the five sentences that precede this one as a sketch for a redesigned house of Being, a new dwelling for us shepherds of Being. Finally, think of the last six sentences as yet another example of the play of signifiers, one more example of the way in which meaning is endlessly alterable through the recontextualization of signs.<sup>54</sup>

“Recontextualization of signs” poses a challenge to theologians and other upholders of tradition by implying the fluidity, inanity, and instability of every element of that tradition. Rorty detaches “signs” and “signifiers” from their customary task as image-builders for religion. Complicated or poetic means of communicating a given faith, such as metaphor, do not represent revelation or the truth, but humanity's evolution--thus “consistent with the Darwinian claim that we differ from other animals simply in the complexity of our behaviour,” as Rorty writes in Philosophy and Social Hope.<sup>55</sup> Language as “strings and noises” contains no spiritual nutrition except as playing its role in human evolution, and invites a comparison with the grunting and bellowing of donkeys and cows, especially since only complexity, in Rorty's view, differentiates us from animals. Rorty has eliminated any ontological meaning from humans. “Beliefs, desires, and intentions” issue from humans-as-animals rather than from women and men interacting with the divine and participating in the resulting rich tradition. Rorty thereby challenges any sense of divine revelation. He reduces the hopes and prayers of



a mother for her child or of a shell-shocked soldier for his very life to a bio-evolutionary role of assisting those people out of their dire emotional straits, presumably so they can get back to being “useful.”

### **III. Reconnecting Religion and Philosophy: Phenomenology and Personalism**

#### ***1) Edmund Husserl***

Is modern philosophy completely anti-Christian? Do any solutions pull philosophy out of its solipsism and materialism, and out of the sense that humans and their needs determine the intellectual agenda? Is there a way for Christianity to use modern philosophy to speak to the modern world?

The German philosopher Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) aims to redirect philosophy away from the abstract and towards a process that, underlying all other aspects of thought, gives the discipline a scientific certainty in the real world. He commands philosophy in Logical Investigations to return “to the things themselves,” which is a positive turn of events for Christianity because his philosophy avoids the automatically anti-Christian disposition of Comte, Schopenhauer, Marx, Nietzsche, and Rorty. This new stance attempts to re-ground philosophy in reality and, in particular, in human experience (however, as we have just seen, American pragmatism, though solipsistic, also looks to human experience). Husserl challenges, at least partially, the post-Christian metaphysics (or pseudo-metaphysics) of secular, Western thinking. He rejects abstract philosophical practice removed from reality. This phenomenological process could question Schopenhauer's view of metaphysics and the will, Comte's idealization and abstraction of Humanity, and Marx's eschatological history devoid of freedom.

Husserl avoids the grand anti-Christian system-builders by starting from the insight that we cannot understand principles unrelated to the concrete world. He offers the example of trying to explain color to a blind person.<sup>56</sup> Humans must be able to relate in concrete terms with their own experience to a given philosophy. In Die Idee der Phänomenologie he asks simple questions in his attempt at constructing a secure foundation for knowledge.<sup>57</sup> He bases his philosophy on a concrete reflection of the objects of the world. Husserl does admit to a discord between the singular object of apprehension and the general, wider world of which the object is simply one element.<sup>58</sup> He offers a sense of the need for a reduction of the sweeping vista of reality into something that humans and philosophy can process, given the limitations of the human mind, but he avoids turning to the system-building tendency of the nineteenth-century, or to the mundane pragmatics of Rorty.

Husserl struggles with the unknown and aims his phenomenology at seizing secure givens in clarity and without any doubt.<sup>59</sup> He admits in Die Idee der Phänomenologie to the extreme difficulty of reducing reality and its constant fluidity into apparently static observations.<sup>60</sup> He notes the fact that “*reinen Phänomene*” (pure things) do exist, that is, that phenomenology is actually aiming at something real—at objects that truly exist in the real world. Rather than playing logical or

philosophical games with reality, he believes that humans can in fact truly and adequately apprehend these pure phenomena. Husserl's phenomenology invites a search for the truth.

Husserl proposes that we use phenomenology across philosophical disciplines to properly ground all areas in reality.<sup>61</sup> He calls, in other words, for these disciplines to issue from the real act of perception that phenomenology attempts. Jean Hyppolite summarizes well the new sense of philosophy that Husserl's method offers that begins from the subjective person in her or his "conscience of self":

This transition from the natural conscience to conscience of self is the necessary step in starting to think philosophically: It is doubtlessly what Husserl has called 'the phenomenological reduction,' this putting into parentheses certain things of the world which permit one not to suppress them but to make them appear, as they truly show themselves and how they truly show themselves; from that we have the new sense of the object.<sup>62</sup>

Phenomenology aims, then, for a new sense in every aspect of inquiry that is more authentic than previous methods. In this, we can see a negative judgment of previous modes of inquiry. Husserl retains, however, the human-centered rather than other-worldly or Christian sense of things, for example, regarding sacraments, the nature of being, or the belief in the spirit world. Yet the positive aspect of Husserl's thought is his turning away from much of the anti-Christian hubris of modern continental philosophy, such as concerning the meaning or inevitable direction of history, and the absolute negation of God. John Paul does warn in *Fides et ratio* (82) of the inability of a purely phenomenological stance in aiding theologians better understand scripture.

## **2) Max Scheler's Phenomenology and Personalism**

Since phenomenology and personalism are not anti-Christian by nature, can the religion adopt their methods to some degree in order to speak to the modern world?

The methods already help the religion in questioning many aspects of modern philosophy that are in opposition to Christianity. For instance, Max Scheler (1874-1928) continues Husserl's phenomenological accent on the immediate apprehension of objects in the world, and seems to realize the problems of solipsism in modern thought.<sup>63</sup> Scheler's concern, notes Manfred Frings, centers on the inability of modern humans to construct a "unified view" of humanity. Humans have become, in other words, a problem to themselves: "There is no view of man that is helping man to understand himself or his place in the universe in any meaningful, truly human and personal, sense. Where man is concerned confusion abounds."<sup>64</sup> Although Scheler's personalism opposes to some degree the path of modern philosophy, he does not find an exit to solipsism.

Scheler links his personalism closely to his phenomenological philosophy.<sup>65</sup> The inner psychic landscape of the person relates with the outer phenomena. Scheler develops a phenomenology in step with developing a sense of the perceiving subject and the characteristics of that individual: "It is the psychic aspect of self-sufficiency, self-movement etcetera of life forms above all--that primordial psychic phenomena of life."<sup>66</sup> "Psychische Urphänomen" ("primordial psychic phenomena") implies a

metaphysical reality tied to the person that precedes or is at least equal to the material of the cosmos and the physical world we inhabit, something with which Rorty and Comte disagree. Scheler's personalism, through this psychic and metaphysical outlook, goes well beyond Rorty's reference to the reduction of human existence to the "useful."

Scheler's personalism depends on the significance of material existence. His article, "Die Stellung des Menschen im Kosmos," develops the idea of the person by contrasting the person with other living beings in the world, from the vegetative lifeforms onwards, rather than from abstract principles of being or idealism. The essay concludes that humans have *Selbstbewußtsein* (self-awareness), unlike plants and animals. In discussing the person, he emphasizes the place of *Geist* (spirit) over *Vernunft* (reason) in the inner order of things.<sup>67</sup> He keeps this issue of *Geist* concrete and from falling into a discussion on German idealism by warning of the nonsense often associated with *Geist*.<sup>68</sup>

He follows that with his own sense of the word by giving it a personalist meaning. He does so by subjectifying the person in contrast to the objective world, showing that the individual, unlike plants and animals, is much more than simply impulses (*Trieb*) and tied to the environment.<sup>69</sup> The person is, he continues, not bound up in reacting to or opposing the environment. He describes this free individual as a human drama (*menschlichen Dramas*) of many acts, or dimensions, the first act of which "Behavior is motivated by *pure essence* of a subject-founded view or perception-complex, and this principle is independent from the physiological and psychic situation of the human organism, independent of its instinctive impulses."<sup>70</sup> The person, in her independence, is more than her impulses or psycho-physiological state, possessing something that Scheler at this point does not name but only hints at.

The person is more than simply independent of the world, given this mysterious power or capacity. With the last act of the drama of the person, Scheler accords great responsibility to the individual as a creator and even dominator over the world.<sup>71</sup> The subjective aspect of the person possesses concrete attributes that enable the individual to act in the world and with other humans as an independent being largely complete and responsible in her own right. For instance, the human *Geist* accords, he writes, *Selbstbewußtwerden* (self-awareness of becoming) and *Zurückbeugung* (bending back) and *Zentrierung seiner Existenz* (a sense of being centered in one's existence).<sup>72</sup> With these powerful faculties Scheler ties phenomenology with personalism. "The power of one's spirit could allow .. *one's own physiological and psychic creativity* and every single psychic experience, every single vital function itself again to construct itself in a contrary way."<sup>73</sup> The person is not limited to a genus, but goes beyond any biological table. Each human being's uniqueness is an interplay of *Geist* biology, the psyche, and one's phenomenological experience of the world.

This power leads to a certain spiritual personalist stance.<sup>74</sup> The individual holds a special, almost otherworldly relationship to the world because of "*menschlicher Besonderheiten*"—human peculiarities or special qualities.<sup>75</sup> Contrasting with Rorty, Scheler goes on to write of humans as the

only animal capable of ascesis and *Sublimierung*. Arthur Luther sums up the above phenomenology and personalism of Scheler that make each human a subjective part of the world: “What appears about man, and the universe in which he finds himself, appears in and through modes of experiencing which constitute man as ‘person’ in the universe. Concrete experiencing is never amorphous or confused; on the contrary it is always specific and ‘clear’.”<sup>76</sup>

### 3) *Karol Wojtyla's Personalism*

While this thesis will examine the papal writings of John Paul II, for this chapter it is instructive for an understanding of personalism to look at his pre-papal teaching. The future Pope John Paul II, Krakow's Archbishop Karol Wojtyla (1920-2005), bases his personalism on the concrete application of spiritual and religious issues. Systems, religious or otherwise, must focus on the person or they become dehumanizing. Systems and dogma are accountable to individuals, reflecting the teaching of Jesus that the Sabbath was made for humans, and not vice versa.<sup>77</sup> Human identity, deeply personal and individual, apparently issues foremost not from dogma, philosophy, or wider society.

To an important degree, Wojtyla's personalist anthropology works from the inside-out—from the will, motivation, and unique stance of every individual—rather than from the outside-in—from a philosophically or theologically prescribed set of moral duties and definitions. He focuses on the single human and avoids defining that being according to theories, books, or deontology. He introduces his 1960 treatise on sexuality, *Love and Responsibility*, by stating that the book “is not an exposition of doctrine. It is, rather, the result above all of an incessant confrontation of doctrine with life.”<sup>78</sup>

Doctrine does not proceed solely from the Bible or revelation, but must develop its human dimension in the real person and that person's experiences. The inevitability of this confrontation or dialogue between religious doctrine and the individual issues from the straightforward personalism of the archbishop.<sup>79</sup> As with Scheler, the future pope develops his personalism by defining the individual as infinitely more than an animal or a product of the environment. This follows the Judeo-Christian tradition of separating humans from nature.

Wojtyla's book on sexuality focuses on love, and connects love with the concrete person.<sup>80</sup> The author opposes any abstracting of this love that is directed at the individual: “And therefore the most fundamental way of looking at sexual morality is in the context of 'love and responsibility'.”<sup>81</sup> This last citation contains two important considerations: First, he chooses sexuality, in a sense the most concrete way of two humans to relate to each other, to express his personalism. Secondly, he connects love foremost with responsibility rather than with philosophy, political ideology, troubadours and ballads, or emotions. Love expresses and shapes itself through specific action—through something outward and measurable that moves among individuals. He leaves no doubt in the reader's mind as to the connections: “The subject of analysis is in the first place the person as affected by the sexual

urge.”<sup>82</sup> Sexuality, like all moral and spiritual issues, inheres deeply to each man and woman; while concrete, it originates from a mysterious inner world unique to each individual.

In this way, the archbishop's personalism accords a great deal of responsibility to the individual, whom he does not lose or have subsumed in theological or ethical systems. He continually returns to what he considers as the focus of ethics, which is the person, and reminds his reader of the supremacy of this focus over others. More specifically, he bases ethics on the motivation of the individual.<sup>83</sup> Motivation inheres to his thought because it links the inner world of the person to the outward act that the woman or man uses to connect with the outer world. Woytyla emphasizes ethical conflict that arises not from different systems among philosophers or theologians, but rather from within each of us naturally, from intensely personal and inner emotions and energies. Though in “The Problem of the Will in the Analysis of the Ethical Act” he does frequently refer to Kant, Scheler, and Aquinas, ultimately the archbishop does not locate the true arena for ethical conflict in, for instance, German philosophy or the battle between modernists and traditionalists in the Catholic Church. He places the real arena of ethical conflict within each individual.

Woytyla often keeps his personalism quite simple, focusing on the level of the individual and away from grand theories or ideals. Ethics cannot exist outside of the human person.

Scheler's emotionalism ... is expanded into a rich system of an ethics of values. From the point of view of experience, however, I cannot agree with his system, precisely because he completely disregards the efficacy of the person. If persons are not the efficient cause of their actions, then there is no explanation for where ethical values come from. The experience upon which ethics is based reveals that persons who experience themselves as the efficient cause of their actions simultaneously experience them-selves as subjects of ethical values-moral good and evil.<sup>84</sup>

This is a surprising statement for a mid-twentieth century Polish archbishop to make, given its silence on the Church's place in developing inner notions of right and wrong. Woytyla's personalism centers on the subjective rather than objective value of the human. In his papal writings, much of his thought about the dignity of the person issues from this subjectivity. The above citation expresses profound confidence in the ability of humans to discern right from wrong. This leads to the archbishop's emphasis on responsibility. This also leads to one important aspect of the personalism of his papal writings--the extreme demands on his readers, and especially on the laity. Adopting Vatican II's call for the involvement of the whole people of God, he calls on every member of the Catholic Church to evangelize and shape social ethics. He invites his readers to live out and realize the counter-cultural revolution that he envisions in a gospel-oriented life.

Woytyla keeps ethics concrete—and maintains the ethical focus grounded in his concrete personalism—by preferring a phenomenological approach over an abstract, theoretical approach to experience.<sup>85</sup> He relies on Narziss Ach, a psychologist, to highlight the deeply personal and, again, simple and direct, process that underlies an ethical decision.<sup>86</sup> This aspect of the will contrasts with Schopenhauer's abstract view of the will. For instance, Woytyla denies the possibility of splitting the will or placing it somewhere metaphysically out of reach of this world and human experience in the

here and now. Unlike Schopenhauer, Wojtyła's will is one of immediacy. The archbishop can thus state in his discussion on Ach that “the self exerts a determinate influence,” again, in other words, emphasizing the responsibility of the person and the need for systems and dogma to place secondary roles over the person and her own inner decision-making and inner landscape.

Wojtyła criticizes abstraction in ethics, and by extension, any attempt to minimize the role of the individual.<sup>87</sup> He outlines decision-motivation-action as the inner workings of the will. He offers a clear analysis of the inner landscape of the individual, rather than losing his personalism in a sop to the mysterious or abstractly spiritual nature of the individual. The importance of the act of the individual, right from the start of the thinking process that leads to the final act with ethical implications, can never be reduced. This personalism energetically opposes abstraction. We can see the importance of the act in its concrete forms within the individual step-by-step.

Obviously, Wojtyła's personalist metaphysics do not preclude a place for God, but offer an enriched perspective.<sup>88</sup> Rather than becoming subsumed in one's relationship with God, the individual enjoys further individuation, since the archbishop identifies God as the source of the uniqueness of the person. Wojtyła identifies an outward, concrete manifestation to this metaphysical inner state, again using this observation to emphasize the uniqueness of the individual as a foundation of his personalism.<sup>89</sup> The archbishop's personalism reaches out horizontally to other people and to objects in the world, and it also contains a vertical or interior dimension.

This horizontal-vertical balance gives Wojtyła's thinking an underlying humility or simplicity lacking in many modern forms of philosophy. These forms become too ambitious in certain areas of thought, reducing in this way the human being to servant of this dysfunctional thinking. (Marx overemphasizes economics, for example, and objectifies each person as *homo economicus*.) Wojtyła accuses a wholly theoretical view, or one that fails to adequately take account of the individual, as erroneous and needing change.<sup>90</sup> He links reason to the individual, rather than discussing reason as some separate entity for philosophical survey. Philosophy errs when it separates for independent analysis any attribute of human life, such as reason, from the person. We cannot properly understand reason when we disengage it from the individual. We need, in other words, a wider, human-oriented perspective in order to understand reason and other human attributes. Wojtyła writes that

The lived experience of responsibility is a confirmation of the relation that exists between an action's moral value and the person's efficacy, both when this experience occurs after the deed is done and when it occurs before it. The lived experience of responsibility points to the will as the psychological factor that constitutes the very core of ethical experience.<sup>91</sup>

Experience links the attributes philosophy likes to endlessly analyze—such as reason, or “an action's moral value,” or will—with the concrete human person. The archbishop's thought never allows for solipsism in philosophy, as he pushes thinkers to turn at every instance to the concrete individual, to leave their books and theories for the real world.

## Conclusion

The American Jesuit theologian Avery Cardinal Dulles (1918--) parallels the pope by inviting us to go beyond the banality of Rorty's post-metaphysics pragmatism and turn to the Catholic tradition for something much more meaningful: "Postcritical theology seeks to reunite the creative with the cognitive, the beautiful with the true."<sup>92</sup> In advancing the idea of Christian truth, the pontiff confronts a post-Enlightenment philosophy that elevates humans to the center of creation, history, ethics, and spirituality, whether in Comte's and Marx' materialist sense, in pragmatism's concern for the human here-and-now, in phenomenology's practice of making human perception vital, or in personalism's assertion that the inner world of the individual human holds central importance. These outlooks give primacy to the human.

Catholic teachers can nonetheless use aspects of some of these modern systems. In particular, Christian personalism presumably adopts a human-centered vantage point that can interpret divine revelation through the effect on the individual. John Paul's personalism, based on Christian truth, offers a new dimension to the aftereffects of the *Cogito*, which made the individual the cause of philosophy--just as Luther, Calvin, Zwingli, *et al* made the individual the cause of religion, and sometime after that capitalist individualism blessed the individual economically. In other words, John Paul's battle is not simply philosophical, but is with every aspect of individual, social, and economic life in Western civilization. He responds with a holistic view. By grounding his theology in the vantage point of humans, he makes his theology acceptable to the modern reader. He adopts personalism as a starting point for a wider witness to the truth of Christ's revelation. As pope, he also follows, as two examples, the Church's traditional neoscholastic use of natural law and the practice of *lectio divina*. He proclaims the gospel through or beyond the solipsism of personalism and exits the narrowness of modern thought's human providence, teleology, and ethics.

Michael Novak notes that for John Paul, "What ultimately determine the character of a culture are its choices...Individuals, like cultures, reveal what they understand of life through their choices."<sup>93</sup> John Paul desperately wants us to choose something more than Rorty's bland nihilism that has given up on God more out of boredom than out of any real conviction or passion for life.

# SECTION I

## KNOCKING DOWN AND BUILDING UP

### Chapter 1

#### Nietzsche

For Henri de Lubac, thinkers such as Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) represent more than philosophical battles. They represent the vanguard of civilization-wide change: “A deep current, already ancient, or rather a sort of gigantic good derived from the thinking of a larger part of the elite, whereby Western humanity denies its Christian origins and turns away from God. This is different from popular atheism, which exists in every era and which is insignificant.”<sup>94</sup> De Lubac's words echo the supposition of this thesis—that Nietzsche expresses the spirit of the modern age. The German conveys the metaphysical sense of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Nietzsche gives great power, spirit, and even metaphysical sense to his anti-Christian message by stating it in personal, emotional, and poetic terms. Rather than being the object of Christian morality, his forcefulness allows him to reverse the relationship, and put Christianity on the defensive, making the religion the object of *his* morality. He is the Inquisition, to which Christianity must answer the tough, sometimes unfair, questions. He openly, proudly displays his anti-Christian aggression, and sums it up in his autobiography, *Ecce homo*, written near the end of his productive life: “It is war, but without powder and steam, without warlike attitudes, without pathos and dislocated extremities, because these all were themselves still an ideal.”<sup>95</sup> Nietzsche admits the power of his words, with war rather than compromise or academic dispassion as the basis of his anti-Christian analysis. This introduces or at least reinforces a new style and substance to critique. Critique is personal, power-oriented, and uncompromisingly dedicated to the destruction rather than slow transformation of aspects of Western society such as Christianity and the Platonic-rationalistic philosophical traditions behind it.

Rocco Buttiglione contrasts the general difference between the two sides of Europe, the material West and the more spiritual East, with Nietzsche coming out of the former and John Paul out of the latter. The

particular vision of man which nourishes the Polish consciousness consists [of the following]: it is the *cultural and existential certitude that Christ is the keystone for the understanding of man and of his history*. For a variety of reasons, this certitude is lost or considerably weakened at the western extremity of the continent. Blinded by the enormous potential for domination which the industrial revolution offered them, these countries have made the measure of their dignity coincide with that of their power, and they have sought to construct on this basis their participation in world history. They have built great national states which have promptly sought to expand at their neighbor's expense and they have divided among them the defenseless people of all the regions of the earth. These states are opposed to the Church, which contested the reorganization of national life as a function of domination.<sup>96</sup>



The members of the Inquisition of Modernity, led by Nietzsche, have been dominating the intellectual terrain of the past three centuries, and investigating Christianity's dubious place in their new moral system. Henri de Lubac finds in Nietzsche, Comte, and Feuerbach's anti-Christian thought an anti-human spirit: "Just like they shared a common foundation in their rejection of God, so also they shared similar outcomes, of which the core is the annihilation of the human person."<sup>97</sup> These words echo John Paul's accusations against modern thought as the generator of the Culture of Death.

## 1.1 Nietzsche contra Christianity

### 1) *Christianity and power*

What are the roots of Nietzsche's vindictiveness towards Christianity? Why did he not simply establish his own system of thought, and ignore the religion? De Lubac describes the atheist philosophers of the nineteenth-century as establishing, with a certain triumphalism, their own type of religion or belief system, which pushed them to believe in the absolute necessity for Christianity's destruction: "Feuerbach, Marx, Comte and Nietzsche all believed that faith in God had forever disappeared. They believed that their atheism was definitive, and they aimed for that. They believed that their rejection of God had the advantage over past atheisms of eliminating the problem that had caused faith in God in the first place."<sup>98</sup> Buttiglione warns us more directly: "Various forms of totalitarianism have sought to construct a city of man without God, in which (despite their occasional humanistic claims) man is inexorably reduced to being merely an instrument of power."<sup>99</sup> These new ideologies are never value-free, but always carry specific anti-Christian and even anti-human sentiments.

Nietzsche uses the image of war to continue the Enlightenment tradition of portraying the Church as the institution of power. He justifies his war against Christianity on the religion's own warlike nature. *Der Antichrist* defines Christianity as an intellectual and psychological force that compels people to act outside of their nature.<sup>100</sup> Concerned with power within society and for the individual, Nietzsche views the Church and Christianity through the lens of power, and the Church's exercise of it, rather than through love or transcendence.<sup>101</sup> Humans actually lose something when they follow what Christian society deems as among the most noble virtues. Such virtues actually make us less alive and give us less life, again, contrary to traditional Christian teaching:<sup>102</sup> Every progressive, intelligent, independent, mature, that is, 'adult,' person, the only kind that "deserves" Nietzsche's respect, must do as the German philosopher does and reject the Church as a community or institution with higher, good and holy values.

Nietzsche portrays the Church's metaphysics and teaching of eternal values and life as its power base and the forces that allowed it to turn Europe into Christendom and thereby influence every aspect of European life. Christianity's metaphysics do not reflect love or eternal values for human actions. Metaphysics is only one more power grab by the Church and philosophers.<sup>103</sup> Power-hungry Church leaders use such teachings to manipulate and frighten people. Nietzsche repudiates as the

worst, most dangerous mistake the *Dogmatiker Irrthum*, Plato's invention (*Erfindung*) of a higher world of pure spirit and ideals on which, he believes, Christianity bases itself and has thereby become "Platonism for the rabble" (*Platonismus für's »Volk«*).<sup>104</sup> These otherworldly, unknowable, and unprovable ideals prejudice humans by making us believe in a truth to which we erroneously give more worth than to the sensory world.

## 2) *Tod Gottes*

The larger debate asks, What makes humans free? What imprisons humans? De Lubac notes that "Humans eliminate God in order to retake control of human greatness that we think has been unjustly taken over by another. They overcome what they consider as the obstacle to their freedom, God. Modern humanism is an anti-theism."<sup>105</sup> These words contrast with Nietzsche's stated aims; de Lubac sees the German philosopher as imprisoning humans who have been free all the while in their Christian belief, whereas the philosopher equates human freedom with liberty from religion. Nietzsche's *Death of God (Tod Gottes)* arises not out of his philosophy or atheism, but from his assertion that the Christian God has become unworthy of belief because humans have grown out of Him and yearn for true freedom, which can only come from stepping away from God. The freedom of a more mature human race demands, and has already brought about, the Death of God. The *Tod Gottes*, as Hasso Hoffman writes, "signals the collapse of the 'beyond' and especially all other worlds, the end of the imagining of a beyond true world that has depreciated our merely apparent world."<sup>106</sup> Humanity is alone, and lonely, and looks with mixed feelings upon the old metaphysical terrain. Nietzsche felt this, and in *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* he explains the death of God in these terms: "For the smallest few, whose eyes hold a mistrust strong and fine enough for this drama, it appears as if a sun has gone down, something like an old, deep faith in doubt that is reversed: for them our old world must seem more outdated, mistrustful, strange, older."<sup>107</sup> Nietzsche's critique of Christianity contains a fatalistic viewpoint. The religion faces inexorable decline because, stuck in the past, it has drifted apart from a modern world that is progressing into the future without it. Christianity is dead.

In the same book, Nietzsche immediately connects the death of God to the end of "European morality."<sup>108</sup> Hasso points out that from the *Tod Gottes* onwards, all related morality for Nietzsche, 'European morality,' unravels.<sup>109</sup> In the cultural climate of late nineteenth-century Europe, Nietzsche demonstrates rather poetically this decline in his extremely disrespectful treatment of the sacred, a disrespect that in a genuinely religious society could never touch living sacred symbols. Zarathustra openly disrespects Jesus for acting on meaningless metaphysical beliefs: "Would that Jesus had stayed in the desert, far from the good and the righteous! Perhaps he would have learned how to live and how to love the world—and how to laugh about it!"<sup>110</sup> God, and therefore the symbols of Christianity that point to God, is the object of Nietzsche's condescension, because the divinity's reality is based on its usefulness to ever-changing human conditions. The German philosopher's inversion operates here: Rather than humanity serving God and doing good in God's name and for the grandeur of the divine, it

is God who serves humanity and does good in our name and for our grandeur. Nietzsche claims that at his point in history, Europe no longer needs this divinity. In fact, it needs to callously, impatiently, even savagely, dispense of God so society can freely move on to the next stage unencumbered by Christianity's enfeebling moral universe.

Portraying God as unworthy of belief represents a more serious refutation of Christianity than atheism itself. Underlying the *Tod Gottes* is the sense that an unworthy divinity and associated unworthy moral values call for vigorous rejection, because such beliefs threaten humans—or at least the greatest of humans—with a diminished existence. For Nietzsche, and in the name of progress, God's death signals the outbreak of a war with anyone who follows a divinity. In the Will to Power Nietzsche succinctly describes the progression: "Higher than 'thou shalt' is 'I will' (the heroes); higher than 'I will' stands: 'I am' (the gods of the Greeks)."<sup>111</sup> Modern humans, in the least, must now condescend to Christians in the same way that we must condescend to the Christian Lord. No longer an object of veneration, God and God's followers are subject to society's ridicule. They are (and themselves create) unnecessary burdens and obstacles for great people.

### **3) *The religion of the lie***

Nietzsche bases his atheism on his anthropology. As de Lubac notes, Nietzsche does not try to argue the case against God directly, but through challenging common psychological and spiritual assumptions about humans. For Nietzsche, the real debate is about humans, not about God; in a sense, God is a byline to the real debate. Any discussion about God is really a discussion about humans, since Nietzsche profoundly disbelieves in God, and sees no need to disprove God *per se*: "Nietzsche takes as a given that God can not live elsewhere than in the human conscience. But God is an undesirable guest: He is 'a thought that limits all that is right.' In order to get rid of it, it is less necessary to refute proofs for God's existence than to show how such an idea can form, how it succeeded in installing itself in the conscience and becoming influential there."<sup>112</sup> Nietzsche's assertion of Christianity's failure to acknowledge the basic truths about human nature, concerning our instincts above all, seeks to alter society's perception of the religion's fundamental character. It is not humans who are fatally flawed, as many Christian theologians have taught for centuries, but Christianity. Ecce homo offers a damning accusation against Christianity by flipping traditional morals with something moral theologians frequently considered "base": Human instincts now own the seat of judgment—most of all over Christianity—and condemn the religion and its teachers just as vehemently as those teachers apparently condemned human instincts.<sup>113</sup> Nietzsche universalizes this dysfunctional aspect beyond his own era of psychological growth, stating that Christianity was terrible from its beginning. It betrayed antiquity's schools of philosophy and tolerance for diversity, and is a lie.<sup>114</sup>

Following his deconstruction of Christian metaphysics, Nietzsche directs his readers to believe in more corporal and sensual things. The Christian denies life and its fundamental energies and

instincts, but such *Willensverneinung* is now ending: “Truly do not any longer believe in hidden worlds and saving drops of blood: it is best to believe in the body, and your own body is your Thing-in-itself.”<sup>115</sup> Nietzsche challenges people to throw off Christianity’s burdens (as well as those brought on by Kant’s metaphysical *Ding an sich*, or “thing in itself”, another favorite target of his) and no longer to fear its threatening dogma. Rather than having matured beyond its medieval violence and demagoguery as many apologists asserted at the time, nineteenth-century Christianity retained its core, life-denying values, but in its current weakened state could not act with its natural violence.<sup>116</sup> Theologians were lying yet again when they claimed to have permanently reformed their religion and when they judged previous religious violence as unnatural, un-Christian, or part of pre-modern spirituality.

Based on this belief about Christianity’s dishonesty, Nietzsche holds a cold, unromantic view of tradition and of those who follow it, blaming their faithfulness on their refusal to think responsibly and independently.<sup>117</sup> He castigates Martin Luther for ingraining the German soul with pessimism and devotion to Christianity despite the absurdity of the religion.<sup>118</sup> By slandering individuals or aspects of Christian tradition usually venerated, Nietzsche continues the Enlightenment tradition of demonstrating the possibility of a negative reaction or anti-theology to that tradition. Rather than defining tradition as a priceless, fragile treasure that we must guard with great care and responsibility (as John Paul repeatedly does), he demands that we throw off its overbearing, twisted power. The Enlightenment had confronted a fairly strong Christianity that enjoyed every place of honor in society. Nietzsche’s assaults on the religion, which was by his time moving to the outer edges of society, makes his opposition more powerful. He castigates a much-weakened Christianity. He demonstrates that a marginalized, disoriented Christianity has not diminished enough. Because of its basic lie, one should want the total annihilation of the faith, because even in a weakened or watered-down form it still poses serious problems for society and is unworthy of even a weak existence.

## 1.2 Nietzsche's Abusive Language

### 1) Cultural foundations

Nietzsche's abusive language issues partly from his attempt to start something new and to break with Western philosophy—or at least with Socratic and post-Socratic philosophy. De Lubac notes: “As for Nietzsche, did not he also, with his way of ‘philosophizing with a hammer,’ destroy all speculation in order to assure the triumph of life? Did he not also despise every ‘philosophy of the professors’?”<sup>119</sup> As one dimension of this sharp break with much of Western thought, Nietzsche attacks philosophy of being and metaphysics. De Lubac cites G. Thibon on Nietzsche: “An aggressive refusal for any law of being, for an extra-human being, for a coherent universe, for an ontological harmony anterior to ‘I want.’”<sup>120</sup> In other words, with Nietzsche we return to primal chaos, including philosophical, spiritual, and ethical chaos, because humans possess no ontology *per se*. Any place for ontology presupposes a place for some level of the truth or higher meaning to life and humans. In this

new, Nietzschean post-truth, post-ontology situation, tradition's place in culture remains, as during the Enlightenment, the object of ridicule. Nietzsche's disrespect for Christianity and his tendency to make it the butt of his jokes and sarcasm challenges reverence for religious symbols; it undermines the sense of ontology or the fact of an anterior being that religious people claim does exist. He links vulgarity rather than reverence to Christianity, and uses derisive, mocking imagery that sticks in people's minds, rather than adopting reason.

His method appeals to people's emotive, skeptical, and 'lower,' immature sides. Nietzsche's abusive language censures Christianity in large part by denigrating its cultural foundations within German and European society: "How did the German spirit transform Christianity!—And to stick to Protestantism: how much beer there is in Protestant Christianity! Can one even imagine a spiritually staler, lazier, more comfortably relaxed form of the Christian faith than that of the average Protestant in Germany?"<sup>121</sup> Christianity is as stale as beer, and as lazy and bloated, unreasonable and drunken, as German drinkers apparently are: Fat, stale, alcoholic, out of shape, and lacking in dynamism, imagination, and creativity. Christianity parallels a smelly, dark, unhealthy pub, with losers and social misfits, underachievers, and the depressed.

Nietzsche does not separate his cultural critique of Germany and Europe from his religious critique (he and John Paul agree on the importance of culture for a religious spirit to really thrive):

In the Reformation we possess a wild and vulgar counterpart to the Italian Renaissance, born of related impulses; only in the retarded north, which had remained coarse, they had to don a religious disguise; for there the concept of the higher life had not yet detached itself from that of the religious life.<sup>122</sup>

Contrary to some perceptions on Nietzsche, he does think systematically (or at least consistently), though he does not write systematically. His writings repeatedly relate human coarseness and the herd-instinct with Christianity. The faith is the great annihilator of human instincts which Nietzsche views as beyond any moral judgment and which helped build such a great culture as in pre-Socratic Greece. The "wild impulses" of the North were "retarded" by religion and thereby wasted on Protestantism rather than used to build a better society. Christianity, he writes with great consistency in several of his works, warps natural, healthy human instincts. "Retarded" implies that Christianity and its effects are unnatural and prevent humans from full maturation. Christians are not as intelligent or worthy of respect as the religion's detractors are.

## **2) A *dehumanizing religion***

Nietzsche's language challenges Christianity's claim that humans are flawed by original sin. He shows that people become this way only by following Christianity because of the erroneous nature of the religion. His belligerent language aims to lower the religion and exalt humans in their natural, instinctive, ideal-less state. It depicts Christianity as a religion that dehumanizes, perverts, abuses, and diminishes humanity. Christians live in a strange simplification (*Vereinfachung*) and falsehood of superstition, as herd animals (*Heerdenthier*); they place themselves at the level of herd

animals.<sup>123</sup> Christians as pessimists take pleasure in cruelty and horror, and live a humiliating morality of slavery, *Sklavenmoral*.

Humans should follow their instincts, but instead they follow Church- and society-dictated moral norms that deny human nature. Nietzsche denounces Christianity as anti-human because instincts, so forcefully denounced by it, give us identity, power, and spirit. Instincts possess the “truth.” He develops the idea of *ressentiment* to describe poetically the dehumanization through Christianity and other metaphysical systems, as in *Ecce homo*: “To be sick is one facet of resentment itself.--With this situation, the sick person has only a large healing balm—which I call Russian fatalism, that fatalism without revolt”; and again in the same book: “Ressentiment, born from the weak, reveals that no one is more harmful than the weak themselves.”<sup>124</sup>

*Ressentiment* is a sickness, whereby the lower, weaker classes of people use Christianity or some other dishonest and dysfunctional metaphysical system, to force themselves, unnaturally and against all human instincts, over the strong, who should, by their nature, rule over the weak. *Ressentiment* symbolizes the disordered instincts, the disordered human being, developed by Christianity. The term is a judgmental word that opposes, for instance, Christian mercy (*Mitleid*). *Ressentiment* uncovers the true meaning of *Mitleid*. Love and mercy are, for Nietzsche, lies, and *ressentiment* uncovers the truth. This latter word exemplifies Nietzsche’s ability to philosophize poetically through strong imagery. The imagery appeals to our intellect, but also to other aspects of our thought process.

By simplifying, Nietzsche is deepening and electrifying his stance against Christianity. The reader does not get lost in hard-to-follow arguments. *Ressentiment* sticks in the reader’s head; we associate the word with Christianity, and replace or challenge traditional word-associations related to Christianity. Nietzsche combats the mythology of Christianity with his own anti-Christian mythology. He fights the power of religion, in other words, with his own primal religious imagination, rather than through boring, systematic, overly-intellectual, and therefore anti-mythological thinking. He tries to go beyond regular thinking and back to the mytho-religio-poetic powers that start a religion in the first place. He knows that, since religion goes beyond regular thinking, the most effective and direct way to oppose religion is to address it at the same level.

### **3) *Attacking the Christian truth***

The truth falls off its lofty place of honor, and every one of its pillars is destabilized and dishonored so that everyone who adopts this critical point of view can see through the religion’s lies. First Nietzsche mocks Scripture by claiming, for instance, that the Bible “is perhaps the greatest audacity and ‘sin against the Spirit’ of which literary Europe is conscious.”<sup>125</sup> *Ecce homo* contains a tough psychoanalysis of a pillar of Christianity filled with sarcasm and irreverence: “Theologically speaking—please listen, as I seldom speak as a theologian—what God really is, is a snake at the end of his workweek lying under the tree of knowledge: he was recovering his God energies...He had

made everything too beautifully...The devil is merely the idleness of God at each seventh day.”<sup>126</sup> He uses Christian imagery to destroy Christian imagery. This deeply unsettles the comfortable piety of those brought up in the Church, since it offers a different dimension to their favorite symbols. Rather than simply explaining why those traditionally pious images are incorrect, he sets out to jolt the reader’s brain into changing the way it regards or views those images. He is, then, more a psychologist than a philosopher or critic of religion. He trains us, in a Pavlovian sense, to think differently about things deeply imbedded in our very psyches. His vilification goes beyond mere thinking and touches the metaphysical. It slanders the archetypes that frequently live on even when faced with censure from more reasoned argumentation.

Second, he criticizes the Christian hierarchy and episcopal line of succession. He identifies a meaningless concoction of *ressentiment*, arrogance, and lust for power in the Church where many feel its holiness and invulnerability pointing them towards that truth: “The virginity of the nun: with what punishing eyes she looks into the face of women who live differently!”; and again: “People were enraptured, among noble idleness, youth, mystics, artists, three-quarters Christian and political con-men from every nation.”<sup>127</sup> Nietzsche challenges the view that Christianity represents a path for living, where the faithful journey towards some great being or truth, guided by a generous, divinely-inspired hierarchy. He challenges the separation of the Perfect Society of the Church from the “World,” and insists that the Church, as part of the world, is as affected by the ways of the world; the Perfect Society is just as “dirty” or blemished. Nothing immaculate, either inside or outside of the Church, exists.

Third, he ridicules, with the force of a poet in the following citation, Christian doctrine in a manner that emphasizes Christianity’s superficiality and transitory nature: “In the end all of your passions will change to virtue and all of your devils to angels.”<sup>128</sup> Life or history will eventually show the journey and all its signposts as nothing but our imagination. The instincts, his larger teaching declares, are the true journey, the true signposts that people should use. This transitory nature of things means that real power and spirituality are located elsewhere:

I am by far the scariest human who has ever lived; this does not preclude that I am also the best-practicing person that ever was. I know the desire for destruction at every level, that my strength can match—in both I obey my Dionysian nature, that does not know how to separate life-affirmation from rejection of life. I am the first immoralist: With this achievement, I am the destroyer par excellence.<sup>129</sup>

These words offer us a new spiritual ideal for the West.

Christianity loses its uniqueness or unchanging, supra-historical voice of truth. Nietzsche relativizes truth, equating Christianity and the God it espouses with every other religion. The religion is human-made and therefore fallible, and by extension a just target of critique and ridicule when it is no longer needed or when it undermines human existence.<sup>130</sup> Its followers are no longer holy and true, but rather fearful and superstitious. They fail to see their folly, as he writes in *Morgenröte*: “It is the fear before a higher intellect, that orders it, before an incomprehensible and indeterminate power, before something more than a personality—it is the superstition in this fear.”<sup>131</sup> Rather than a unique

revelation, Christianity parallels other, equally hollow human religions, making reform futile or meaningless. He writes in Ecce homo: “The truth of the first treatise is the psychology of Christendom: The birth of Christendom out of the spirit of resentment, not as previously believed, out of the ‘Spirit’--a counter-movement from its nature, the great rebellion against the reign of noble values.”<sup>132</sup> Nietzsche rewrites the meaning of history and Christianity’s place in that history. He imagines (rather than explains) a new way of viewing history, just as , with the above citation relating to Dionysian energy, he imagines a new human being, personified in himself.

### 1.3 Nietzsche's Philosophical Method

#### 1) *Philosophy and power*

As mentioned, Nietzsche desires to break violently with Western thought, and this deeply affects his methodology, as he rejects the very idea of methodology, so central as it has been to Western thinkers. For de Lubac, especially with Zarathustra, “Invention, creation are thus the two words henceforth from Nietzsche that define the task of true philosophy...The philosopher is ‘a terrible explosion who endangers everything’; he is a violent man, a tsarist creator of culture; ‘his will to truth is will to power.’”<sup>133</sup> Nietzsche envisions the philosopher as revolutionary and warrior, someone who undermines cultural stability and brings about something new, but not without pain, suffering, and violence.

Nietzsche accuses Christianity and Western philosophy (including Western ethics) of committing parallel errors and lies. The following, from Der Antichrist, though specifically addressing Christianity, can also apply to his thoughts on philosophy:

Neither morals nor religion is touched from Christianity with a point of truth. Louder imaginary primal things (‘God,’ ‘I,’ ‘spirit,’ ‘the free will,’--or else ‘the unfree’); louder imagined forces (‘sin,’ ‘redemption,’ ‘mercy,’ ‘punishment,’ forgiveness of ‘sins’). A merging between imaginary natures (‘God,’ ‘spirits,’ ‘souls’); an imaginary natural science (human-centered: fully lacking in concepts from natural primal things); an imaginary psychology...a imaginary teleology (‘the kingdom of God,’ ‘the most recent testimony,’ ‘eternal life’).<sup>134</sup>

With this strong link in his thought between philosophy and religion, his analysis of the former undermines Christianity’s place in Europe’s culture, especially since, as the following citation shows in comparison with the preceding one, Nietzsche uses the same language to discuss both Christianity and Western philosophy. In Die fröhliche Wissenschaft he writes that “all philosophical idealism was until now something like sickness”; and again in Ecce homo: “Socrates as an instrument of Greek disorganization, as typical decadent known for the first time. ‘Rationality’ against instinct. Rationality at any cost became then dangerous, and a life-sapping power!”<sup>135</sup> Nietzsche writes with remarkable clarity and simplicity in Die fröhliche Wissenschaft as to the basis of his opposition to any “truth,” Christian or otherwise:

We have no organ for revelation, for the ‘truth’: we ‘know’ (or believe or imagine) so much only out of the interest and usefulness of the herd-human, the species: and what is itself



known as ‘usefulness’ is finally only a belief, an imaginary thing and perhaps the most fatal stupidity, that underlies us.<sup>136</sup>

Nietzsche regards philosophy as the handmaiden of power, rather than of truth, goodness, meaning, or metaphysics. A commentator nicely summarizes his philosophical outlook:

For Nietzsche philosophy is not a search for the truth; there are for him no truths, but only interpretations, and each system is nothing but the experiment of its founder, the reality only of his/her own interests, the attempt to bring the world to their side. The real question is whether one should enter this side of things.<sup>137</sup>

A philosophy is relevant and useful when it is the handmaiden of power (rather than the handmaiden of theology--*ancillia theologiae*--as ancient and medieval theologians had termed it). Nietzsche identifies great, almost unlimited, power in humans. He claims that we have, after all, invented values and even gods and Christianity.<sup>138</sup> However, he believes, Christianity discourages its faithful from following their instincts-led, power-oriented destinies as individuals. The religion has gravely erred in doing so: Because the world is a world of becoming and not of being (or, rather, as Heidegger emphasizes, being *is* becoming for Nietzsche), we cannot legitimately impose on the world eternal values or a true, higher existence.

Nietzsche does admire our tendency to impose meaning or order, but only because of the power this demands: “To impose upon becoming the character of being--that is the supreme will to power.”<sup>139</sup> Despite our great capacity for such an imposition--despite two millenia of Christianity and its values imposed on European culture--we cannot escape our instincts; these inevitably define and shape us: “The animal functions are, as a matter of principle, a million times more important than all our beautiful moods and heights of consciousness: the latter are a surplus; and what one used to call ‘body’ and ‘flesh’ is of such unspeakably greater importance: the remainder is a small accessory.”<sup>140</sup> This thought seems to equate power not with spiritual power (and of course not with the power of love) but with an animal-like power based on the instinctive drive to live, grow, and exercise influence over others.

## 2) *Disorientation*

As mentioned, Nietzsche’s philosophy no longer searches for a truth, metaphysical or otherwise. “The moral person does not place the intelligible world closer than the physical, because there is no intelligible world.”<sup>141</sup> Nietzsche accuses philosophy of having taken a wrong direction in many areas of inquiry, partly because, as the above quote suggests, Christians have erred in placing ethical or metaphysical values ahead of physical ones. He centers the modern, post-Enlightenment philosopher’s vocation on disorienting and even abusing Western culture and religious organizations, practices, and beliefs when these elements prevent humans from following their instincts: “I am by no means a bogey-man, nor a moral-monster—I am even a contrast-nature to human style, that one until now revered as virtue.”<sup>142</sup> He leaves a strong warning in *Ecce homo* about the spirit or approach of his philosophy, and how his readers should relate to his ideas: “No new gods will be established by me.”<sup>143</sup> Nietzsche’s “religion” or spirituality parallels Auguste Comte’s in focusing only on humanity.

Nietzsche questions philosophers in the same spirit that he questions the transcendental values and ideals of Christianity, because philosophers tend not to stop with humanity, but go beyond to higher causes and God. Echoing his charge against Christian metaphysics, Nietzsche derides what he considers harmful speculation about, for instance, Kant's *Wesender Dinge*.<sup>144</sup> "Another word against Kant as moralist...a virtue that merely rises out of a feeling of respect before the concept 'virtue,' as how Kant wanted it, is harmful. 'Virtue,' 'duty,' the 'good in itself,' the good with an impersonal and universal character—a pipedream, in which the descent, the last enfeeblement of life, is expressed by the subjects of Christendom."<sup>145</sup> In other words, no eternal truths exist; only the needs of the individual are real.

The German philosopher questions Western philosophy's metaphysical speculation, with its roots in ancient Greece, and by doing so undermines philosophy's utility for theologians as *ancillia theologiae*. "A person, like Socrates, who more cheerfully and before all eyes lived like a soldier—was a pessimist!"...Oh friends! We must also overcome the Greeks!"<sup>146</sup> The philosophy for which he calls cannot help theologians use reason and ethics as part of their proclamation of a gospel that speaks of eternal values and a transcendent, personal God. The Church as a supernatural organization seems folly to anyone trained in this sort of truth-and metaphysics-starved philosophy. De Lubac writes that, favoring Apollo's organizing the chaotic and Dionysus' ecstatic, inspiring creativity, Nietzsche hated Socrates' rationalism and accused him of lacking mysticism; for Nietzsche, "The battle between Dionysus and Socrates has not finished. The Greek's tragic way of thinking will explode again."<sup>147</sup> Underlying Nietzsche's attempted destruction of Western philosophy is the conviction that all is not lost, and that he can recreate or help recreate the original soundness of pre-Socratic philosophy. Nietzsche designs to erase over three-thousand years of Western philosophy and theology, and to re-establish the creativity and power-oriented impulses of Apollo and Dionysus.

Nietzsche undermines the concept of truth with particular vigor and from many sides. He writes that "knowledge works as a tool of power."<sup>148</sup> Given his lack of respect for religious or philosophical authority, this particular idea invites moral, philosophical, and religious relativism. It questions every aspect of the Western religious and philosophical tradition, since nothing is really of value except, Nietzsche declares, the will to power and, by extension, the need for scornful, prejudiced critique when society and its religious values are decadent (and he believes that they are decadent when they are about anything other than power). Power and critique are the only absolutes, and everything must fall before them. While we cannot know facts of truth, using the will to power and a strong skeptical stance, we can hold valuable interpretations of the world.<sup>149</sup>

## Conclusion

Nietzsche opposes Christianity to great effect. He never creates a systematic philosophy, as he distrusts such thinking. This lack of systematization makes it difficult to engage his arguments, which themselves are quite consistent. He undermines specific, yet important elements of Christian teaching.

He avoids confining his examination to sweeping generalizations that we can reject with counter examples.<sup>150</sup> Yet his philosophy contains something more important: De Lubac sees the spiritual issues behind Nietzsche's new human who is set free from Socrates and Christians: "The new temptation is more subtle, and without doubt more pernicious. It promises not only order, but drunkenness as well, and its insinuations are not even questions of deceit: the very idea of truth disappears, replaced by the notion of myth."<sup>151</sup> By destabilizing "Christian dichotomies of good and evil, heaven and hell, the saved and the damned,"<sup>152</sup> Nietzsche promotes a relativistic, disrespectful, and critical attitude, and one with a gigantic, troublesome, and even uncontrollable ego. A critical attitude does not necessarily attack tradition or undermine Catholic teachings, but Nietzsche's criticism also contains mockery and prejudice, and it holds Christianity responsible for the cultural wasteland, the *décadence*, that he saw everywhere in Europe. Nietzsche calls for a new human, as in Die fröhliche Wissenschaft: "To the sea!--one ponders how for each individual a philosophical overall justification of their art of living and thinking works;" and again: "Oh, that so many new suns have still not been created! Even the evil, the unlucky, the exceptional person should have their own philosophy, positive right, and sunshine!"<sup>153</sup> With these words, and with his entire philosophy, Nietzsche encourages a continual opening-up and struggle against any limitation, most of all against religious and philosophical traditions. In Ecce homo he sums up his own spiritual basis for his attitude: "My humanness is a constant self-overcoming."<sup>154</sup>

## Chapter 2

### John Paul II's Anthropology I

A civilization, Pope John Paul II believes, must center itself on one sacred truth. His anthropology asserts the dignity of the person based on the truth that the person is an image of God. The pontiff's teachings on the human individual do not always seem original when read in light of Friedrich Nietzsche's vision of the human individual. Henri de Lubac notes the circular trajectory of Christian theology: Concerning "God made humans in the divine image and likeness," "The Christian tradition has never ceased, since its inception, commenting on these words. It has recognized in them our first nobility, the foundation of our greatness."<sup>155</sup> Rather than creating something new in response to the philosopher, the pope emphasizes continuity with Catholic tradition because the same unchanging truth exists as it did before. He uses, for instance, neoscholasticism and natural law methodology in conjunction with Vatican II's emphasis on concrete historical givens (historicism), and personalism's emphasis on the individual's importance. Pope Leo XIII's *Rerum novarum* (1891), which asserts timeless, top-down deductive truths of natural law about humans everywhere and for all time, exemplifies traditional papal neoscholastic teaching.<sup>156</sup> Natural law, as taught by the Catholic Church, asserts that the biological order follows certain universal principles or laws as defined by the Creator, which humans can discern even without the gospel and which are applicable to all.<sup>157</sup> In his basic teaching about the human individual, John Paul uses personalism, a historical perspective, and neoscholasticism and natural law in a holistic rather than contradictory way.<sup>158</sup>

Certain issues arise from reading John Paul within a Nietzschean environment, and demonstrate the pope's boldness in claiming the truth: 1) Both writers assert the primacy of humans as a basic idea, but use it in radically differing ways. The pontiff's adoption of the term "dignity" presents an alternative to Nietzsche's call to shocking, even violent individualism, non-conformity, and self-assertion over tradition, society, and people. 2) John Paul's gospel-inspired critique of modern notions of liberty strongly opposes Nietzsche's views. The pope grounds liberty in right relationship with God rather than in moral or will-to-power license. 3) Metaphysics, Christian morals, spirituality, and earthly realism link both thinkers, though John Paul stamps his discussion with the divine image offered by Christianity. 4) The pontiff's antidote to the spiritual malaise that he addresses does not first and foremost critique post-Cartesian or post-nineteenth-century philosophy, but takes its most important form in expressing hope and rebirth through, for instance, prayer and the real or deeper meaning of the commandments, which find their fulfillment in Jesus. In other words, he tends in his writings towards positive solutions rather than towards exhaustive analysis of negatives.

#### 2.1 Nietzsche's Anti-Christian Anthropology

##### *1) Christian morals*

Henri de Lubac notes a subtlety in Nietzsche's philosophy that makes it more difficult to address the German's atheism: "He [Nietzsche] does not combat faith in God. But what he does

combat, what he says we must never stop combating in Christianity, is its ideal of humans.”<sup>159</sup>; and again: “What he combats is confidence, honesty, simplicity, patience, love of neighbor, acceptance, submission to God.”<sup>160</sup> As we will see, de Lubac correctly observes that the German opposes Christianity's anthropology; Nietzsche does not waste words on defaming or attacking belief in God. He attacks Christianity's belief in humans and their virtuous living.

The here-and-now world of sensations, bodily needs, and nature, including the petty things of nature, supersedes the worlds and ideals created in our heads, the place where Nietzsche locates the origins of Christian revelation and the subsequent development of Christian doctrine. Paralleling Schopenhauer, he views these intellectual worlds to be as real as we imagine them to be; we can end them instantly. He calls for a “natural human” and an earthly view of life, where the force of nature supersedes traditional morality: “These petty things—nutrition, location, climate, recuperation, the entire logic of self-fulfillment—are much more important concepts than this Almighty, that until now has been taken as central. Now we must begin to unlearn that.”<sup>161</sup> As in some other writings of his, this remarkable simplicity cuts through layers or potential layers of argumentation. This poetic immediacy handicaps the theologian's seemingly timeless, carefully-layered reason- and dogma-based analysis by celebrating the instinct- and nature-oriented spirituality of the human in the here-and-now, reducing humans down to instinctive energy. The patient, step-by-step, carefully-nuanced neoscholastic assertion of natural law or timeless truths can hardly speak to such a practical, impatient, clear-cut world-view.

Yet Nietzsche goes much farther in his attack on faith than simply an indirect, Rousseau-like celebration of nature-man. Nietzsche bases his anthropology largely on a rejection of Christian morals (and Kant's Categorical Imperative, which Kant asserted as a moral natural law relevant to all humans everywhere). Nietzsche's morality, exalting instinct-man in all his wild moral savagery, becomes anti-morality when viewed from Christianity's perspective. Suffering, service and sacrifice for others, humility, and forgiveness deny humans their full potential. Only those who have liberated themselves from Christian tradition can really live free and ethical lives.<sup>162</sup> Nietzsche's condemnation of an *Ausflucht* (escaping flight) into a metaphysical world, Christian or otherwise, enables him to turn solely to sensory existence and this life.<sup>163</sup> Fully-realized humans pursue a *Willen Zur Macht* (will to power), “the principle of the eternally new, self-creating lives”<sup>164</sup> by choosing earthly, sensory instincts over a supernatural, metaphysical good or being. “Eternally new” (*ewig neu*) implies for Nietzsche a rejection of both the treasures of Catholic tradition and a sense of the permanence of truth. “Eternally new” implies that life is constantly renewing itself and fighting to free itself of a tradition or religious-based ideal. Life casts off the ideal, and energizes and approves itself, seeking no higher blessing or guidance.

Nietzsche calls us to “maturity” by our rejection of the fear of gods and their wrath that he believes still imprison us. In calling humans to break free of morals and tradition, he does not differentiate between fear of wild animals or gods: “The first result of our recent humanity is that we

no longer need to have a constant fear of wild beasts, of barbarians, of gods, of our dreams.”<sup>165</sup> As civilized people no longer totally burdened by nature's power, we no longer need fear nightly bear attacks. Neither need we fear any divine power or ethics, since we have likewise advanced beyond that level of existence. He bases this anti-Christian spirituality on the expression of human power, and a rejection of love and divine grace. He calls for a radically changed perception of humans and of religion. Time is meaningless, empty of the linear and teleologically-significant meaning of the Bible and Jesus' teaching of the eschaton.

## 2) *Power*

Nietzsche calls for radical egoism, and a kind of self-improvement that maximizes the individual's instincts and will. In Ecce homo he sees fit to cite his words from Götzen-Dämmerung that emphasize an affirmation (*Das Ja-sagen*) and maximization of this life: “The affirmation of life itself even in its strangest and most difficult problems; the will to life in the work of the highest type of its own luck-inducing inexhaustability—I name this Dionysian and understand it as a bridge to the psychology of the tragic poets”; and again: “But to be the eternal desire for becoming, this desire implies self-annihilation.”<sup>166</sup> The eternal desire for Becoming is not a happy or pleasure-seeking energy, but demands sacrifice and suffering. Power is the end result of life, and the search for anything else is simply decadence. In this way, Nietzsche calls for a psychology that competes directly with Christianity and possesses its own metaphysics and morals. He believes that fullness of life issues from the taking of power for oneself, and so we cannot avoid direct competition. Self-realization, self-aggrandizement, and self-determination define the kind of human he envisions.

Nietzsche defines humans in power-oriented terms where our actions hold value only when they empower the actor and affirm his life, even at the expense of other lives or whole societies. Love and solidarity are not issues because for Nietzsche they do not empower and affirm greater life. Humans do not share any transcending, uniting characteristic. Nietzsche rejects Auguste's Comte's *Humanité* because Comte's anthropology, also godless, first, possesses in itself a kind of divinity and second, rejects a master-slave mentality since all people participate in this divine aspect. Though Nietzsche's humanity has no divinity, special individuals do possess god-like powers. Given this radical individualism, Nietzsche finds dignity in select, empowered humans. His notes from 1888 and published in The Will to Power outline "*The typical forms of self-formation. Or: the eight principle questions:*"

1. Whether one wants to be more multifarious or simpler?
2. Whether one wants to become happier or more indifferent to happiness and unhappiness?
3. Whether one wants to become more contented with oneself or more exacting and inexorable?
4. Whether one wants to become softer, more yielding, more human, or more 'inhuman'?
5. Whether one wants to become more prudent or more ruthless?
6. Whether one wants to reach a goal or to avoid all goals (as, e.g., the philosopher does who smells a boundary, a nook, a prison, a stupidity in every goal)?

7. Whether one wants to become more respected or more feared? Or more despised?
8. Whether one wants to become tyrant or seducer or shepherd or herd animal?<sup>167</sup>

This “Nietzschean manifesto” of human development lacks traditional moral or metaphysical values or prescriptions, as well as references to a higher power, divinity, or even human community. Nietzsche radically isolates individuals and their self-importance, power, and potential for mastery beyond the personal sphere. Nietzsche ties all instincts or human nature under one movement, that of the will to power. Human freedom expresses itself most fully in this power-paradigm. He writes elsewhere that each instinct fights with the others for supremacy.

Nietzsche considers humans at the level of actions and power-oriented feelings. Contentment and happiness, and even their opposites, hold no values for the hardened human Nietzsche envisions, and community-oriented virtues are therefore also disallowed. Questions 4, 5, and 7 seem to call for a warlike, power-hungry man (Nietzsche cared little for a Superwoman). Question 6 does seem to hint, once again, at an instinct- or instincts-based life. Humans hold out no other values, either socially-based or coming from within, but live a non-reflective existence at an animal-like, instinctive level. This lifts some of us to a higher level than “normal” humans. Question 8 implies reflection in this process, though leaves undefined whether this thinking obeys any instincts-based criteria or values. By leaving such ideas undefined Nietzsche avoids creating a new value or moral system. Nowhere, however, does he imply in these eight questions any moral valuations higher or holier than these basic human instincts. Nietzsche defines us according to power alone.

### 3) *Human nature*

From 1887-88, and as published in The Will to Power under the title "*The means by which a stronger species maintains itself*," Nietzsche adds to his list of personal development discussed above. This addendum includes:

To grant oneself the right to exceptional actions, as an experiment in self-overcoming and freedom. To venture into states in which it is not permitted *not* to be a barbarian ... To learn obedience in such a way that it provides a test of one's self-support. Casuistry of honor taken to the greatest extreme of subtlety. Never to conclude ‘what is right for one is fair for another’ --but conversely! .... To have no ambition to emulate the virtues of others.<sup>168</sup>

Once again, Nietzsche fails to define important elements such as concerning “exceptional actions,” “freedom,” “honor,” or “the virtues of others.” He thereby avoids setting up another moral goal for one to attain, and focuses on right attitude. He invites his reader to be a law unto oneself, to not hold oneself accountable to anyone or anything, to seek out universal actions and states as a barbarian, that is, without respect of any external law, custom, or tradition. When we acquiesce, we should do so for anti-Christian and anti-moral reasons and spirit--to obey as a way not to construct community and fellowship, or to build up our own moral practices, but to increase our selfish powers that we can then use to attack, among other things, the person, authority, or moral law previously obeyed. Nietzsche mocks the Christian virtues by calling for his reader to adhere to them only as a means to empowerment.

Nietzsche does challenge Jesus' teaching to turn the other cheek by inviting the reader to draw new, post-Christian definitions for fairness and justice. He does not always undermine Christianity directly. He attacks the Church and its teaching by setting up an alternative moral vision for people to follow. He calls for a creative, undoubtedly anti-Christian human nature.

Even John Paul, who so passionately loved humans, cannot easily counter Nietzsche because the latter did not philosophize from an ivory tower or in the abstract. Nietzsche deeply understood, among other things, the messy, dark, and difficult sides of life, and found inspiration from this earthly realism. Such thinking can seem full of compassion or at least understanding for humans, and thereby deeply connect with readers. It acknowledges life's terrors, though the following words do seem particularly hard-hearted:

*Type of my disciples.-- To those human beings who are of any concern to me I wish suffering, desolation, sickness, ill-treatment, indignities--I wish that they should not remain unfamiliar with profound self-contempt, the torture of self-mistrust, the wretchedness of the vanquished: I have no pity for them, because I wish them the only thing that can prove today whether one is worth anything or not--that one endures.*<sup>169</sup>

## 2.2 Divine Revelation

### 1) *Humans and revelation*

The pontiff's adoption of the term "dignity" presents an alternative to Nietzsche's call to shocking, even violent individualism, non-conformity, and self-assertion over tradition, society, and people. How does John Paul envision Christian anthropology for contemporary secular society?

First, despite the emphasis on spiritual realities and human dignity, John Paul often mutes his idealism when reflecting on humans, and instead identifies twisted, tragic-heroic qualities of each individual, referring in *Redemptor hominis* (14) to each person's "continual inclination to sin and at the same time in his continual aspiration to truth, the good, the beautiful, justice and love." The pontiff's psychological-spiritual realism determines a caring, thoughtful, and positive outlook towards humans rather than critical assessment or condemnation.

Second, he takes a holistic view. Every aspect of human nature falls under John Paul's reconstruction of the truth and metaphysics. He finds deeper, spiritual meaning to concepts that Nietzsche discussed. For instance, the pope claims that the Catholic Church asks questions that challenge the secular notion of freedom: "No one can escape from the fundamental questions: *What must I do? How do I distinguish good from evil?* The answer is only possible thanks to the splendour of the truth which shines forth deep within the human spirit, as the Psalmist bears witness: 'There are many who say: 'O that we might see some good! Let the light of your face shine on us, O Lord' ' (*Ps* 4:6)." (*VS* 2) With this Christian meaning, freedom addresses more than the instincts-oriented, individualistic, materialistic needs that Nietzsche emphasizes. John Paul teaches that prayer and a nurturing Catholic tradition and culture transform people, rather than *liberation* from such prayer, tradition, and culture, because Catholic spirituality attends to deeper aspects of humans.



Third, John Paul counters Nietzsche by resuscitating elements of Christianity that secularists have attacked, including Scripture. Nietzsche rejects Christianity as overbearing, legalistic, and condemning whereas, as just one example of his use and celebration of the Christian tradition and its Bible, the pontiff praises the commandments for liberating their followers. Instead of a minimal threshold over which God forbids us to step, they invite us to a deeper, richer moral and spiritual perfection inspired primarily by love. John Paul writes in *Veritatis splendor* (6-9) that Jesus' challenge to the rich young man reminds us of the necessary preconditions to spiritual growth: "The question which the rich young man puts to Jesus of Nazareth ["Teacher, what good must I do to have eternal life?"] (Mt 19:16) is one which rises from the depths of his heart. It is *an essential and unavoidable question for the life of every man*, for it is about the moral good which must be done, and about eternal life." (8) Even though the young man had observed all the commandments, he still failed by his own force to take the next step. This discussion of the rich young man connects this biblical passage to our own present-day lives, something John Paul does often.

Fourth, the pontiff does not compete with liberals and feminists in constantly creating theories or ritual that can replace tradition. He uses Paul's Letter to the Romans to apply an unoriginal, neoscholastic salvation economy to human freedom, something that he roots in the very nature of theology:

We find ourselves faced with the original reality of sin in human history and at the same time in the whole of the economy of salvation. It can be said that in this sin the 'mysterium iniquitatis' has its beginning, but it can also be said that this is the sin concerning which the redemptive power of the 'mysterium pietatis' becomes particularly clear and efficacious. This is expressed by St. Paul, when he contrasts the 'disobedience' of the first Adam with the 'obedience' of Christ, the second Adam: 'Obedience unto death.' (DV 33)

The age-old spiritual formula still applies because its truth runs deeper than current philosophy or religious trends which are often inspired by Nietzsche.

## **2) Time and Timelessness**

The pontiff places each person in relation to redemption in his attempts at humanizing and individualizing the faith, something that runs counter to Nietzsche's view of Christianity as an imposition on human nature rather than a fulfillment of it. He complements his vision of the eternal, neoscholastic-based natural law ideas of humans with his personalist concern for the practical and the individual. His personalism emphasizes the importance and value of divine revelation to the individual. He makes the truth concrete by locating it in a voice in the heart of each person:

Accordingly, what is in question here is man in all his truth, in his full magnitude. We are not dealing with the 'abstract' man, but the real, 'concrete', 'historical' man. We are dealing with 'each' man, for each one is included in the mystery of the Redemption and with each one Christ has united himself for ever through this mystery. (RH 13)

Addressing anthropological issues in his encyclical on God the Son, he asserts that every transcendent concept about God, or about humans as creatures of this God, holds concrete meaning and application for people.

The truth has application in this life. The pope's discussions on humans orient the reader towards this world rather than towards abstract speculation, eternal essences, or pseudo-mystical realities. Rather than terrifying us with visions of purgatory or even hell, his writings affirm life (in a somewhat unsettling or unexpected parallel with Nietzsche, since they both seek the maximization of life in the here and now) and attempt to empower humans. Contrary to popular and feminist understandings of the pontiff, his traditional language strongly affirms the human body:

The Sistine Chapel is precisely - if one may say so - the sanctuary of the theology of the human body. In witnessing to the beauty of man created by God as male and female, it also expresses in a certain way, the hope of a world transfigured, the world inaugurated by the Risen Christ, and even before by Christ on Mount Tabor. (Homily, April 8, 1994 (6))

He uses a physical part of the Christian tradition, the Sistine Chapel, to make a point about the tradition's teaching concerning another physical part, the body. The pope connects two aspects of physicality to reaffirm tradition.

Using circular logic, he defines humans through his belief in God, writing that as creatures we need and want revelation for our concrete, temporal existence: "But God himself meets the needs of man who nurtures in his heart an ardent desire to be able to see him." (Homily, April 8, 1994 (3)) He historically situates this timeless truth by celebrating on this day, April 8, 1994, the Russian religious artist Andrei Rublev, as well as Michelangelo, Perugino, Botticelli, Ghirlandaio, Pinturicchio and others: "The soul's gratitude to the invisible God who grants man the power to represent him in a visible way was expressed through their work." (Homily, April 8, 1994 (3)) Art, like every aspect of human endeavor, relates mysteriously to Christ's redemption, and the Church can judge artistic works by the eternal parameters it has set up. Through art the eternal meets the historical.

He remedies contemporary political, intellectual, and moral problems by focusing theology on the heart and, not limiting it there either, on the *practice* of belief. As a contrast to ideology-based violence as on September 11, 2001, John Paul writes in Rosarium virginis mariae (2002) that "One cannot recite the Rosary without feeling caught up in a clear commitment to advancing peace, especially in the land of Jesus, still so sorely afflicted and so close to the heart of every Christian." (6) Moral and philosophical relativism fail in their promise to liberate, fulfill, and spread joy because they leave us without a center. We drift without a natural law and a reliable, timeless method such as neoscholastic theology combined with, for example, a concrete, rosary-centered prayer life. The secular, modern path, and not Christianity, disorients people. The practice of the immutable truth, and the divine grace that it offers, provides the only possibility for freedom and fulfillment.

Humans are creatures of the truth, but of a concrete and tangible truth, against which many current intellectual trends are, the pope believes, incompetent, petty, and dangerous. The truth alone frees and opens us to the Lord. "Called to salvation through faith in Jesus Christ, 'the true light that

enlightens everyone' (*Jn* 1:9), people become 'light in the Lord' and 'children of light' (*Eph* 5:8), and are made holy by 'obedience to the truth' (1 *Pet* 1:22).” (VS, 1) In contrast to this focal point, he adapts another pivot of timeless Christian truth, original sin, for discussing sin and evil. The Fall’s mysterious energy tempts us to turn towards idols, including the harmful, intellectual gods of modernity, such as relativism, scepticism, and a pseudo-freedom independent of truth: “Thus, giving himself over to relativism and scepticism (cf. *Jn* 18:38), he (the modern human) goes off in search of an illusory freedom apart from truth itself.” (VS 1)<sup>170</sup>

### 3) *Humans and God*

The pope grounds liberty in right relationship with God rather than in moral or will to power-oriented license. John Paul's emphasis on mystery plays a central role in his anthropology, above all in this relationship with God. John Paul's attitude towards prayer challenges Nietzsche's person-centered anthropology, from the eternal and spiritual. As a spiritual force it challenges Nietzsche and contemporary society’s emphasis on the historical individual by invoking eternal truths for all humans.

John Paul claims that humans and God enjoy mutual intimacy at a level that humans cannot always understand. Rather than proving this statement outside of Biblical verses, he offers us a moral interpretation to inspire and guide our actions. Moving from metaphysics into the concrete, he warns that this intimacy carries responsibility: Through the prophets, as exemplified in the Ten Commandments, God calls us to do divine work.

In the 'ten words' of the Covenant with Israel, and in the whole Law, God makes himself known and acknowledged as the One who 'alone is good'; the One who despite man's sin remains the 'model' for moral action, in accordance with his command, 'You shall be holy; for I the Lord your God am holy' (*Lev* 19:2); as the One who, faithful to his love for man, gives him his Law (cf. *Ex* 19:9-24 and 20:18-21) in order to restore man's original and peaceful harmony with the Creator and with all creation, and, what is more, to draw him into his divine love. (VS, 10)<sup>171</sup>

John Paul leaves many loose ends in this encyclical and in many other writings, from a (post)modern, polemical, critical standpoint, and moves on to related issues and the moral impact of this teaching.

John Paul connects mystery with anthropology because of his close link between human and divine nature. Divine revelation offers us much greater dignity and responsibility than Nietzsche’s *Übermensch*. Revelation accords a meaning to our lives that stretches beyond human capacity and our imagination. Nietzsche’s Zarathustra promises power and potential for humans. By claiming that revelation ennobles humans, John Paul’s anthropology does not fit into Nietzsche’s image of Christianity as dehumanizing, inviting the reader to question not only these attacks on the faith but also the *Übermensch*’s vision of liberty. John Paul does not negate modern philosophy’s claim to the centrality or significance of humans, but challenges the roots or direction of that belief. While indeed central, humans must live within the boundaries of the truth.

John Paul never resolves the tension between the individual and society, where neither one seems to dominate over the other in his view. For instance, prayer works simultaneously at the

individual and societal levels, with the family as an intermediate: “The revival of the Rosary in Christian families, within the context of a broader pastoral ministry to the family, will be an effective aid to countering the devastating effects of this crisis typical of our age” (Rosarium virginis mariae 6), a crisis that the pontiff points out in many writings as occurring at both individual and society-wide levels. Prayer at these various levels can remedy what reason, political slogans, or ideologies cannot. His theology here avoids what many consider the Vatican II model of starting with discernment from the community, developed in the post-Vatican II period by liberation theologians and feminist Catholics, but one of prescription: He hands from on-high a timeless, duty-oriented solution, independent of the historical situation of a given community. John Paul does not try to create a new theological method or to develop further Vatican II's method when he confronts Nietzschean thought.

The pontiff again combines the eternal with the historical person. He invokes spiritual rather than intellectual-critical weapons. He challenges Nietzsche by proclaiming that divine revelation, as the center of Western spirituality, remakes humans in the original work of redemption and in the ongoing process of God's work in humans, who require divine grace in every historical period. The need for divine grace inspires John Paul to push humans and their history out from the center of human existence and, as a traditional Catholic neoscholastic theologian, to replace that center with the mystery of God. For instance he avoids a psychological definition of prayer, instead calling it the core of one's relationship with God, and identifying its origins with the Holy Spirit rather than with the individual: “The breath of the divine life, the Holy Spirit, in its simplest and most common manner, expresses itself and makes itself felt in prayer.” (DV 65)<sup>172</sup>

Mystery inheres to humans just as much as to God, because just as the pope cannot write about God without writing about humans, so he cannot write about humans without writing about God. The Creator, he reminds us in Veritatis splendor (10), made humans in the divine image, which he examines at the moral level: “The Church, instructed by the Teacher's words, believes that man, made in the image of the Creator, redeemed by the Blood of Christ and made holy by the presence of the Holy Spirit, has as the *ultimate purpose of his life to live 'for the praise of God's glory'* (cf. *Eph* 1:12), striving to make each of his actions reflect the splendour of that glory.”

Redemption rather than secular, critical analysis offers a clear anthropology. Redemption mysteriously remakes humans and offers us a proper understanding of our true identity: “[T]he Redemption that took place through the Cross has definitively restored his dignity to man and given back meaning to his life in the world, a meaning that was lost to a considerable extent because of sin.” (RH 10) Christ offers us a true understanding of our transcendent value, and the transcendent value of existence itself. (RH 11) We cannot avoid this new sense if we realize, with John Paul, that Christ through the incarnation, has “in a certain way *united himself with each man*” (RH 13 citing Gaudium et spes)

What does John Paul accomplish by avoiding a deeper, critical analysis of such ideas? He emphasizes the place of the Church in promoting this union, rather than investigating this relationship

with Christ further. He cultivates mystery by leaving logical gaps in his teaching. The pontiff offers a specific picture of our relationship with God with a narrow view of the truth of existence, humanity, and truth's operations. Although it would go too far to suggest that he is anti-intellectual, he does often rely on imagery rather than critical analysis, and centers his discussion of humans and God on the sonship of humans to God the Father. In Dives et misericordia he turns to Jesus' parable of the Prodigal Son, highlighting faithful love and faithful fatherhood, and the father's mercy for the son. Thus far in this viewpoint, John Paul the neoscholastic does little to challenge Nietzsche's understanding of Christianity as dogmatic and zealous. The pontiff challenges modern thinkers not by relativizing concepts or liberalizing his thought. He does not acquiesce to (post-)modern thinking or to Nietzsche's attacks on the religion. He does not write as one who fears his critics and detractors. Rather, he opens his reader to different dimensions of an issue, inviting us to see the limitations of Christianity's critics. Aided by neoscholasticism, he thinks vertically (or hierarchically) much more than horizontally, though as mentioned, his personalism completes his thought.

The pontiff finds meaning in the fatherly tenderness found in the parable that runs deeper than mere ethical admonition: "Notice, the father is aware that a fundamental good has been saved: the good of his son's humanity. Although the son has squandered the inheritance, nevertheless his humanity is saved." (DM 6) Humans can find their true selves through this relationship with God rather than through irresponsible choice and diversity: "[O]ne can therefore say that the love for the son, the love that springs from the very essence of fatherhood, in a way obliges the father to be concerned about his son's dignity." (DM 6) Again, he fearlessly sets up new or rethought imagery, offering a vertical or original spiritual level to issues.

Humans can fathom their true selves, that is, their true sinfulness as well as their true dignity, through relationship rather than through individualism and self-assertion: "[T]he relationship of mercy is based on the common experience of that good which is man, on the common experience of the dignity that is proper to him. This common experience makes the prodigal son begin to see himself and his actions in their full truth (this vision in truth is a genuine form of humility)." (DM 6) Experience inheres to this view, but under Church interpretation and control rather than, as feminists commonly claim, in forming the basis of individual thought.

Rather than promoting assertiveness, the pope asks for humility. He spends the entire second section of his encyclical on the Holy Spirit, Dominum et vivificantum (1986), on the attempt of the Paraclete to convince humans of their sinfulness: "In its turn, and in the context of 'sin' and 'righteousness' thus understood, 'judgment' means that the Spirit of truth will show the guilt of the 'world' in condemning Jesus to death on the Cross." (DV 27) This work of the Holy Spirit constitutes God's salvific plan for the world, the pope continues. This activity occurs in the intimate arena of the conscience, and this, "being a proof of the action of the Spirit of truth in man's inmost being, becomes at the same time a new beginning of the bestowal of grace and love" (DV 31) The pope conceives humans' knowledge of themselves as partly supernatural rather than based solely on reason,

empiricism, or Freud's subconscious. Divine grace, not science, offers the ultimate answers to our questions and human identity. The pontiff connects anthropology and pneumatology in this encyclical.

With the above citation from Dominum et vivificantum John Paul refutes Nietzsche by thinking vertically, by unearthing a deep though simple meaning from an old-fashioned theological millstone. John Paul imagines this process of judgment by the Holy Spirit as anything but negative or foreboding, since love rather than a human-type of justice and condemnation defines such judgment. At the same time that the Holy Spirit carries out this action, it consoles the human in which it is working. (DV 31) This consolation in the face of human sin occurs because "the greatest sin on man's part is matched, in the heart of the Redeemer, by the oblation of supreme love that conquers the evil of all the sins of man." (DV 31) The pope characterizes this cleansing as actually the mysterious process of mutuality between the individual and God. Borrowing from First Corinthians, he points out that this same Paraclete also "searches even the depths of God." (32) The pontiff concludes that only the light of the Cross of Christ properly illustrates human sin's true nature (32), and a person "cannot be 'convinced' of it except by the Holy Spirit: the Spirit of truth but who is also the Counselor." (32) The pontiff shrouds sin and redemption, and the Holy Spirit's work, in a mystery that stands beyond the reaches of the modern critic. He shrouds his anthropology to a large degree in such mystery.

### **2.3 "The victory of good in every realm"**

The pontiff's antidote to the spiritual malaise that he addresses does not first and foremost critique post-Cartesian Western philosophy. It takes an important form in expressing hope and rebirth through prayer and the meaning of the commandments, which find their fulfillment in Jesus. John Paul outlines the effect of his theology on the individual. With his discussion of prayer, he offers the reader a heart-centered, non-power-oriented, anti-materialist dimension to our lives. Humans at their most significant, truest level, are more than their appearance. Contrary to Nietzsche and his will to power, the pope ultimately defines each person as mystery. John Paul responds to the modern rejection of Christianity and adoption of reason-based individualism with mystery. Prayer runs deeply in us because it "is also the revelation of that abyss which is the heart of man: a depth which comes from God and which only God can fill, precisely with the Holy Spirit." (DV 65) This is abstract and imprecise, and thereby constitutes a countercultural mindset in our industrial, digitalized world of concrete, precise thinking.

The pontiff offers a traditional, unexciting response to contemporary world problems: "Our difficult age has a special need of prayer." (DV 65) He describes the present-day spiritual issues of humans from this traditional viewpoint, but agrees with Nietzsche on the West's "decadence":

In the face of this danger, and indeed already experiencing the frightful reality of man's spiritual decadence, individuals and whole communities, guided as it were by an inner sense of faith, are seeking the strength to raise man up again, to save him from himself, from his own errors and mistakes that often make harmful his very conquests. And thus they are discovering prayer. (DV 65)

In this above citation one wonders if John Paul aims to describe present-day practices or, rather, hopes that people are actually doing this. He again favors imprecision over clarity and a long critique.

The pontiff's top-down, anti-critical reading of history allows him to call for spiritual practices that many could term medieval but that in fact aim at the human will and thereby at human actions. He prescribes a Marian-based version of *imitatio Christi*. He calls us to accept Christ wholeheartedly, appropriating and assimilating the entire reality of the incarnation and our redemption in order to face modern problems. In self-giving we find ourselves and can enjoy the fruits of relationship, which include the adoration of God. (VS, 8) "The Rosary mystically transports us to Mary's side as she is busy watching over the human growth of Christ in the home of Nazareth. This enables her to train us and to mold us with the same care, until Christ is 'fully formed' in us (cf. *Gal* 4:19)." (Rosarium virginis mariae 15)

John Paul leaves unexplained the idea of a mystical transport to Mary because he centers his argument partly on discussing the mysterious and our actions in relation to this mystery. When it comes to certain areas of faith, he spurns the modern tendency towards exhaustive, unlimited critical examination and simply calls on us to act. God's knowable but mysterious nature restricts insight of the Lord to living in, rather than defining, the divine presence. Christ saves and the Holy Spirit sanctifies, through the intercessory work of Mary, all beyond our complete understanding. Humans depend for life, truth, and all else, on divine mercy, and can only "understand" through faith, and a faith that leads to concrete practice. God reveals God's self as an intimate, personal divinity, as part of our individual journey. The pope throws a medieval cloud of unknowing over the basic core of our modern predicament and hopes (and prays) for the best. This instruction offers the best of Polish romantic piety to Western civilization and the world: Trust in God, and act on that trust, and everything will work out.

The pontiff's opposition to Nietzsche demands more than logical argument, and looks to spiritual realities—he looks to awaken a certain Catholic spiritual awareness in his readers. The pontiff replaces reason as the core of our self-understanding and self-expression with the most basic Christian teaching, one that in its simplicity goes beyond even doctrine, at least to some degree, and calls us to *imitatio Christi*. John Paul challenges modern thought with ancient Christian practice. He identifies the most basic human need as love, without which we cannot live: "He remains a being that is incomprehensible for himself, his life is senseless, if love is not revealed to him, if he does not encounter love, if he does not experience it and make it his own, if he does not participate intimately in it." (RH 10) John Paul buries humans in the mystery of the imitation of Christ, and in a passive way this refutes Nietzsche's (and modern philosophy and psychology's) notions on the subconscious, reason, and power. *Imitatio Christi* offers a human dimension to redemption which the pope centers around this natural, deep need for love: "This, as has already been said, is why Christ the Redeemer 'fully reveals man to himself'. If we may use the expression, this is the human dimension of the mystery of the Redemption." (RH 10)

Rather than reason, power, ideology, or earthly achievement, this love, carried to its fullest dimension with Christ's redemption, allows humans to find "the greatness, dignity and value that belong to his humanity. In the mystery of the Redemption man becomes newly 'expressed' and, in a way, is newly created." (RH 10) John Paul does not grant new thought or ideological development any eternal meaning or power. Instead, the mystery of redemption remakes the entire human, so that those who desire to understand themselves and their deepest nature "must with his unrest, uncertainty and even his weakness and sinfulness, with his life and death, draw near to Christ. He must, so to speak, enter into him with all his own self, he must 'appropriate' and assimilate the whole of the reality of the Incarnation and Redemption in order to find himself." (RH 10) This theology aggressively marks a territory around humans, but leaves unanswered a critical understanding of how to "appropriate" or "assimilate" the incarnation, which itself remains unexamined. Redemption, most fully understood and expressed by the papal magisterium, uses love and mystery to offer the clearest definition we have of humans. John Paul calls not for more logic or polemics, but for changed consciousness.

## 2.4 Homo philosophus

John Paul the philosopher, just as much as John Paul the theologian, gives a resounding "No" to Richard Rorty's following words of American pragmatism:

The greatest of my many intellectual debts to Donald Davidson is my realization that nobody should even try to specify the nature of truth. A fortiori, pragmatists should not...[O]ne can profit from his arguments that there is no possibility of giving a definition of 'true' that works for all such languages. Davidson has helped us realize that *the very absoluteness of truth is a good reason for thinking 'true' indefinable and for thinking that no theory of the nature of truth is possible*. It is only the relative about which there is anything to say.<sup>173</sup>

Truth for the pontiff is indeed accessible, and across cultures and languages, the constancy of the truth is present. Michael Novak notes that for John Paul II,

[P]hilosophy and theology meet in the anthropology of the 'real existing' human person. The philosopher sees *homo creator*; the theologian sees *imago Dei*...It is an affront to human dignity for a social system to repress the human capacity to create, to invent, and to be enterprising. In human 'creative subjectivity' Wojtyla sees the principle of liberty, and for him this liberty naturally deploys itself in the three fields of conscience, inquiry, and action.<sup>174</sup>

Nietzsche too concerns himself with liberty and action, but adopts his aggressive stance. Metaphysics, Christian morals, spirituality, and earthly realism link both Nietzsche and the pope, though John Paul stamps his discussion with the divine image offered by Christianity. John Paul reflects vertically, on the relationship between God and humans, and emphasizes human dignity, both of which contrast with Nietzsche. Philosophy must help humans understand the truth of their spiritual tradition and its relationship with modernity. Contradicting Nietzsche's portrayal of humans as mostly tending towards the non-thinking herd, the pontiff begins *Fides et ratio* by describing each human being as homo philosophus, with keen intellectual needs and powers, but with more than just these needs. Inevitably,



we question our existence and search for its deeper meaning, asking “Who am I? Where have I come from and where am I going? Why is there evil? What is there after this life?” (1) Philosophy expresses the natural intellectual restlessness and curiosity of humans. Yet Michael Novak sees something deeper than even liberty: “John Paul II is a philosopher of liberty. Deeper in his eyes than liberty, however, is creativity. No end in itself, freedom is *for* something and must be *ordered by* something.”<sup>175</sup>

John Paul's philosophy is as holistic as his theology. He claims that we approach our instinctive search for the truth from different angles; philosophy engages the entire individual: “Men and women have at their disposal an array of resources for generating greater knowledge of truth so that their lives may be ever more human. Among these is *philosophy*, which is directly concerned with asking the question of life's meaning and sketching an answer to it.” (FR 3) With this last sentence, John Paul calls his reader to accept rather than fear philosophy since it is a part of human nature. As Christians, we can and must use philosophy in order to fully understand divine revelation: “Driven by the desire to discover the ultimate truth of existence, human beings seek to acquire those universal elements of knowledge which enable them to understand themselves better and to advance in their own self-realization.” (FR 4) The pontiff thus assigns philosophy a holy task and follows the ancient Greeks in imagining it as an all-encompassing search for wisdom rather than as overly-concerning itself with such fragmented topics as language, logic or epistemology: “The truth comes initially to the human being as a question: *Does life have a meaning? Where is it going?*” (FR 26) A healthy and complete philosophy expresses the person's natural, restless search for meaning. The pope spiritualizes every aspect of the person, and philosophy fails to reach its potential and follow its vocation when it does not work from this base.

Given this spiritual dimension, the pontiff does not view philosophy in the same way as contemporary secular thinkers do. Modern philosophy, John Paul believes, has simultaneously cut itself off from its spiritual sources of Christianity and metaphysical curiosity even as it has arrogated to itself an overly critical practice that never acknowledges limits. Philosophy can examine and criticize, but it cannot fully understand certain mysteries: “It should nonetheless be kept in mind that Revelation remains charged with mystery. It is true that Jesus, with his entire life, revealed the countenance of the Father, for he came to teach the secret things of God. But our vision of the face of God is always fragmentary and impaired by the limits of our understanding. Faith alone makes it possible to penetrate the mystery in a way that allows us to understand it coherently.” (FR 13) The pontiff has set these mysteries aside, out of the full critical reach of philosophy. This view of history helps explain his irenics. Given the limitations of philosophy, he does not need to dominate its discourse as, first, his truth and its reconstruction have many other avenues to expression and, second, modern philosophy has limited and weakened itself by refusing to inquire about eternal, metaphysical issues.

John Paul takes a large view of history and thought, which is unavoidable and unsurprising since he is combating the fall-out of the eighteenth-century by inviting his audience to reassess modern thinking. The Enlightenment and its aftermath do not define his outlook as it does for so many modern intellectuals and religious leaders in the West. Instead, this event simply forms part of a larger Christian and teleological history. In light of his esteem for the great Christian thinkers, mystics, and teachers of Antiquity and the Middle Ages, such as Saints John Chrysostom, Augustine, and Thomas Aquinas, the eighteenth-century and its results can appear as a juvenile rebellion against a much larger, richer tradition: “The atheism of which we are speaking is also closely connected with the rationalism of the Enlightenment, which views human and social reality in a mechanistic way.” (CA 13) The Enlightenment, in fact, dehumanizes humans by adopting a one dimensional, mechanistic view that does not cohere with the entire corpus of Western metaphysics and spirituality, and that does not anticipate deeper or multiple meanings. As stated, then, the pope seeks to recast philosophy as more than the search for the correct inquiry about the temporal and fragmented world. In their great intellectual capacity to investigate the truth, humans can use philosophy to examine truths about themselves and life in general.

John Paul challenges the Enlightenment’s unfaithfulness to Western religion and metaphysics. Flawed in important respects, we must not accept modern thought without criticism, since such a philosophy does not serve the good of humans. Atheism, as one example, has produced tragedy, since “there is a denial of the supreme insight concerning man’s true greatness, his transcendence in respect to earthly realities, the contradiction in his heart between the desire for the fullness of what is good and his own inability to attain it.” (CA 13) Atheism goes against human nature since it invites the de-spiritualizing or materializing of life by eliminating eternal and metaphysical perspective. It does this in part by destroying the sense of “the need for salvation which results from this situation.” (CA 13)

John Paul’s straightforward and predictable assessment of the Enlightenment and its aftermath strives for more than it seems, as it aims for a spiritual solution, and not simply to win a debate with modern philosophy. He simplifies his thought in accordance with the task of evangelization that he has given himself as Peter’s successor. The Holy Father acts as the good pastor who is guiding his rebellious, secularized flock back to the spiritual safety of Western metaphysics and Christian spirituality. The pontiff does not view this as primarily an intellectual issue, but as a spiritual or metaphysical one, making even his most intellectual and philosophical writings foremost pastoral addresses and assessments of a spiritual situation. Though his writings on philosophy are among his least irenic (or most polemical), this stance does not lead to hostility or argumentation, since he still writes from the position of a religious leader rather than that of a professional scholar or ethicist. He thus widens the discussion beyond simply scolding post-Enlightenment thought, and explores philosophy’s spiritual, pastoral dimension, something the Enlightenment and following philosophical currents reject: “Life in fact can never be grounded upon doubt, uncertainty or deceit; such an existence would be threatened constantly by fear and anxiety. One may define the human

being, therefore, as *the one who seeks the truth.*” (FR 28) Rather than positivism, science, or Nietzschean thought offering all the answers, John Paul inverts things and claims that philosophical systems or ways of thinking must serve the holistic spiritual deliberation of Western civilization. Such systems must advance humanity rather than the other way around, since “[i]t is unthinkable that a search so deeply rooted in human nature would be completely vain and useless.” (FR 29)

## Conclusion

John Paul’s anti-critical or circular approach to theology starts with the truth. The pope centers his discussion of humans on the nature of the truth. He sees our identity as issuing from our relationship to it as individuals and societies, and by our decision to orient our lives around that truth or to reject it and live outside of its divine grace, in lives of untruth. The pontiff warns that the centrality of the redemptive act for all other areas of existence means that acceptance or rejection of the revealed divine truth determines our life’s direction.

The pope believes that the truth can speak for itself and he links every issue, such as liberty, conscience, and rights and responsibilities, to this truth.<sup>176</sup> He believes in the truth and its transforming power. We read his own faith in action through his teaching, as he often offers us a logic of prayer. His blunt questions, then, challenge the reader’s position on those transcendent truths rejected so virulently by Nietzsche, and attempt to retake some control of the intellectual debate from Richard Rorty, Michel Foucault, and other descendants of Nietzsche.

Nietzsche invites no limit to the power of the *Übermensch*. Freedom, not surprisingly, stems from within, especially from the instincts. John Paul warns of a great limitation in humans, and identifies freedom in the transcendent—in something greater-than though profoundly connected-to humans. This freedom too comes from within but in the sense that the Holy Spirit dwells within us. Humans must accept our creatureliness. God sustains the Christian with the Holy Spirit, whereas for Nietzsche the *Übermensch* sustains himself and senses neither creatureliness nor an inner connection to the transcendent.

## Chapter 3

### John Paul II's Anthropology II

John Paul's writings on community confront Nietzsche's teachings on power, solipsistic individualism, and the rejection of metaphysics and absolute good. The pope's call for Christian community and love, thoroughly unoriginal and anchored in Catholicism, opposes the death of God and nihilism, the latter of which Nietzsche regarded as a transitory but central phase. Tradition, particularly Catholic (and Polish), appears in the pontiff's writing as the answer to the tragedies of the twentieth century that he blames on modern philosophy. Important details of Nietzsche's *Übermensch* find rebuttal from John Paul's reinvigoration of (1) old-style virtues over recent spiritual fads; (2) love, solidarity, and the family over ideology and unrestrained individuality; (3) Catholic social teaching that accounts for new realities while basing itself on well-used methodology and sources; and (4) the characteristics and centrality of mystery.

In practical terms, the pontiff identifies the significance and place of the eternal in contemporary society, especially in the realm of truth. Reinvigorated but well-established Church teachings and methods speak more energetically than new or revolutionary dogma or politics because the original *kerygma*, though unchanged, remains fresh and revolutionary to this day. John Paul does not aim to compete with Nietzsche's philosophy or other brands of atheism; nor with modern liberalism, feminism, and their "progressive" additions to Christian doctrine. The modern secular model of society, rather than the old religious model, has erred deeply, he judges. Rise, Let Us Be On Our Way desires "a faith that has the courage to open and reveal this treasure in constantly new ways, to whom Christ sends His disciples. And not just the kind of responsibility that limits itself to defending what has been handed down, but the kind that has the courage to use its talents and multiply them (cf. *Matt 25:14-30*)."<sup>177</sup> In this call for responsibility and renewal he demonstrates openness towards modernity, but his is a Catholic modernity.

In the arena of culture, John Paul, again seemingly the old-fashioned thinker, invites a kind of nineteenth-century *Kulturkampf*, with dialogue based on respect but also on an unchanging, uncompromising sense of right and wrong. Intellectual and religious exchange will not compromise the core of Catholic social or metaphysical teachings. He does avoid aggressive polemics, though, by emphasizing the dignity of all humans, even of those with "incorrect" viewpoints. Dialogue aims, ultimately, at lovingly reasserting Catholic values in politics and ethics.

### 3.1 *Übermensch*

#### 1) *The Übermensch and community*

Nietzsche, as in the following words from Ecce homo, ties the death of God with the end of a sense of humanity that recognizes the same intrinsic value in each person.

Those things which humanity until now seriously considered, are not reality, are simply imagination strongly stated, and are lies that come from the bad instincts of sick people, in

their deepest sense from a terrible nature--all the concepts 'God,' 'soul,' 'virtue,' 'sin,' 'beyond,' 'truth,' 'eternal life.'...But they searched in themselves the greatness of human nature, their own 'divinity.'... All questions of politics, the ordering of society, connections, are in their deepest sense falsified, in that they took the worst people as being the best.<sup>178</sup>

The death of God raises issues about the individual that medieval Christendom had to some degree resolved. The notion of God had supported moral, philosophical, or existential notions about humans. The harsh words here--“lies that come from the bad instincts of sick people,” for instance—imply a shaken moral world. The morals of the former, Christian, world cannot linger because they are lies. People who live them live a lie. Thus Nietzsche pushes or even shocks the reader into a search for different, non-Christian morals. As Walter Kaufman writes, Nietzsche had in mind “the 'gay science' of fearless experiment and the good will to accept new evidence and to abandon previous positions, if necessary.”<sup>179</sup>

The *Übermensch* invites an individualistic, power-oriented spirituality that challenges Christian community.

The word 'Übermensch' relates to a type of the highest device of well-being, in contrast to 'modern' humans, 'good' humans, to Christians and other nihilists—in one word, that in the mouth of Zarathustra, the destroyer of morality, becomes a very meditative word...that means to express the 'ideal' type of a higher art of human, half 'holy,' half 'genius.'<sup>180</sup>

*Selbstüberwindung*, the realization of one's awakened possibilities, kills God and overcomes the hurdle of Christianity. Nietzsche, as in the following from Will to Power, rejects the possibility of a common humanity or any solidarity with the poor and suffering: “There is an element of decay in everything that characterizes modern man: but close beside this sickness stand signs of an untested force and powerfulness of the soul. *The same reasons that produce the increasing smallness of man drive the stronger and rarer individuals up to greatness.*”<sup>181</sup> This radical, assertive individualism spiritually awakens one to power, not to love and mercy.

Self-realization demands that we destroy the chains supposedly tied around us by the weak, yet ultimately we must overcome ourselves, and must do so alone, without a Church or community, and certainly without God. “I stand on my highest mountain and before my longest journey: for that I must go down deeper than I have ever climbed.”<sup>182</sup> Zarathustra wanders alone, in and out of towns and conversations with other solitaires. He never reaches out in anything resembling self-giving or solidarity. Also Sprach Zarathustra fails to address the dignity of other people. Nietzsche extols the *Einsamkeit*, the loneliness, of the *Übermensch* because he sees in human relationships a negative core, a herd mentality of the lowest common denominator, which reduces every non-*Übermensch* to mediocre conformity. Rather than a transcendent drive or moral virtue, an instinctual, almost animal-like human force counters this negative herd pressure.<sup>183</sup> Community with Nietzsche takes on a negative, dehumanizing meaning.

## 2) *The Übermensch and creativity*

Nietzsche links creativity and destruction together and believes in the necessity of both for the furtherance of humanity, which occurs through the higher individual. Since humans are so ingenious and power-oriented that they can create gods, at least some people have the capacity to develop into *Übermensch*.<sup>184</sup> The *Übermensch*'s independent ingenuity offers new possibilities. But such brilliance arrives only through much suffering and pain, as Zarathustra recounts: "Oh yes, how many bitter deaths must there be in your life, for you creative types...That the creative one is also a child that is newly born, in that way you must also will to be the one giving birth and will to have the bearer's pain."<sup>185</sup>

Death, suffering, and destruction inhere to the acumen intrinsic in the *Übermensch*. This new mythology kills old traditions such as Christianity or Western metaphysics as a necessity to the *Übermensch*'s existence and growth just as old animals and plants die in the face of more vibrant biological growth. Life is continuous growth and death. The *Übermensch*'s instincts seem to feed off of the energy surrounding the death of culture, tradition, or whatever else must get out of the way.

When we free ourselves from the limitations of community and tradition we free ourselves to think new, creative, and daring thoughts. Nietzsche defines as the worst aspect of tradition its limitations on our thinking: "Small thinking is the worst of all. It is truly better to do bad than to have small thoughts"; "But small thoughts are the worst. It is truly better to do bad acts than to think small thoughts."<sup>186</sup> Our deepest spiritual hopes and powers rise from the death, suffering, and confrontation with others or aspects of ourselves, and we can do nothing to change that. We must boldly forge ahead as part of strong, vigorous, renewed life.

## 3.2 Diakonia

### 1) *The Pope's Foundations*

John Paul's style in reconstructing truth centers on alternatively knowing when to reach out and be flexible, and when to insist on his principles. His opposition to Nietzsche and other modern thinkers does not therefore consist of rebutting every criticism, including feminist matriarchy / anti-patriarchy, or of compromising his convictions. Rather than competing with secular thought, he engages with society from the truth of his core, unchanging beliefs and principles. The pontiff establishes a solidly traditional Catholic theological foundation from which to reach out to society. He holds a traditional ecclesiology, and speaks from the magisterium, making the Church's hierarchical structure part of his message.<sup>187</sup>

Redemptor hominis (15) celebrates the Church's mission as rooted in Christ and always disposed towards the good of humans. Ecclesiastical leaders, guardians of the truth established by Christ, must speak to humans and strongly guide them:

Inspired by eschatological faith, the Church considers an essential, unbreakably united element of her mission this solicitude for man, for his humanity, for the future of men on earth and therefore also for the course set for the whole of development and progress. She finds the principle of this solicitude in Jesus Christ himself, as the Gospels witness.

The faith community participates in a traditional, providential view of history. The Church can do so because

In the midst of the problems, disappointments and hopes, desertions and returns of these times of ours, the Church remains faithful to the mystery of her birth. While it is an historical fact that the Church came forth from the Upper Room on the day of Pentecost, in a certain sense one can say that she has never left it. Spiritually the event of Pentecost does not belong only to the past: the Church is always in the Upper Room that she bears in her heart. (Dominum et vivificantum 66)

The Church is both a product of history and the events surrounding the historically-located Pentecost, but the spiritual nature of these events also makes the community a-historical. The Pentecost event has an eternal quality that defines the Church, and that the Church in turn can use in relation to human history and its “problems, disappointments, and hopes, desertions and returns.” Ecclesia as product of Pentecost, of an historical event that transcends history, claims a unique vantage point in relation to ordinary or secular history.

The Church has not changed in its essential nature in the past two thousand years, but remains as strong, infallible, and blessed as ever, since “The Holy Spirit, given to the Apostles as the Counselor, is the guardian and animator of this hope in the heart of the Church.” (Dominum et vivificantum 66) Just as the Holy Spirit is unchanging in its nature, so the Church which it inspires does not change in its deepest nature. The historical Church remains unchanging in its deepest nature even if history, in which it also plays a role, is constantly changing. A tension thus exists between the spiritual nature of the Church and its relationship to historically-based human society. The Church serves society in the traditional way. From a position of apparent spiritual maturity and authority it guides the faithful and all of society, and dispenses sacramental grace and the teaching of the truth.

## **2) *The First Two Commandments***

The pope’s view of Ecclesia holds a double meaning. First, the emphasis on the mysterious, unearthly quality of the community marks a softening in his hierarchy-oriented, clergy-centered tendencies, and the place from which he can therefore speak to modern society. Second, he centers the community, and the individual’s social nature, on love, whereas Nietzsche emphasizes power. We live our full humanity not as the *Übermensch* but in Christian service and solidarity. Refuting Nietzsche’s elitism, where the strong dominate, or at best ignore, the weak, the pope calls for radical egalitarianism, where people’s equality counters economic or social differences and hierarchies:

As far as the right to life is concerned, every innocent human being is absolutely equal to all others. This equality is the basis of all authentic social relationships which, to be truly such, can only be founded on truth and justice, recognizing and protecting every man and woman as a person and not as an object to be used. (Evangelium vitae 57)

Living in community, in contrast to Nietzsche’s *Herdentier* (herd animals), represents *Selbstüberwindung* (self-overcoming). We realize our fullest potential not through *Einsamkeit* (solitariness) but through our humble, loving relationships and community-building with others.

Veritatis splendor (12) notes that after Jesus talks of God he uses the Decalogue to turn the rich young man towards other humans.

The commandment to love one another expresses the extraordinary dignity of each person, and this quality occasions John Paul's unequivocal, top-down or neoscholastic, teachings on ethics. The Decalogue's commandments reflect the one commandment regarding the good of each person at the spiritual, corporal, and communal levels, as well as with God.<sup>188</sup> The pope finds dimensions to these issues that reveals God's presence in our lives. In Evangelium vitae (76), for example, the pontiff derives new meaning from the commandment to love one another:

With the gift of his Spirit, Christ gives new content and meaning to the law of reciprocity, to our being entrusted to one another. The Spirit who builds up communion in love creates between us a new fraternity and solidarity, a true reflection of the mystery of mutual self-giving and receiving proper to the Most Holy Trinity.

Humans should not fear to love one another because they will not have to love each other with their own strength: "The Spirit becomes the new law which gives strength to believers and awakens in them a responsibility for sharing the gift of self and for accepting others, as a sharing in the boundless love of Jesus Christ himself." (Evangelium vitae 76) John Paul attempts, with the idea of dignity, to reawaken old religious doctrine to new and inspiring fullness; "dignity" echoes the modern Western preoccupation with rights, but offers it a spiritual and Catholic dimension. The pope re-energizes and re-sanctifies the old signs, symbols, and practices rather than searching for something new, as contemporary secularists seem fond of doing.

Renewed scope to every issue gives the pope enough room to redefine or reawaken outdated concepts. He places humility second only to *agape* love in his community of service. Jesus' commandment to love one another as he has loved them includes, the pontiff highlights in Veritatis splendor (20), the virtue signified in washing his apostles' feet. Jesus demands that we take up our cross and give all of ourselves. This love of humility remains susceptible to a Nietzschean critique if taken as an isolated element of the pontiff's writing. If understood within the entire corpus of the pope's teaching, it holds another meaning. Read, for instance, within the context of the dignity inherent in *all* humans, referred to frequently by the pontiff (as opposed to Nietzsche's belief in the dignity of *some* people), humility can seem just and reasonable. If we acknowledge the great dignity of each human, we naturally admire humility, since it seems like a suitable way to approach another. The latter virtue signifies radical egalitarianism rather than the possibility that people will take advantage of the virtue (though the pontiff is not naïve about human nature).

### **3) Human dignity and Catholic social doctrine in a prophetic Church**

John Paul considers it the Church's duty to speak prophetically to society. He applies the idea of human dignity to concrete communal issues in modern society, such as technological or economic progress, as a way to promote *diakonia*. In Redemptor hominis he briefly discusses the economic roots of much social evil in modern society in traditional notions of the will: "The man of today seems ever



to be under threat from what he produces, that is to say from the result of the work of his hands and, even more so, of the work of his intellect and the tendencies of his will.” (15) The pontiff characterizes the modern human as someone who lives in fear. (15) Technology, uncontrolled and without any universal plan, fails to be authentically human-centered.

Here he describes the spirituality of things, in this case concerning the depth or true nature of humans threatened by society's superficial use and understanding of technology. Humans fail to realize or respect their profundity: “Man often seems to see no other meaning in his natural environment than what serves for immediate use and consumption.” (RH 15) Technological growth and progress demands, he adds, a proportionate advancement in morals and ethics that reflects greater maturity. More than that, the pontiff asks, “Does this progress, which has man for its author and promoter, make human life on earth ‘more human’ in every aspect of that life? Does it make it more ‘worthy of man’?” (RH 15) The dignity and truth of humans supersedes technological progress.

In Centesimus annus (1991) John Paul addresses dehumanizing, socially fragmenting tendencies in Western society since the nineteenth century:

The Church, in fact, has something to say about specific human situations, both individual and communal, national and international. She formulates a genuine doctrine for these situations, a *corpus* which enables her to analyze social realities, to make judgments about them and to indicate directions to be taken for the just resolution of the problems involved. (CA 5)

John Paul puts the weight of recent Catholic tradition and the prestige of the magisterium behind the importance of human dignity. He links the new evangelization for which he called frequently throughout his pontificate with the essential elements of Catholic social teaching, “When ideologies are being increasingly discredited.” (CA 5) He places people before ideologies.

He does not place people first, but points to a still deeper reality. This reality gives us a truth-based identity that precedes any individual: “Now, as then, we need to repeat that there can be *no genuine solution of the ‘social question’ apart from the Gospel*, and that the ‘new things’ can find in the Gospel the context for their correct understanding and the proper moral perspective for judgment on them.” (CA 5) He offers this, the two-thousand year-old gospel, as the definitive teaching on progress and modern society. With this discussion on Rerum novarum, John Paul ensures that Church teaching on social issues possesses real doctrine and foundation. A metaphysical, Christian outlook alone provides solutions, including the establishment of the only true egalitarianism.

The pope's Catholic social doctrine exemplifies the Church serving society through a prophetic voice. The prophet asks the longer-term, spiritually-focused, questions in the face of society's uncontrolled “progress” towards an unclear goal. The prophet locates the eternity, the truth, within the historical process. The prophetic Church keeps the dignity of humankind, and therefore the perspective of love, in primary view. The pontiff chooses the side of those pushed aside by technology. The servant Church sides with people and accompanies them through their lives, rather than simply admonishing and attempting to control the laity. The papal analysis of technology, fed

from the truth, empowers people, but not in a way imagined by Nietzsche. The pontiff offers the metaphysical view of technological progress:

Do all the conquests attained until now and those projected for the future for technology accord with man's moral and spiritual progress? In this context is man, as man, developing and progressing or is he regressing and being degraded in his humanity? In men and 'in man's world', which in itself is a world of moral good and evil, does good prevail over evil? (RH 15)

The pontiff questions whether the current model of rapacious progress fits into Western, Catholic-oriented history.

John Paul bases his metaphysics on preaching that God is love and that we can retreat into the Lord's fatherly love: "Let us have recourse to that fatherly love revealed to us by Christ in His messianic mission, a love which reached its culmination in His cross, in His death and resurrection." (Dives et misericordia 15) A simple and old-fashioned call ends Dives et misericordia: Love "for each individual and for every human community, every family, every nation, every social group, for young people, adults, parents, the elderly—a love for everyone, without exception. This is love, or rather an anxious solicitude to ensure for each individual every true good and to remove and drive away every sort of evil." (15)

#### **4) A Catholic Critique of Socialism**

John Paul's Christianity seeks to regain its accustomed place, recently occupied by Nietzsche, Foucault, and feminists, of serving society as the source of social critique, but the Church will not become a Church of compromise on its core beliefs. The pope does not act as the leader of a defensive Church, the passive target of an aggressive academic and political community, though with his pastoral attitude he also avoids Catholic triumphalism. He forcefully criticizes those ideologies which have frequently attacked Christianity, decrying, for instance, the dehumanizing element of socialism, where "Socialism considers the individual person simply as an element, a molecule within the social organism, so that the good of the individual is completely subordinated to the functioning of the socio-economic mechanism." (CA 13) This could well serve as a criticism of Michel Foucault's philosophy, as we will see.

John Paul's teaching offers new growth over the decay of ideology and political, power-oriented agendas. The pontiff presents himself and the Church as the guardian of human dignity. He reiterates the importance of freedom inherent in the dignity of humans: "Man is thus reduced to a series of social relationships, and the concept of the person as the autonomous subject of moral decision disappears, the very subject whose decisions build the social order." (CA 13) He highlights the erroneous anthropology of socialism's atheism, and claims that "It is by responding to the call of God contained in the being of things that man becomes aware of his transcendent dignity." (CA 13) Socialism fails in his view because it fails to account for the truth of humans. The pontiff adds that "no social mechanism or collective subject can substitute for it ['transcendent dignity']." (CA 13) Modern

ideologies, ironically, best fit the Nietzschean description of Christian doctrine as dehumanizing and rigid, while John Paul's Christian doctrine calls for flexibility, creativity, and mercy. The Church serves by reminding people of God's presence and by applying this presence to the issues and problems of the day.

The Holy Father roots his teachings about *diakonia* on the inner dignity that each person enjoys, a worth no longer tied to socialism's or feminism's economic or power-oriented view of humans, but to the a priori truth of God: "The denial of God deprives the person of his foundation, and consequently leads to a reorganization of the social order without reference to the person's dignity and responsibility." (CA 13) John Paul places the sweeping historical and political events in Eastern Europe in 1989 under the notion of *diakonia* rather than simply under secular-oriented "progress" in human rights or economic liberalization: "In a certain sense, it was a struggle born of prayer, and it would have been unthinkable without immense trust in God, the Lord of history, who carries the human heart in his hands." (CA 25) One wonders if prayer played such a primary role (more than the CIA for instance) but here the pontiff as mystical prophet boldly offers his own Christian-based interpretation, and does not care about a lack of objective data to prove his words. He proclaims without embarrassment—in fact, with great and bold certainty—that the events of that year find their roots and inspiration in the Good News, and that they consequently belong to the Christian journey, fitting into the whole of the West and its spiritual perspective:

It is by uniting his own sufferings for the sake of truth and freedom to the sufferings of Christ on the Cross that man is able to accomplish the miracle of peace and is in a position to discern the often narrow path between the cowardice which gives in to evil and the violence which, under the illusion of fighting evil, only makes it worse. (CA 25)

The revolutions of 1989, rather than just economic or political-power, possess a metaphysical substance, a truth to them that precede their historical reality because they offer false community and anthropology. Through these interpretations John Paul attempts to have the Church own and interpret history and its ideologies, rather than letting the deconstructionists define the meaning of recent events.

### **5) *The Priesthood and diakonia***

The pontiff's opposition to ideology and his faith in traditional Catholic spirituality originate from deep, spiritual and mystical roots. In *Dono e Mistero* he offers a counter-cultural, Catholic sense of "revolution" that attempts to turn things on their head and paint a different picture of an old word that has meant much to the modern world. He juxtaposes this Catholic sense of revolution with modernity's customary definition:

Saint John of Vianney surprises above all because in him is revealed the power of grace that acts in the poverty in the middle of humans. What touched me above all was his *heroic service of the confessional*. A humble priest who listened to confessions for more than ten hours a day, eating little and sleeping for only a few hours and who succeeded in a difficult historical period in bringing about a sort of spiritual revolution in France....In the midst of

laicization and anti-clericalism of the nineteenth century, his testimony constitutes a revolutionary event.<sup>189</sup>

He turns the meaning of revolution on its head. Countless revolutionaries since the Enlightenment have followed the French Revolution's example and identified the Church and Christianity as central targets. He claims that it is always the Christian message and the Church that proclaims it that is revolutionary, and the political extremists who are always the same.

Inner spiritual metanoia remains, in this view, as it has for 2000 years the only worthwhile revolution. Thus John Paul believes that the priesthood truly, radically changes a person. In Dono e Misterio he emphasizes the universal, eternal nature of the priesthood, which he bases on Vatican II's reference to the priest being simultaneously rooted in the word of God and tradition. This rootedness holds a universal dimension: "If we are immersed with our humanity as priests of 'today' in the 'today' of Jesus Christ, the danger of becoming something of yesterday and outdated does not exist."<sup>190</sup> Any given historical era, with its peculiar revolutions and upheavals, pales in comparison to the eternal, radical presence of priestly spirituality and power, which transcends the human condition and does not modify in the face of historical change or scientific progress. The deepest reality does not change because human nature remains constant. John Paul, using mystical language, looks to priests for leadership in the political, ideological, and cultural battles of today on account of their transcendent roots: "In their divine-human connection, modern priests can solve the tension between 'traditionalism' and 'progressivism.'"<sup>191</sup>

Traditionalism and progressivism really mask the deeper reality witnessed by the Church and its pastors. As with many aspects of Christian theology, especially a priori theology, John Paul here emphasizes mystery: "The priest has a mysterious, formidable power when confronted with the Eucharistic body of Christ."<sup>192</sup> The Church's service, in its priestly, sacramental dimension, ultimately reaches beyond understanding and therefore beyond the aim of modern philosophy, that latter of which so incessantly critiques everything it can. This priestly mystery encompasses the deeper mystery of Christ. John Paul unites transcendence and mystery to the great good of the redemption: "In its basic form, the priest becomes the administrator of the greatest good of Redemption, because the priest gives to humans the Redeemer in persona."<sup>193</sup> Just as importantly, John Paul uses transcendence and mystery in his irenic opposition against incessant criticism. The a priori is central to his irenic approach, as he shrouds the a priori in mystery, showing how it is beyond the reach of the critics, rather than confronting those critics too forcefully. He avoids losing himself in countless, unending polemics.

### 3.3 Ecclesia

John Paul refers to Genesis 1:26 when discussing the basis for the concern that Church members should have for each other member. He weds the human and the universal through very

human yet universal images of child and mother. He then invites us to accept his a priori image of the Church based on this twinning, through the attitude of mystery rather than through argumentation. The pope's convictions carry the calm air of a person thoroughly convinced of his beliefs and not about to waste energy fighting against innumerable critics:

Every man comes into the world through being conceived in his mother's womb and being born of his mother, and precisely on account of the mystery of the Redemption is entrusted to the solicitude of the Church. Her solicitude is about the whole man and is focused on him in an altogether special manner. The object of her care is man in his unique unrepeatable human reality, which keeps intact the image and likeness of God himself. (RH 13)

He connects his images of Christ, humans, and community, in a holistic way, and emphasizes “the whole man” and the church's special way of relating to humans. The mystery inheres to the fact of God's presence in individuals and the Church to which they belong sacramentally and therefore mysteriously.

John Paul's view on the Church borrows from tradition. The Church, he believes, possesses supernatural dignity, meaning, and place in history. His portrayal of religious community challenges Nietzsche's cynicism for Church and Christian culture. Christians demonstrate faith's superiority to critical reasoning in their love for one another and by honoring the mysterious presence of God. In *Veritatis splendor* the Pontiff warns against Nietzsche's human-centered, non-loving philosophy by observing that those who live according to the flesh feel the terrible weight of God's law and have actually limited their freedom.<sup>194</sup> John Paul here parallels Nietzsche in portraying an unreasonably harsh side to the religion. The former, though, sees the guidance, strength, and love of the Holy Spirit as a way out of this harshness: A metaphysical view of things changes one's entire orientation. Those who desire to serve others and live in the Spirit can use God's law as a guide.<sup>195</sup> We can escape the egotistical cage into which Nietzsche has shoved humanity. Transcendent love, rather than human will and instinct, leads to freedom. John Paul rejects any Nietzschean understanding of a post-modern, post-Christian human being living a full life without Christ. Happiness or fulfillment cannot come from any source we choose.

The Church must boldly lead humans down this path of love: “The Church wishes to serve this single end: that each person may be able to find Christ, in order that Christ may walk with each person the path of life, with the power of the truth about man and the world that is contained in the mystery of the Incarnation and the Redemption and with the power of the love that is radiated by that truth.” (RH 13) Truth is not so much sought after, as Nietzsche claimed were the habits of philosophers and theologians. Rather, truth is something to be served. The Church and its members serve the truth by serving Christ. The Church can never abandon humans, but must actually center itself on humans:

Man in the full truth of his existence, of his personal being and also of his community and social being-in the sphere of his own family, in the sphere of society and very diverse contexts, in the sphere of his own nation or people (perhaps still only that of his clan or tribe), and in the sphere of the whole of mankind-this man is the primary route that the Church must travel in fulfilling her mission: he is the primary and fundamental way for the

Church, the way traced out by Christ himself, the way that leads invariably through the mystery of the Incarnation and the Redemption. (RH 14)

The Church will not yield to the latest ideological or political fad. Instead, the pontiff offers a very narrow, specific set of instructions to the Church on how to be Church. The Christian community centers on Christ and humans, and therefore humans at every level. This timeless definition can fit into any era of Ecclesiastical history.

### ***1) Christian society***

In contrast to Nietzsche's ideal society, John Paul calls for a Christian society that honors and reverently guards Catholic tradition. The Christian community does not suffocate individuals, but frees them to live its truths. The spiritual power of the Church bears witness to the limited earthly force of human instincts, on which Nietzsche places his hopes, and guides us in her truth through moral issues.<sup>196</sup> The Church transcends any given moment in history and the forces and influences of this moment on humans. The Catholic community transcends the social conditioning that each person receives. It lies beyond this social conditioning. We must take our proper place in Ecclesia, and accept its teachings. This ecclesiastical harmony opposes the *übermenschliche Einsamkeit* (the Superman-like solitariness). We must journey within the Church and its tradition, alongside other Christians, rather than climb some metaphorical mountain on our own. We cannot rely on our own strength, but we can rely on that of religious community.

Though the Church plays a profound role in history, its essence also lies beyond the temporal because of Christ's eternal nature: "*Christ's relevance for people of all times is shown forth in his body, which is the Church.*" (VS, 25) As earthly head of this supernatural organization, John Paul rejects or judges different currents of thought that contradict his evangelical vision. These fashions come and go, but the Church and Christ remain the same. Moral prescriptions, first witnessed in God's Covenant with Israel, then brought to perfection in Jesus' New Covenant, must receive faithful protection and implementation in different cultures and eras.<sup>197</sup>

### ***2) Church and morality***

The Church's moral teachings, developed through theological science, reflect the need for an ongoing relationship between God and humans. Theologians must use their reason to interpret and proclaim divine revelation for the world because the Church serves the human journey towards freedom and self-realization. Without a healthy relationship between reason and theology, ideologies result, and damage humans and societies by attacking our dignity: "A man is alienated if he refuses to transcend himself and to live the experience of self-giving and of the formation of an authentic human community oriented towards his final destiny, which is God." (CA 41) Society's importance comes from facilitating this Christian self-giving. "A society is alienated if its forms of social organization, production and consumption make it more difficult to offer this gift of self and to establish this

solidarity between people.” (CA 41) Alienation, at societal and individual levels, inheres to a post-Christian secular outlook that rejects Church teaching.

The Church, not secular society or its fragmentary critique, meets our deepest spiritual and communal needs. Community and love replace polemics as the face of the search or argument for the truth. The Christian community, a school for life's truth, teaches humans the basic issues of our existence, including how to live freely: “A person who is concerned solely or primarily with possessing and enjoying, who is no longer able to control his instincts and passions, or to subordinate them by obedience to the truth, cannot be free.” (CA 41) Instincts, contrary to Nietzsche’s view, hold no higher truth or spiritual force; they need a Christian context or interpretation, but more than simply intellectual context and interpretation. Living a secular, individualist mythology imprisons the human spirit, because the Creator made this spirit for Christian community.

### **3) Obedience and individualism**

John Paul, in his belief in truth's constancy and eternity, bases his holistic reconstruction of the truth largely on virtues that secular society long-ago considered outdated. In CA he repeats a teaching he uses elsewhere--the importance of obedience to the Church community and to God in an individual’s development: “*Obedience to the truth* about God and man is the first condition of freedom, making it possible for a person to order his needs and desires and to choose the means of satisfying them according to a correct scale of values.” (CA 41) Following Christ—following the truth—demands obedience. Freedom, possible only through this virtue, takes on a spiritual dimension that Nietzsche had not identified. Love connects freedom and obedience, which power-oriented feminists and Nietzsche judge as nonsense.

Metaphysics sheds a different light on the same issues. Today’s individualism attacks human dignity because it promotes the expression of power and rejects love. “In order to overcome today's widespread individualistic mentality, what is required is *a concrete commitment to solidarity and charity*, beginning in the family with the mutual support of husband and wife and the care which the different generations give to one another.” (CA 49) This echoes the following phrase from *Evangelium vitae*: “The loftiness of this supernatural vocation reveals the greatness and the inestimable value of human life even in its temporal phase.” (2) One cannot judge obedience according to earthly, power-based criteria, but according to this much wider perspective. In entering into direct polemics with secularists, John Paul would only be playing their game. Repeatedly, he invites the reader to play his game of Christian love, mystery, and community from the different dimensions that his various writings adopt.

John Paul closely relates God with the individual and society. The modern breakdown in faith has unbalanced both society and individuals. More than ever society needs the Church to guard human dignity against the abuse of power from various sectors in society. John Paul succinctly judges post-Christian mythology: “The individual today is often suffocated between two poles represented by the

State and the marketplace. At times it seems as though he exists only as a producer and consumer of goods, or as an object of State administration.” (CA 49) The market-place and the state do not satisfy humans’ metaphysical needs. John Paul unearths the bases of the competing mythologies: “People lose sight of the fact that life in society has neither the market nor the State as its final purpose, since life itself has a unique value which the State and the market must serve.” (CA 49)

Centesimus annus concentrates on the dignity of humans, and the relationship of the individual to society, rather than on simply socialist or totalitarian movements of the last century, which the Holy Father judges as important symptoms but not causes in their own right. He therefore does not spend much time on them, but turns to their roots instead. He explains why such ideologies dehumanize people, particularly through their orientation to power. Evangelium vitae, concerned with bioethics, in its deepest sense addresses human dignity and the connection between this good and the truth of the gospel—the truth of God’s love, which many contemporary sexual, reproductive, and medical practices lack.

### 3.4 Church and Culture

The Church as guardian of the revealed truth carries a great burden and cannot acquiesce to trends and the easy or politically-correct way: “In the light of the sacred teaching of the Second Vatican Council, the Church thus appears before us as the social subject of responsibility for divine truth.” (RH 19) Nietzsche would perhaps have admired the strength and integrity John Paul demands from the Church in preaching the truth. The Church must transmit this truth through dialogue with the rest of society and its intelligentsia in various ways and at different levels: “As in preceding ages, and perhaps more than in preceding ages, theologians and all men of learning in the Church are today called to unite faith with learning and wisdom, in order to help them to combine with each other.” (RH 19) The pontiff does not call for fear or rejection of modernity, but dialogue where well-grounded theology itself can also gain from modern thought. He does not envision a Church in retreat from culture, though it must be sure of itself and must proclaim the gospel with more than words, and with words of love.

Based on such authenticity, the Church must not fear openness and dialogue with others. The Church, as John Paul reflects on Vatican II, can gain in its understanding of Jesus Christ by dialoguing with other religions. (RH 11) Rejecting triumphalism, Catholics must always behave respectfully when proclaiming the Gospel and interacting with society and individuals because of the sacred nature inherent in every human and therefore in every society and culture: “The *missionary* attitude always begins with a feeling of deep esteem for ‘what is in man’, for what man has himself worked out in the depths of his spirit concerning the most profound and important problems.” (RH 12) The missionary truly led by the Spirit cannot commit evil acts towards another culture or society: “It is a question of respecting everything that has been brought about in him by the Spirit, which ‘blows where it wills’.



The mission is never destruction, but instead is a taking up and fresh building, even if in practice there has not always been full correspondence with this high ideal.”(RH 12)

It would be easier in the short term for Christian missionaries to adopt a destructive attitude towards target cultures, notably through negative criticism or political power struggles. In accentuating a positive attitude, John Paul demands great patience; although such an attitude plants important seeds, it also takes much longer to develop into a Christian culture. This patience is tied to the pontiff’s certainty in the truth of the action. Once the truth is preached, if done so with love, it will inevitably produce results. This belies an almost blind faith in the truth, since the pontiff does not need to see every concrete result.

Yet John Paul is not naïve regarding the truth and politics, among other things. He boldly describes the game of power in which he calls himself to play a part, a game of good versus evil. The cultural-warrior pontiff believes, given the fascist, war-scarred twentieth-century, that the stakes could not be greater, and that ultimately only the gospel’s truth stands guard of human dignity and even the fall of civilization. The fifth part of Centesimus annus assesses the relationship between Church and culture, a theme also examined in Fides et ratio, Evangelium vitae, and Veritatis splendor. In Centesimus annus, John Paul writes of the primary importance of spreading the gospel of love when confronted by a power-ordered culture: “If one does not acknowledge transcendent truth, then the force of power takes over, and each person tends to make full use of the means at his disposal in order to impose his own interests or his own opinion, with no regard for the rights of others.” (CA 44) John Paul proposes love as the answer to Nietzsche's view of cultures.

Catholicism plays an important role in shaping culture, as power-hungry totalitarianism, for instance (a central theme of Centesimus annus), cannot exist without negating the love-oriented people of God. (CA 45) The Church opposes totalitarianism and plays an essential role in culture because it teaches society about human dignity by referring to transcendent values and truths.<sup>198</sup> This transcendence must influence democratic society because “if there is no ultimate truth to guide and direct political activity, then ideas and convictions can easily be manipulated for reasons of power.” (46 CA) Where the notion of the truth fails, a power game takes over and creates its own logic.

John Paul does not envisage an inflexible culture tied to an unyielding Church, because this does not reflect his idea of the truth. Rather, he envisages a dynamic culture, which thrives together with the equally dynamic Church, thus discounting the staid, unyielding, distantly authoritarian image of the Church that Nietzsche adopted: “From this open search for truth, which is renewed in every generation, *the culture of a nation* derives its character. Indeed, the heritage of values which has been received and handed down is always challenged by the young.” (CA 51) John Paul turns the inevitable challenges from youth into strength. Reconstructing the truth as a perpetual task constantly strengthens tradition. His faith in the truth inspires a bold disposition to youthful questioning or social change: “To challenge does not necessarily mean to destroy or reject *a priori*, but above all to put these values to

the test in one's own life, and through this existential verification to make them more real, relevant and personal” (51 CA)

In other words, John Paul calls for a personal tradition. He does not want the dead-weight of tradition any more than Nietzsche does. We see here, as elsewhere, that John Paul, in reconstructing the truth, agrees with the modern critic on many central points rather than simply rejecting everything about modern philosophy or from the Church's critics. Nietzsche's power-approach does not legitimately oppose the Church. Challenges with roots in love, humility, and the truth legitimately aid the Church to evangelize by teaching it how to relate better to ever-changing cultures.

The pontiff rejects holding worldly power in esteem because he possesses great faith in another force. For him, ultimately, the Holy Spirit brings and holds everything together: “The hidden breath of the Spirit will unify all” so that Christians can hear it say “go into the future together, nothing shall separate you.”<sup>199</sup> John Paul calls for faith in this force even when confronted with great destruction. He writes of the Spirit's role in the tragic stories of his own country: “I want to describe my Church in which, for centuries, / the word and the blood go side by side, / united by the hidden breath / of the Spirit.”<sup>200</sup>

## **Conclusion**

How does the pope reintroduce old or traditional symbols and ways of discussing society and the social nature of humans? Reconstructing the truth takes endless imagination, as John Paul must simultaneously bring together the individual and social in holistic ways in a scholarly and cultural environment in the West that encourages isolation of social groups and individuals, and hostility towards traditional practices and outlooks. For the pope, Christian community concerns great currents of *a priori* truths and their application at cultural, societal, and individual levels. Adopting this holistic approach, John Paul examines the same basic issues as they arise in the different public and private arenas. He roots his prayer-oriented simplicity in Poland's and Western civilization's rich Catholic origins. His call for heterogeneity differs from the one currently heard on North American university campuses. He anchors his multiplicity in the truth of Catholicism.

## SECTION II LANGUAGE ISSUES BEHIND THEOLOGICAL ISSUES

### Chapter 4

#### Foucault, Deconstruction, and Christianity

The term “postmodernism” is problematic because there exists a plurality of postmodernisms and because scholars and writers have not yet determined if and where postmodernism leaves modernism behind. Rather than wrestling with the countless aspects of the word, this thesis will focus on some of the writings of Michel Foucault (1926-84). The same applies to the term “deconstruction.” Foucault did not always associate himself with these terms, but the wider academic community has appropriated him for its work in these areas. “Modernism” was discussed in the Prolegomena and the chapters on Nietzsche. Just as Foucault is an intellectual grandchild of Nietzsche, and perhaps to some extent of all of Enlightenment and nineteenth-century thought, so postmodernism cannot always be separated clearly from modernism because of its own roots in the Western thought that preceded it. This thesis does not want to waste space delving into the differences between them, and chooses to treat postmodernism as one facet of modernism. John Richard Neuhaus briefly sums up the meaning or result of deconstruction in the West today: “Talk about right and wrong or true and false is out. Talk about what 'meets my needs' is in.”<sup>201</sup>

For Avery Dulles, “Labels such as ‘postmodern,’ ‘postliberal,’ and ‘postcritical’ are likely to be rather manipulative. They seem to put unfair demands on people to conform to what the speaker proclaims as the spirit of the age, with the implication that previous approaches are obsolete.”<sup>202</sup> Whether Dulles means that Foucault himself was deliberately manipulative in forming a part of the postmodern, deconstruction milieu, or whether those who co-opted Foucault for this movement (Foucault was, after all, not always a convinced member of this group) does not matter—Foucault's historicizing does demand a rigorous conformity by forcing people interested in his work to exclude Christianity, despite the religion being one of the pillars of Western civilization. Dulles adds, regarding postcritical theology, that “religions are predominantly characterized by their symbols. The Christian religion is a set of relationships with God mediated by the Christian symbols. These symbols are imbedded in the Bible and in the living tradition of the Christian community. The symbols do not operate in isolation; they mutually condition and illuminate one another. Christianity, therefore, cannot be reduced to a single symbol, even that of Jesus Christ.”<sup>203</sup>

In other words, Foucault has set up an intellectual world where Christianity simply cannot function. He has done this without directly attacking the religion, perhaps because he knew that with his system there was no need for such attacks. Foucault has attempted to change the nature of history as a subject—in how we view our history--and in doing so he marginalizes Christianity. In contrast, the Catholic theologian Jean Daniélou regards history as a Christian creation set up to serve the

religion: “But Christianity itself is historic; indeed, the historical approach to reality was originally a Christian discovery; and even today, it is only in virtue of Christian presuppositions that history can attain to its proper standing, because Christianity alone represents a positive and irreversible increment.”<sup>204</sup> Henri de Lubac's words are more correct about Foucault than about Nietzsche (the latter clearly did attack Christianity, and this frequent practice of his indicates that the German philosopher did not think that Christianity's demise was necessarily certain):

The God that Nietzsche announces and wants as dead is not only the God of metaphysics; it is quite precisely the Christian God... But he never outlines his refutation. For him, as well as for Comte and Feuerbach, God's death is an accomplished fact. Christian history can be nothing but a legend, and its dogma nothing but a mythology. It is useless to waste time there.<sup>205</sup>

Nietzsche opposes Christianity with, among other things, the will to power. Michel Foucault, though less poetically, also grounds his thought in an interpretation of power, and by this advances post-Enlightenment de-Christianization. Foucault's approach to the subject areas he examines, most specifically in *Les mots et les choses*, can inspire power-oriented thinkers in their approach to Christian doctrine and spirituality. His wide-ranging attack on Western civilization upsets all thought, learning, and tradition, including that issuing from and supporting Christianity. Perhaps the supposition of the present thesis could stand accused of taking Foucault out of context, but such grand thinkers are always lifted out of their original focus because of the range and applicability of their thinking. Also, the forcefulness of his writing and his sweeping generalizations, often without examples, invite a widening of his thinking. His particular brand of deconstruction in this way negatively affects Christianity. His history leaves no place for the faith, since it cannot imagine an entity as grand and far-reaching as Christianity, and so the faith decompresses within the confining walls of his history. He accomplishes this without attacking the religion directly.

## 4.1 Foucault's History

Christianity's tendency to an overarching view of things, including humans, history, nature, and the cosmos, and most of all its traditional claim to the truth, cannot find a place in a history that negates the possibility of holistic viewpoints. Foucault rejects tradition or other thematic ways of understanding history, and emphasizes divisions, limits, and “transformations that serve as new foundations, the rebuilding of foundations.”<sup>206</sup> This “new form of history” results from the unconventional types of questions Foucault invites us to ask and his concern for power. One wonders how unconventional those questions really are, given that the spirit in which they are asked is a spirit most common to the last two-hundred or so years of Western history, as John Richard Neuhaus reminds us: “As Lenin said, every economic, social, and political question comes down to ‘Who Whom’--who does what to whom...In the West today, variants of that doleful Marxist doctrine are found in literary criticism, radical feminism, and radical politics, where it is confidently declared that all human behavior is explained by the quest for power. Those who deny that are blithely dismissed as

naïve souls who are suffering from ‘false consciousness.’”<sup>207</sup> Foucault disputes unities and seeks criteria to isolate elements within these unities, asking, for instance, “What is an *oeuvre*? What is a theory? What is a concept? What is a text?”<sup>208</sup> The text, theory, or concept relates to the truth in no important way because truth, like these texts and *oeuvres*, mutates, means nothing, and depends on force and influence-seeking. The truth is just part of the power centers of a given culture. Hans Urs von Balthasar's sense of the spirituality of Christian history differs significantly:

The theology of history cannot allow one to declare the supreme sense of a given epoch or life in itself or at that time. Epochs and earlier lives receive their sense from time and ultimate destiny; past times are so minimally linked to the moment of the time of their existence that they have occupied and so little irrevocably past, that they are on the contrary directly accessible at every moment. This access determines their essence, which is of the past only in appearance, that this access continually transforms them with the passing of time.<sup>209</sup>

In contrast to Catholicism's claim to a continuing apostolic tradition and *kerygma*, Foucault emphasizes the important role of “discontinuities” in historical research, defining them as

Decisions, accidents, initiatives, discoveries, the material, which through analysis had to be rearranged, reduced, effaced in order to reveal the continuity of events. Discontinuity was the stigma of temporal dislocation that it was the historian's task to remove from history.<sup>210</sup>

Like Nietzsche, then, Foucault leaves nothing sacred. Oriented towards power, he practices a hermeneutics of suspicion towards the documents and monuments of Western civilization. He avoids the anti-Christian invective of the former. But his judgment of the banality or errors of conventional histories that his readers can apply to, for instance, “providential Christian history,” represents an effective way to undermine the religion. His mindset contradicts such a historicizing by inviting his reader to adopt the same power-oriented, dismissively cold attitude towards Christian truth-telling. Foucault refuses to reflect on the spiritual or psychological fallout, in a Christian or personalist sense, of such rejection, and invites the reader to equal callousness. He refutes any “total history” which he defines as seeking “to reconstitute the overall form of a civilization ... what is called metaphorically the ‘face’ of a period.”<sup>211</sup> Civilization, above all Christian civilization, loses its meaning and even its right to exist.

Foucault disorients every aspect of Christian history, including philosophy, ethics, the Bible, and the magisterium's teachings, by questioning every possibility for a holy sphere. Sacred space does not exist in this world view: “All the treasure of bygone days was crammed into the old citadel of this history: it was thought to be secure; it was sacralized; it was made the last resting-place of anthropological thought.”<sup>212</sup> Eliminating the possibility of holy space or time opens the way for historians and other scholars to examine exhaustively but unreflectively on anything and everything, leading many liberal thinkers to attack instinctively Christianity and its role in Western and world history. Criticize, criticize, criticize (and never, as encouraged by Catholicism, with a dose of self-criticism). The historian no longer guards tradition and civilization, but critiques and opposes it: “It was even thought that its most inveterate enemies could be captured and turned into vigilant

guardians.”<sup>213</sup> Foucault denies that historians can search for meaning, and invites us to pick history apart as if it is a machine, so we can better understand how it functions. The attitude, also similar to that of a microbiologist picking apart a flower to observe how it works, at times likens historians to pure scientists. Daniélou, conversely, holds to the Christian sense of history, a sense that John Paul also follows: “It is impossible to understand history unless you start from the conviction of universal sinfulness.”<sup>214</sup> It is impossible to understand Foucault's history unless you start from the full denial of Christianity, and above all from the denial of the conviction of sinfulness and other basic Christian teachings.

Foucault invites us to judge as impossible, outdated, and unimaginable any coherent, sweeping vision of humanity, history, providence, or any teleological purpose to one's actions. He calls the historian to an ever-more dizzying arrangement of the bits and pieces of information that had previously found meaning and place within a certain view of thematic or mythological (for example “Christian”) history: “What interplay of correlation and dominance exists between them; what may be the effect of shifts, different temporalities, and various rehandlings ... in short, not only what series, but also what ‘series of series’—or, in other words, what ‘tables’ it is possible to draw up.”<sup>215</sup>

Foucault judges as quaint the work which historians had previously accorded themselves: “All the critical concern pointed to one and the same end: the reconstitution, on the basis of what the documents say, and sometimes merely hint at, of the past from which they emanate.”<sup>216</sup> Although a possible task, he imagines that we have nevertheless outgrown our use for it. Foucault criticizes the sacred objects, attitudes, and events of history and historians as much as Nietzsche criticizes philosophy, with the former noting: “History must be detached from the image that satisfied it for so long, and through which it found its anthropological justification: that of an age-old collective consciousness that made use of material documents to refresh its memory.”<sup>217</sup>

Here Foucault declares his project of attempting to change through his reading of history our very identity at some profound or unknown immaterial place. In this way he challenges our being as deeply as Nietzsche does. The three thinkers—Foucault, Nietzsche, and John Paul—base the issue of culture and meaning in something immaterial (Nietzsche's will; John Paul's transcendence; Foucault's stubbornly vague theories) and emphasize “being” over “having.”

Yet Foucault's immaterial viewpoint does not necessarily provide for a treasure of meaning. He critiques the “old history” and its search for the deeper meaning to human events: “The project of a total history is one that seeks to reconstitute the overall form of a civilization, the principle—material or spiritual—of a society, the significance common to all the phenomena of a period, the law that accounts for their cohesion—what is metaphorically the face of a period.”<sup>218</sup> Foucault rejects a holistic view of events and material within a civilization or era: “A total description draws all phenomena around a single centre—a principle, a meaning, a spirit, a world-view, an overall shape; a general history, on the contrary, would deploy the space of a dispersion.”<sup>219</sup> He fails to describe what a society with such intellectual underpinnings would look like, but this seems like a form of anarchy. In the very

least, anarchist thinkers can seize on this idea and on Foucault's entire program. The theologian Johann Metz describes the results of this mindset regarding Nietzsche, which helps us see how Nietzsche's thought comes to fruition in the history of Foucault:

In Nietzsche ... there no longer is any finale, not even, as he explicitly emphasized, a 'finale into nothingness.'... Now the 'new man' becomes the 'pilgrim without a goal,' the 'nomad without an itinerary,' the 'vegabond' in a Dionysian key, for whom all the highlights in things and relationships have vanished. He becomes the 'flexible man' who drifts off goallessly... Now this 'new man' is less and less his own memory and more and more his own experiment, and nothing more. All the exigencies that come to us from our pasts are transformed into continually open options. And now the mystery of his redemption no longer finds its roots ... in remembering, but in forgetting, in a new cult of amnesia.<sup>220</sup>

Foucault admits that his work not only challenges a civilization-wide viewpoint, but also affects the individual. He does so by inviting an unhealthy and intolerant vilification and rejection of anyone holding the traditionally-holistic view: "As if ... we felt a particular repugnance to conceiving of difference, to describing separations and dispersions, to dissociating the reassuring form of the identical."<sup>221</sup> This parallels Nietzsche's call for an extreme anti-communal, anti-tradition individualism. Foucault points more specifically to his agenda with the individual, based on the above viewpoint: "As if we were afraid to conceive of the *Other* in the time of our own thought."<sup>222</sup> The elevation—or even sacralization—of the *Other* (similar to a feminist understanding) provides a base and energy to the attack on civilization.

Although Foucault denies any interest in a unifying view of history, he in fact offers his own. Granting his critique such a double standard and freedom enables him to attack his society's sense of heritage and social mores without taking any accountability. Through the concept of the *Other* he engages with tradition without accepting any ownership for our present society or the one that we are creating partly because of his deconstruction. He uses the *Other* as a quasi-unifying viewpoint: It integrates his deconstruction but offers nothing on which to build.

Within this half-consolidation, Foucault overtly rejects sweeping views of history: "To the decentring operated by the Nietzschean genealogy, it opposed the search for an original foundation that would make rationality the *telos* of mankind, and link the whole history of thought to the preservation of this rationality, to the maintenance of this teleology, and to the ever necessary return to this foundation."<sup>223</sup> Despite these words, he does practice an old-fashioned or "old history" confrontational style. He adopts an ideological, power-oriented position in the struggle for world-views in which he embroils himself:

The cry goes up that one is murdering history whenever, in a historical analysis—and especially if it is concerned with thought, ideas, or knowledge—one is seen to be using in too obvious a way the categories of discontinuity and difference, the notions of threshold, rupture and transformation, the description of series and limits. One will be denounced for attacking the inalienable rights of history and the very foundations of any possible historicity.<sup>224</sup>

De Lubac does admit to rupture in history, but in contrast to Foucault he views history at a civilizational-wide perspective, from which the Enlightenment and nineteenth-century philosophy was the great rupture with Christian civilization: “One day, Christianity no longer touched humans. They began to believe, on the contrary, that they could only develop in liberty if they first of all broke with the Church and then with the transcendent Being itself upon which the Christian tradition depended.”<sup>225</sup> Foucault rejects the power of tradition and adopts a radical, individualist position, untying events and individuals (one can only assume this in light of his vague disposition) from their heritage: “My aim is to uncover the principles and consequences of an autochthonous transformation that is taking place in the field of historical knowledge.”<sup>226</sup> He fails to define the human dimensions of this autochthonous variation or connect this change to any institutional or historical aspect of tradition. Again, the theologian Metz describes this from Nietzschean roots: “The biblical tidings about God, as a message about bounded time, are expressed in a culture that is primarily oriented by memory, by the memory of humanity's history of suffering. As we have seen, the message about the death of God, as a message about a time without finale, expresses itself in a culture of forgetfulness, in forms of cultural amnesia. The eternity of time exacts forgetfulness as the condition of happiness. 'Blessed are the forgetful' is the way Nietzsche put it.”<sup>227</sup> Daniélou offers another dimension of this forgetfulness, reminding us of what Foucault is rejecting and what we are all losing by accepting his teaching: “Synergism is one primary characteristic of the Christian theology of history.”<sup>228</sup> This is, as John Paul points out, a spiritual issue. How we view history matters to our spiritual growth and maturity, as individuals and societies. Foucault's history undermines Christian spirituality.

## 4.2 Foucault's Time

Foucault is indifferent to or unaware of the spirituality or mystery of history—that history contains different dimensions; he concerns himself with surface issues only. De Lubac notes that “If it is true that the reality of sacred history hides mysteries everywhere, that does not signify only that a deeper sense lies hidden to be discovered under each biblical fact, such as a secret virtue residing in each plant. The 'ocean of mysteries' that Origin pushes us to see in scripture is deeper. It includes a great variety of miracles [*merveilles*]. For instance the same episode, phrase, or word can hold several significations.”<sup>229</sup> Foucault rejects Christianity's notion of mystery as so aptly described by de Lubac. Foucault's critical reasoning rejects fathomless depth and uncharted spiritual horizons.

Foucault seems to remove humans from history and his entire project, and he largely accomplishes this through his use of time. His view emphasizes discourse rather than the individuals and culture that created such words: “Whether as a synchrony of positivities, or as an instantaneity of substitutions, time is avoided, and with it the possibility of a historical description disappears. Discourse is snatched from the law of development and established in a discontinuous atemporality.”<sup>230</sup> This lifts events and individuals out of their personal context, including religious, spiritual, or cultural. It mechanizes happenings and people by portraying the resulting discourse as



energy for one's politics or other needs. This mechanistic reading of culture and history reminds one of old Soviet ideologues or Marx himself speaking of history's and economics' unchanging, inevitable laws that make humans into cogs.

Foucault devalues human experience, since human experience is rooted in time: "That we no longer (for this study) relate discourse to the primary ground of experience, nor to the *a priori* authority of knowledge; but that we seek the rules of its formation in discourse itself."<sup>231</sup> His rejection or fear of authority, then, seems to dehumanize his thought, where discourse becomes the primary fact of history or at least his temporary truth. People contaminate discourse by perhaps giving it a subjectivity that he refuses to see in it. Again, his vagueness makes this discussion conjecture. Foucault distorts history. Richard Rorty notes that "You would never guess, from Foucault's account of the changes in European social institutions during the last three hundred years, that during that period suffering had decreased considerably, nor that people's chances of choosing their own styles of life increased considerably."<sup>232</sup> We can say the same about Foucault's ignorance—self-taught or natural—concerning spiritual matters.

Not surprisingly, Foucault's discussion largely focuses on one dimension of people in The Archaeology of Knowledge and Les mots et les choses: "The speech act is not what took place just prior to the movement when the statement was made (in the author's thought or intentions); it is not what might have happened, after the event itself, in its wake, and the consequences that it gave rise to; it is what occurred by the very fact that a statement was made—and precisely this statement (and no other) in specified circumstances."<sup>233</sup> He makes the statement master over humans and our knowledge and history, and refuses to speculate on the underlying human motivation and significance of a given statement. People seem to serve this discourse rather than the inverse. He fails to use his investigation to illuminate human nature and makes people incidental to his discussion's goal. Thus with mental illness, he remains cold and distant to the person, and interested uniquely in the words that a given society has constructed around mental illness: "In the cultural perception that lasted until the end of the eighteenth-century of the insane, the insane are different only in the sense that they do not recognize difference; they see everywhere only resemblances and signs of resemblance; for them, all signs resemble, and all resemblances are the same as signs."<sup>234</sup> He applies this approach of indifference and distance to more than simply the history of science or politics, using it for example to judge the deepest of human experiences that we put into words.

Though Foucault usually focuses on Natural History, The Analysis of Wealth, Grammar, and Madness, he does take the time to single out, of all things, intimate religious experience (a topic he otherwise ignores), as if emphasizing that nothing transcends his inquiry. He treats prayer itself as simply a speech act ready for dissection with all other statements: "[T]he act itself does not remain the same throughout the series of statements; that in a prayer there are as many limited, successive, and juxtaposed acts of prayer as demands formulated by distinct statements."<sup>235</sup> His method reduces

spirituality to a series of statements for examination, where his evaluation reigns supreme over the inner or deeper sense of the prayers. The heart, never mind the soul, does not exist for Foucault.

Foucault's emphasis on discourse supersedes time itself. People or things only exist through discourse's validation, and in turn an enunciative field authenticates that discourse: "Generally speaking, one can say that a sequence of linguistic elements is a statement only if it is immersed in an enunciative field, in which it then appears as a unique element."<sup>236</sup> The rules of discourse actually define humans' place in their own history: "At the very root, the statement is divided up into an enunciative field in which it has a place and a status, which arranges for its possible relations with the past, and which opens up for a possible future."<sup>237</sup> Foucault seems to conceive of humans, or at least a significant part of each of us, as a product of our statements, and he thereby establishes discourse and its words as more real than the people who speak them: "Every statement is specified in this way: there is no statement in general, no free, neutral, independent statement; but a statement always belongs to a series or a whole, always plays a role among other statements, deriving support from them and distinguishing itself from them: it is always part of a network of statements, in which it has a role, however minimal it may be, to play."<sup>238</sup> This objectification of discourse tempts us to define humans solely according to the words we produce and write down. The inquiry potentially enslaves us to our words or to some interpretation of those words.

Relationships between life and this scrutiny do exist, although Foucault's vagueness again prevents any definitive judgment: "Archaeology does not deny the possibility of new statements in correlation with 'external' events. Its task is to show on what condition a correlation can exist between them, and what precisely it consists of."<sup>239</sup> This life seems mechanistic rather than human or biological, where Foucault has removed the possibility of God, soul, or religious purpose to his investigation: "And in a collective recitation—a prayer or a lesson—how many statements are produced? How can one establish the identity of the statement through all these various forms, repetitions, and transcriptions?"<sup>240</sup> Rather than witnessing to one's spiritual journey, prayer becomes part of the human patrimony about to endure the violence of this examination.

The strength of Foucault's methodology lies in its attempt to build new relationships between historical events, though these connections seem entirely arbitrary and without moral or deeper direction: "Archaeology, then, takes as its model neither a purely logical schema of simultaneities; nor a linear succession of events; but it tries to show the intersection between necessarily successive relations and others that are not so."<sup>241</sup> Given the dehumanized or detached manner of this investigation, these new relationships could bear almost any result, good or bad. Lacking moral sense, this ideology can become an unchained beast. Freeing humans and history of any moral or teleological sense and even releasing history of its human element can invite any kind of use for the methodology.

Foucault aims to create more possibilities and individual freedom by expanding our horizons with this model: "To constitute an archaeological history of discourse, then, one must free oneself of two models that have for so long imposed their image: the linear model of speech (and partly at least

of writing), in which all events succeed one another, without any effect of coincidence and superposition; and the model of the stream of consciousness whose presence always eludes itself in its openness to the future and its retention of the past.”<sup>242</sup> This seems to offer absolute freedom as the only moral guide. This indulgence invites extreme individualism, independence, and separation from all time-honored custom or spiritual practice. In this way, Foucault’s freedom radically opposes that which John Paul espouses. Another issue with this last thought of Foucault centers on the lack of reasons offered as to why we should do this, or the lack of moral scrutiny of simply dropping from centuries-long usage certain models of speech. Foucault empties radical intellectual change of moral circumstance. His methodology’s moral indifference to great or sudden change in our way of thinking, writing, or investigation invites careless and callous modification and change for change’s sake. Johann Metz sums up the spiritual issues that lie in the wake of such a spirituality of history: “So today there is a cult of unlimited experimentation. Everything is possible; anything can be created. Yes indeed. But there is also a new cult of fate. Anything can become obsolete. The will to experiment continues to be undercut by an unconfessed, unrecognized resignation.”<sup>243</sup>

### **4.3 Foucault and Christianity**

Joseph Ratzinger offers us a sense of the distortion of and rebellion against the Christian heritage and truth by modern and postmodern philosophers:

And if in modernity people wanted to express a notion of freedom in order to assert autonomy, and did it, then it was done, in my view, mostly in opposition to this absolutism of sin ... That is also why neither modernity nor postmodernity will let themselves have anything to do with the history of salvation and the history of God anymore, which means that we theologians are faced with the challenge of studying the relationship between suffering and guilt afresh... Jesus' awareness of a person did not focus first on his or her sin, but on the suffering of the other.<sup>244</sup>

In this sense, Foucault writes in opposition to Christianity and the general Western heritage just as much as Nietzsche does. Foucault continues the Nietzschean rebellion, with a different style and plan of attack. Foucault's New History not only tries to have nothing to do with Christianity, but as mentioned it leaves no room for Christianity. One has to choose between a Christian view of history and a Foucaultian.

Foucault’s writings propose theological or mythological nihilism, the uprooting of all religious or secular traditions. He refuses to guide the reader on interpreting or giving significance to what he describes as a meaningless junket of statements and deconstructed documents. Despite his advocacy for freedom, he disrespects any comprehensive view of a chosen chronological period and parallels Nietzsche in providing the reader with only one possible attitude: “The series described, the limits fixed, the comparisons and correlations made are based not on the old philosophies of history, but are intended to question teleologies and totalizations.”<sup>245</sup> This constant questioning and belittling of historical studies outlines his comprehensive view of the historian’s trade and of the subject itself.

Foucault discards all permanent sense to history, and rejects the existence of certainty or sacred space. This one absolute represents Foucault's only unchanging attitude towards history: History contains no meaning or great mythology, or at least none of more importance than children's literature. This empties Western civilization of a uniting myth.

Foucault's absolute calls us to question ceaselessly, but without underlying intentions. Any arrangement of history's facts and figures, and weight assigned to them, must eventually face a disassembly and reconstitution, or a permanent dissolution and elimination for a different, preferably novel series of facts, figures, interpretations, and meanings. He charges the face and soul of contemporary history and civilization with insignificance (John Paul highlights his concern for such a disposition several times). Accomplishments, struggles, successes, or spirituality possess no meaning, and raise his suspicions. Naturally, this methodology threatens Christianity by inviting ceaseless, meaningless, and irresponsible questioning of each aspect of the religion. Healthy questioning with a point to it—as among young people striving to understand the world, John Paul points out—can strengthen the Church. But aimless, ceaseless questioning in Foucault's manner can develop into a powerful and even violent nihilism. This perspective states that God, tradition, and all institutions are dead, and people as groups or individuals can will together any sort of nonsense or magnificence out of all of these spare parts of culture and history that no longer connect into a grand design or vision.

Yet things are not as simple as this with Foucault because, as mentioned, his methodology contains more underlying principle than he admits, and this underlying notion invites opposition to Christianity. His anti-Christianity grants knowledge the sense or spiritual significance that we decide to accord it, and he believes that we give it that sense for reasons of power alone. He portrays knowledge as moving within a self-contained world, almost oblivious to the outside: "This appearance of the language of knowledge frees an entire historical field that did not exist in previous epochs. Something like a history of knowledge becomes possible."<sup>246</sup> This last sentence reflects a universe of words wrapped up in itself, guilty, perhaps, of solipsism. Rather than the world or some divine revelation infusing itself into human consciousness or the science of knowledge, humans themselves take the first step and later developmental stages of understanding the world. Foucault ignores any truth in itself, but addresses the wheels of knowledge. This invites us to become efficient at critical, deconstructing scrutiny, but inefficient or unwilling to build a new tradition or contribute to an existing one such as Christianity. His highest reality, epistemology, grants the foremost meaning to humans: "In images, that which one imagines becomes that which one knows, and in turn, that which one knows becomes that which one represents everyday."<sup>247</sup> Some unidentified force, presumably human, determines what we know, but it lacks accountability or any sort of semi-permanence.

We are really talking about two different worlds, and the one (Foucault's) imposes itself on the other (John Paul's). Foucault disconnects knowledge from the truth. Indifferent to the truth or its existence, he does not make it an issue, except by portraying it as a game of power or as an expression of other, archeological currents. Les mots et les choses states the changing nature of the force of

knowledge, without finding any deeper spiritual meaning in it or in related modifications: “The former connection to the *text* by which the Renaissance defined erudition is now transformed and becomes in the classical age connected to the pure element of *language*.”<sup>248</sup> His study of language issues related to, as one example, the Reformation and its religious upheavals, something that he never accomplished, could contribute to Christian tradition. Instead, he remains silent on this issue, arbitrarily (one assumes) choosing the topics of his investigation of discourse.

Foucault ties knowledge to power, though as previously stated, unlike with Nietzsche’s new mythologizing, he leaves his argument undeveloped. He portrays words and learning as self-contained. He does not envision any infusion of grace, revelation, biblical truth, or divine wisdom in Renaissance thought: “Even when meant for publication, knowledge during the Renaissance remained within a closed space.”<sup>249</sup> He relieves progress itself of any Christian or other teleological meaning, though because he has no specific mythological agenda other than power, he does so in a manner much less offensive to Christians than Nietzsche does: “In its roots, progress, as it is defined in the eighteenth century, is not a movement within history, but is the result of a fundamental connection of space and language.”<sup>250</sup> In other words, he finds the heart and soul of progress in discourse and words, rather than in humans and their institutions. He attacks traditional views of the Renaissance as spiritual, religious, and psychological upheavals brought about by an increased individualism. While his analysis does offer new insights into even the Christian tradition, its underlying nihilism and atheism negate or marginalize the whole idea of a Christian history or civilization. Regarding Western history, he negates any Christian spirituality to what is in fact, a Christian history. This counters Catholic thinking as exemplified by French Dominican Yves Congar (1904-95): “The Christian Tradition (or Christianity as Tradition) has its origin in the Father handing [livraison] everything over to Jesus Christ; it is itself, in its deepest sense, the handing over [livraison] of *Jesus Christ*.”<sup>251</sup> Again Congar notes that “Jesus Christ himself left nothing written, but left us Christianity: not simply doctrinal statements, but the reality of being saved and of the communion, the reality of the New Covenant.”<sup>252</sup>

In the face of this concrete, spiritual and historical Catholic Tradition, Foucault fails to offer examples for many of his insights, leaving them vague and undeveloped. How does this vagueness inhere to his thought? It invites a sense of irresponsibility and even airiness (in terms of attacking Christianity or Western civilization out of boredom or for fun) or, conversely, a tone of gravity and scholarly drama, as if he is founding some great new methodology to challenge our society, and is too important to busy himself with the *minutiae* needed to support his grand theories and help lesser intellects understand. His grand theories and sweeping statements imply serious scholarship, but perhaps his thought and theories contain much less substance than a first glance suggests. He disintegrates the old-growth of culture that takes centuries and millennia to develop, yet fails to replace it with anything substantial. This criticism can also apply to liberalism and feminism: The tendency to destroy and perpetually criticize, without ever going through the tough work and sacrifice

of building culture. (This contrasts sharply with John Paul's ideas of heroic sacrifice for the faith, embodied most perfectly for the pontiff in the martyrs of ancient and twentieth-century Christianity.)

Foucault's polite indifference towards Christianity and his detached manner of eliminating the religion and the wider Western tradition buttress the modern philosophies and ideologies that concern John Paul. Foucault's courteous and rational currents of thought differ from Nietzsche's somewhat nutty-man's raging. The French philosopher demonstrates the reasonableness and politeness of the anti-Christian intellectual. His indifference to the religion makes him the worst kind of anti-Christian thinker: His writings undermine Christianity even though they focus almost entirely on other issues, despite the centrality of the Church and its theology in intellectual and wider developments over the past two millennia. Nietzsche has done Christianity a great favor by taking it so seriously. With his faultfinding, ecclesiastical leaders such as John Paul have been able address those many shortcomings in the faith that Nietzsche assails. With writers such as Foucault, conversely, Christians and their leaders can remain comfortable and pretend that the worst part of the *Kulturkampf* has ended, when in fact all pillars of stability necessary for Christian tradition and the remains of Christian civilization have slid away almost imperceptibly.

Foucault's rudeness and menace to Christianity issues in part from his attack on historical practice, just as much of Nietzsche's confrontation with Christianity proceeds from his remarks on philosophy and metaphysics. First, Foucault treats the "old-history" that had served Christian tradition well with the condescension of someone discussing a defunct ideology or dated intellectual fad: "For the history of ideas, the appearance of difference indicates an error, or a trap; instead of examining it, the clever historian must try to reduce it: a smaller difference, and beneath that an even smaller one, and so on until he reaches the ideal limit, the non-difference of perfect continuity."<sup>253</sup> This implies that old-history scholars superstitiously fear contradiction or rupture (when, in fact, as one example of John Paul's acceptance of contradiction, he addressed many of the Church's past sins, including concerning individuals such as Galileo or entire communities such as Orthodox Christians).

Second, like Nietzsche, Foucault portrays his intellectual stance as the mature one, in contrast to the outdated modes of thinking (into which Christianity, for the most part, undoubtedly fits): "Archaeology, on the other hand, takes as the object of its description what is usually regarded as an obstacle: its aim is not to overcome differences, but to analyse them, to say what exactly they consist of, to *differentiate* them."<sup>254</sup> One assumes that he denies that Christians would have the capacity to accomplish this. At the first sign of an "obstacle," do Christians head for cover under their churches and Bibles?

Confronted with Foucault's vagueness, this study asks whether Foucault would think Christianity has the capacity for mature thought. In its own self-understanding and proclamation of the truth, can Christianity address inconsistency, rupture, and differences? Or is Christianity stubbornly immature and superstitious? Foucault parallels Nietzsche, though vaguely and indirectly, in marking Christianity out as outdated and incapable of coping with modernity and "mature scholarship." Can

one be a Christian and therefore accept its truth, and still have the intellectual vigor, honesty, and integrity for which Foucault here calls? Can Christianity not develop an intellectual life with enough finesse to confront the following? “The appearance of a new positivity is not indicated by a new sentence—unexpected, surprisingly, logically unpredictable, stylistically deviant—that is inserted into a text, and announces either the opening of a new chapter, or the entry of a new speaker. It is an event of a quite different type.”<sup>255</sup> Not only to satisfy itself in its own seminaries, but in the wider scholarly and non-scholarly world, faced with the following indirect but powerful criticism of Foucault, how can Christianity address the following: “It is understandable that some minds are so attached to all these old metaphors by which, for a century and a half, history (movement, flux, evolution) has been imagined, that they see archaeology simply as the negative of history and the crude affirmation of discontinuity; the truth is that they cannot accept that change should be cleansed of all these adventitious models, that it should be deprived of both its primacy as a universal law and its status as a general effect, and that it should be replaced by the analysis of various transformations.”<sup>256</sup> Avery Dulles gives us some indication that a basic starting point in a dialogue with Foucault is not easy but starts with reflecting on the practice of criticism: “Was there ever a precritical era in theology? In a sense, no. Theology is by its very nature a disciplined reflection on faith, one that attempts to distinguish methodically between truth and illusion and to ground its affirmations on principles rather than on blind impulses. In that sense it involves the use of criticism.”<sup>257</sup> Foucault’s criticism aims at damaging theology while the criticism about which Dulles writes aims to enhance theology.

Third, emphasizing transformations rather than tradition opposes Christianity in another way as well. The emphasis on flux destroys Western history’s connection with its Christian, teleological truth. This truth is just another of the discourses or transformations to face analysis before another discourse or positivity, perhaps completely unrelated to Christianity, comes along. In the case of Swiss theologian Hans Küng (1928), this analysis is indeed related to, and pointed at, Christianity. Gregory Baum more succinctly than Dulles locates the impassible distance between Catholic tradition and Foucault: “In this affirmation of pluralism, postmodern thinkers even welcome the return of religion, as long as it is not monotheistic and makes no claim on history...for the postmodern generation, celebrations of the sacred are simply self-referential as is every other language game. Postmodern culture rejoices in polytheism. In this perspective, biblical monotheism appears intrinsically violent: it promotes the *ratio* for totalitarian domination.”<sup>258</sup>

#### **4.4 Hans Küng: A Case Study**

The inner Catholic theological turmoil of the post-conciliar period, exemplified by Hans Küng, reflects the depth of anti-Catholicism in society and even within the Church itself. Küng’s way of reading history and doing theology closely parallels Foucault’s attitude towards history and power.

The power-paradigm (extreme individualism, scientism, capitalism, and materialism) has influenced theology itself, and some Christians, including many leaders and teachers, have ignored a

sense of love or truth inhering to the religion and the Church, opting for a justice-oriented (and based on that, frequently anti-Catholic) praxis devoid of love. Even Christian thinkers, then, have been attacking the faith. With Hans Küng we have the theologian-as-Church-critic: As its primary task, armed with a hermeneutics of suspicion (or perhaps a hermeneutics of contempt), theology no longer announces the Kingdom of God, but instead complains *ad nauseam* about the structural, historical, spiritual and patriarchal sinfulness of the Christian community. Ecclesiastical history no longer witnesses to the inexorable march towards the eschaton. Instead, theologians proclaim relativity and denounce the unforgivable sins of Church leaders and missionaries. Theology no longer apologizes in the old sense of the word, but in the modern.

Küng, like Matthew Fox or a plethora of feminist theologians claiming to practice prophetic ministry, condemns most of the Christian Church and its history, and announces membership in another, more innocent, victimized part of that community. John Richard Neuhaus succinctly summarizes such thinkers, who have failed to make a true commitment to their church:

They resent it when the magisterial parent tries to discipline her unruly children, but the acknowledgment that the Magisterium is the parent is essential to the rebellion. They fervently declare their anticipatory obedience to the next pope or the next council or to the pope and the council after that, confident that the parent will at last come around to agreeing with them. They would be at a great loss were the parent simply to abdicate authority. For the habitually dissident, too, ecclesial authority provides a secure identity.<sup>259</sup>

Such scholars make the majority of the Church, the apparently sinful Church, into the “other,” even as they rail against those sinful Christians having constructed countless “others” (witches, homosexuals, Jews, women, heretics). This fractured and deconstructed community contrasts with, among other realities, Augustine’s much-cited and formerly-practiced belief of *ecclesia* as a united group of saints and sinners. In his short rendition of Christian history, Kleine Geschichte der katholischen Kirche, Küng deliberately chooses to narrow his topic of Catholic history to that of the papacy, the most controversial, power-oriented, and corrupt aspect of the tradition. He skips most theological developments, the history of saints and spiritual teachers, the achievements of Catholic art, architecture, and music, or the role of the laity throughout the ages (except to claim repeatedly that the hierarchy has severely limited the role of laypeople). He holds the same view of lay people that Nietzsche does: They are passive, uneducated victims, herd thinkers who fail therefore to have a mature, authentic relationship with God.

Küng’s rendition of early Christian history exemplifies theological deconstruction. Even when historical facts could favor the teaching of the magisterium, as concerning the early development of stable ecclesiastical leadership and the continuity of the apostles and Christian theology, Küng searches for other explanations, perhaps more out of the habit of condemning the Church than out of good historical research. Thus while the author does admit to some form of hierarchy in proto-Christianity, with little footnoting proof he states: “Without a doubt authority and power existed within the proto-Church, but the spirit of these words of Jesus was not patriarchal in nature, but



concerned instead with serving and the well-being of the whole.”<sup>260</sup> It has become so easy and fashionable to attack and criticize the Church and Christian tradition nowadays that, in Küng’s work, we need little proof for the contrast between the pure, loving, nearly-non-hierarchical proto-Church, and the terrible machine of patriarchal power and abuse that it supposedly became. The absence of footnotes seems overconfident and superficial, given the book’s sweeping claims about so many different aspects of Church history. His irresponsible anti-Catholic mythologizing reads more like a power-oriented ideological manifesto than a history based on proper documentation and a balanced search for meaning.

The stark comparison between different areas of the Church also reflects Küng’s obsession with Catholicism’s power-structures, something that unbalances the entire book. His comparison of post-first century Church history with the idealized founding era repeatedly distorts Church history: “So in this way did not the church henceforth work as a bulwark, and not in its founder's spirit as a community of free, basic peers, of brothers and sisters?”<sup>261</sup> In contrast with these words, even the most casual observer of history can find countless examples of the original spirit of Jesus and his followers being lived out in the following centuries. Conversely, division and power struggles, as found in *Acts of the Apostles*, inhere to proto-Christianity as much as to every era of the faith.

Küng commits a common sin of modern Western thinkers in condemning the apparently uncritical narrowness and medieval and modern intolerance of the Church, while himself uncritically accepting the modern or post-modern thought on which he bases his argument. Rather than admitting any positive aspect to the Catholic Church’s protectiveness of its domain in its concern for Catholics ravaged by modernity (such as by the industrial revolution or the violent revolutionary tendency of nineteenth-century European politics), he dismisses early modern Catholicism as “triumphalistic.”<sup>262</sup> One could argue just as easily that the industrialists and revolutionaries were the triumphalists. One could argue that secularists are now triumphant, especially in their slander of all things Catholic.

Küng aims to remake the entire Church in his image by attacking those parts of it that do not fit into his view. He thus portrays this era of Catholic history in its ugliest side: “The Jesuit Order, which grew distant from its founder's ideals and became ensnared in the politics and business of this world, was hated as the agent of the papacy and the exponent of anti-modernism, and was finally disbanded by the pope himself at the urging of absolutist rulers in Portugal, Spain, and France.”<sup>263</sup> Through this vision of the papacy, he paints post-Reformation Catholicism as weak, sterile, inflexible, and intolerant, while refusing to adequately examine the ills of this era against which the Church was, some would claim, valiantly fighting: “Thus the popes sunk ...into meaninglessness and reacting to the period's defiance only with stereotypes, sterile protests, and confusing judgments. Catholic princes, self-interestedly promoting the status quo, were often the unique support of the papacy.”<sup>264</sup> Here again the author fails to place the Church's actions in context. The dearth of context means that readers cannot decide for themselves if the ecclesiastical authorities acted correctly or not, and whether or not the papacy's only support came from princely also-rans.

Küng parallels Foucault's atomized reading of history which invites a distorted view useful only for the political power interests of the author, because naturally the author only extracts from history those events or issues that support the argument. Küng refuses to interpret the Catholic Church's reaction against the French Revolution from within the wider historical background of the time, only briefly and superficially recognizing the turmoil and revolutionary violence of the 1790s and Napoleonic era. He does, however, admit that the lower clergy tended to support the basic aims of the Revolution and that a high number of priests fell victim to its massacres.<sup>265</sup> But this once again highlights, in his view, the corrupt, power-hungry, and removed nature of the hierarchy (and of course, as a rebellious priest-theologian, isn't he a lot like those priests of the French Revolution, valiantly fighting evil power structures?) He fails, though, to highlight the integrity incumbent in the Church's opposition to such a violent, anti-traditional movement, emphasizing instead Rome's feudalistic distance and arrogance: "And Rome? Pope Pius VI himself [was] an aristocrat."<sup>266</sup> As if every member of the nobility was somehow guilty for the injustices of Europe—there again, stereotypes without historical evidence. The pope receives automatic condemnation from the author because of his birthright, something over which no one has control. He describes the ensuing split in France with no admiration for the Church's refusal to blindly follow the times and forgo its own prophetic voice: There was "the new, militantly lay-republican culture of the ruling liberal bourgeoisie and the settled-in conservative Catholic clerical and royalist, later papist counter- or sub-culture of the church. The time of the official Catholic church in a cultural ghetto had begun."<sup>267</sup> The French Revolution during this time did not seem faithful to its own ideals, so naturally the Church opposed it (though there were many less honorable reasons for the Church's resistance and so the Church would have disapproved even of a less violent revolution), as violence seemed the sole prerogative in France at this time.

France's revolutionary destruction compares, over a shorter period of time, to that of the Thirty Years' War. Western civilization (with Küng as one example) never totally discredited the Revolution, and revolutionary or political violence, in the same way that it did theological violence. Küng fails to explain why, but keeps grinding away at the "reactionary" papacy when another point of view would show the hierarchy as, perhaps, protective of its followers just as liberals after 1648 attempted to defend against another series of religious wars: "The papal states in the nineteenth century were the most politically and socially backwards political entity in Europe, in which the popes spoke out against even railroads, gas lighting, suspension bridges, and other inventions."<sup>268</sup> As in his discussion of the post-Reformation papacy, he fails to paint an adequate picture of the historical landscape against which the Catholic Church was reacting, where dramatic economic change, paved in part, for instance, by slavery in the United States, Latin America, and elsewhere, led to so much suffering and upheaval.

Even when discussing positive aspects of Catholic history, the author refuses to relinquish his anti-papacy and his refusal to tell the wider story. While Küng does allude to the spiritual renewal of nineteenth-century Catholicism—"There was in the nineteenth century doubtlessly a new awakening of

religious power in the clergy and laity, in the Ordered communities, in missions, in charity, solidarity, and especially also in the piety of the people<sup>269</sup>—he cannot resist another shot at the papacy and popular piety, denouncing “this emotional-sentimental reverence for the Holy Father, not seen in the Middle Ages nor in the Counter-Reformation.”<sup>270</sup> He avoids spending more time on those flourishing movements of spiritual renewal that tried to practice faithfully the love and zeal of first-century Christianity because they do not support his condemnation of the Catholic Church as structurally and spiritually dysfunctional. An even-handed account of these Catholic movements could portray the Church as a healthy spiritual community, something that would disprove the need for deep structural change. If the hierarchy was so corrupt, how could the people and various church organizations have experienced such spiritual awakening? The Küng-formula demands a swift overpass of the positive events and developments of Christianity and a return to the negatives, his theological bread-and-butter.

Given his above statement on Catholic missionary work and ethical renewal, his following comments on the papacy issue from his loathing of the institution rather than from the historical reality of Catholicism in general. They reflect Küng’s twin handicaps of an overly-narrow view of his Church’s history and personal cynicism and bitterness: “Tightening up [Festigung] on the inside and isolation on the outside!...Out in the modern world cold religious indifference, anti-Catholicism [Kirchenfeindlichkeit], and faithlessness could reign. Inside papalism and mariology warmed things: emotional security through every kind of popular piety.”<sup>271</sup> Klein Geschichte der katholischen Kirche criticizes the tendency of “the Church” to distance itself from the people, but this above writing can only issue from a sanctimonious theologian stuck in his ivory tower and himself removed from people and their piety. Congar knows something that Küng clearly does not, as in the former’s humble words: “Tradition is not sterile capital mechanically conserved: it knows a development, a deployment, by which it enriches itself from within, without additions from the outside.”<sup>272</sup> The nineteenth-century church, one could argue, found its spiritual energy within itself. Even Küng admits that the century saw many spiritual strengths. He fails to make the possible connection between the church’s turn inward and development of this popular piety, with Catholicism’s spiritual blossoming.

We see Küng’s lack of a pastoral or personalist viewpoint from his detached, calm arrogance, and from his cold analysis of the reaction to Darwin’s theory of evolution. He fails to account for how this theory so deeply upset the world views of individuals and societies (and not only of the Catholic hierarchy), and does so even to this day! He castigates the Church for promulgating as Church doctrine Mary’s Immaculate Conception in 1854, which he terms, and probably rightly so, as a reaction to Darwin. Yet, one could just as easily accuse science and not the Church as arrogant and triumphalist. Equally important, this Marian doctrine developed from a widely-held popular belief. With this new teaching, the Church was, in other words, doing something Küng expressly denies it ever did: Giving voice to the spiritual lives of the common, illiterate, and poor Catholic masses and peasants. Küng misses this because he regards the Church hierarchy as unattached rather than as profoundly rooted in its people. He turns the doctrine into papal reactionism, arrogance, and lust for

power because this is what he chooses to see. This once again parallels Foucault's historical method of lifting bits and pieces out of history and assigning them meaning that they may not possess but that suit the ideological needs of the author.

Küng ultimately portrays no faith in or understanding of the Holy Spirit in church history. Küng is a post-Christian theologian influenced by the same spirit as Foucault, and we can see this by contrasting him with the words of Yves Congar:

Möhler sees in tradition that which effects the unity of the Church as Church coming from Christ's teaching and from Pentecost: by the Holy Spirit, the truth taught by Christ interiorizes and becomes, by love, the inspiration of communion. The Holy Spirit creates, at the same time, from within, the unity of the community and the organs or expressions of its genius, that is, of its tradition.<sup>273</sup>

Küng falls into Foucault's trap of isolating tidbits rather than seeing the wider web of Christian spirituality, where the great fact of Christianity—Christ's death and resurrection—subsumes all other facts. Küng fails to read Christian history with a Christian perspective, as Avery Dulles demands us to: “Any individual can lose or betray the faith, but the Church as a whole has the promise of indefectibility because Christ has promised to be with it through his Spirit to the end of the age.”<sup>274</sup> Küng sees the same church that Nietzsche and Foucault see; Küng is a Nietzschean theologian because he reads church history separately from the work of the Holy Spirit, as if the Holy Spirit has been somewhere other than operating in the church. This is the result of a hermeneutics of suspicion or, more likely, of contempt. It rejects Augustine's church of saints and sinners.

## Conclusion

Congar explains that tradition as a treasure cannot exist in a world of isolated tidbits of unconnected, meaningless history: “Tradition thus takes on a second sense. It was first the transmission of a sacred deposit just as it is. But it is also the explanation of what this tradition does by the fact of its being lived and defended, generation after generation, by the people of God. Tradition guards, but in a living way and in a history that is not empty; it therefore builds up treasure.”<sup>275</sup> A war of attrition exists between deconstruction and Christianity in the Western world, as the religion faces inner and outer attacks, with the following stance easily practiced by some Catholic theologians such as Küng: “The difference between the critical and the genealogical enterprise is not one of object or field, but of point of attack, perspective and delimitation.”<sup>276</sup> Good biblical exegesis as well as good Christian history can fall prey to this way of thinking, and we can easily end up with an irreverent, Hans Küng-like approach to the Bible and Christian tradition. Neither side can offer détente, since deconstruction constantly chips away at Christianity and at every level imaginable. Nietzsche outlined this battle against the religion. Is it possible for the Church to wage this war within philosophy, or should Catholic leaders turn their back on the subject and modern views in general, similarly to Orthodox Christianity and certain American evangelical Protestants. Billy Graham, for instance, rejects any form of biblical criticism as found in modern Catholic and liberal Protestant seminaries for

fear of a slippery slope that would, he fears, eventually lead to the disintegration of every article of faith and therefore of revelation itself. John Paul undoubtedly accepts the danger of the slippery slope and thinks he can preach the gospel from within it. The Holy Father believes that revelation, as the truth, cannot be disintegrated by philosophy and that Christians can and should embrace modern philosophy as one tool of evangelization.

## Chapter 5

### Thought and Epistemology

Yves Congar adopts tough, bold language to demonstrate the necessity of traditional Catholic thinking: “We question Protestantism. We challenge it to draw the conclusions from the fact, attested to in the economy of salvation, that Revelation does not have an individualist and private sense, but is social and public. Also, we ask it to take seriously the promise of the presence of the Holy Spirit in the sense that this presence operates in the Church.”<sup>277</sup> This comment inspires a parallel question for Michel Foucault and other purveyors of an unending secularism that in France in the post-Sartre era has led to endless fragmentation: What are the social and public consequences to the attacks on belief and (more central to this thesis) why have you not taken seriously “the presence of the Holy Spirit in the sense that this presence operates in the Church”?

Michel Foucault follows the standard Western paradigm of individual, subjective, and relativistic knowledge free of central dogma, while John Paul places revelation and therefore God at the center of what we can know. The Holy Father adopts what Avery Dulles refers to as a “postcritical” stance: “[T]he critical program was animated by a bias toward doubt, with the implied assumption that the royal road to truth consists in uprooting all voluntary commitments. In the estimation of critical thinkers, probity requires one to abandon any convictions that can be doubted rather than to maintain such convictions in the face of possible doubt.”<sup>278</sup> Again, Dulles' words of the general rejection of criticism echo John Paul's attitude towards an aggressively critical approach: “[T]he critical program neglects the social dimension of knowledge. Implicitly it assumes that each individual is in a position to command all the evidence relevant for solving the question at hand...[T]he critical program overlooked the tacit dimension of knowledge. It gave no cognitive value to what Pascal meant by the 'reasons of the heart'.”<sup>279</sup>

John Paul's new evangelization, in part by offering a counter-cultural epistemology based on the deposit of faith, attempts to reconstruct what Foucault has deconstructed. Both the Holy Father's method (for instance, his Christian-personalist approach to the reader) and content differ from the French scholar's. Dulles's following words, though not directly about the pontiff, nevertheless sum up this counter-cultural attitude of the pontiff: “Postcritical theology, as I use the term, begins with a presupposition or prejudice in favor of faith. Its fundamental attitude is a hermeneutics of trust, not of suspicion. Its purpose is constructive, not destructive.”<sup>280</sup> The epistemological visions of Foucault and the pontiff conflict because they possess contrasting levels of meaning with, for instance, each writer expressing his agenda differently. The Holy Father presents his message with the goal of successfully converting his audience. His personalist, spiritual perspective challenges basic assumptions and questions, and works at the root particles of Western culture that he judges as hostile to Christianity. With his personalism the pontiff tends, largely through his phenomenological philosophical stance, to treat issues at the individual human level rather than analyzing at ideological, philosophical, or

dogmatic strata. Instead of directly opposing Foucault's method, the pontiff's perspective challenges our need to deconstruct, by raising the question of whether this helps or hinders the individual and society. This perspective demands that we choose *for* something, not *against*, and that we (re)construct, not deconstruct. The Holy Father's thinking parallels Yves Congar's words that "Sacred history contains an ontology that is related to sacramental ontology."<sup>281</sup> The pope sees the world in sacramental terms. Foucault rejects Congar's statement as much as John Paul accepts it.

John Paul brings thought to the concrete human level, something Les mots et les choses and L'archéologie du savoir, ironically enough given Foucault's focus on humans, fail to do. John Paul rejects both solipsism, by refusing to keep thought at the level of thought, and justice without love, by emphasizing the human dimensions of ethics and politics. Because he roots himself in a different place than modern secular Westerners, the Holy Father takes the liberty of disagreeing with the basic questions asked by critics of the Church. This reflects the disjunction between the Holy Father's thought and modernity, and even his personal ill-at-ease with current culture. He aims for deeper, spiritual concerns. In Crossing the Threshold of Hope, before offering an answer, he tends to rephrase his interlocutor's questions in the attempt to guide the conversation and challenge the interviewer's (and society's) ideology and anxiety. In responding to a query about the turmoil of the post-Vatican II era, he asserts his own, more spiritually-focused view of the question: "Allow me once again to disagree with such a way of looking at things. What I have said up to this point leads me to have, regarding this issue, a different opinion from the people you mention. My opinion is based on faith in the Holy Spirit who guides the Church, and also from a careful observation of the facts."<sup>282</sup> Epistemological methodology and content fundamentally differ from Foucault because John Paul roots both in his *lectio divina* and his personal, prayer-oriented relationship with God, and relates these practices to humans. He looks at issues differently in their basic makeup.

A discussion of John Paul and the French scholar raises difficulties because, for one, John Paul is his own man, and does not restrict his evangelization to answering French deconstructionists and the concerns of post-Cartesian Western thought. He strives for a wider audience and a deeper view of things than many modern philosophers do; the pontiff does not write solely for philosophers or from a philosophical viewpoint. On the issue of whether he "succeeded" or not, John Paul himself would probably return to his methodology and say that only the Holy Spirit knows.

## **5.1 John Paul II and Foucault: A Short Comparison**

### ***1) Foucault's underlying currents***

Even Foucault's meaninglessness must contain a center or, to use his own term, a "secret origin" or pre-thought of his style of research: "The analysis of thought is always *allegorical* in relation to the discourse that it employs. Its question is unfailingly: what was being said in what was being said?"<sup>283</sup> This epistemological attitude invites unrelenting criticism that refuses to let alone any

tradition, paradigm, or belief system. Christianity has no place in this intellectual world, except as a constant target: “What purpose is ultimately served by this suspension of all the accepted unities, if, in the end, we return to the unities that we pretended to question at the outset?”<sup>284</sup> The French scholar does not intend to remake or reform Christianity.

Foucault outlines his agenda more specifically in The Discourse on Language by tying tradition, belief, and paradigms to power and therefore aiming his unrelenting criticism at these things, having destroyed, from his viewpoint, their sacredness or honorific place: “I am supposing that in every society the production of discourse is at once controlled, selected, organized and redistributed according to a certain number of procedures, whose role is to avert its powers and its dangers, to cope with chance events, to evade its ponderous, awesome materiality.”<sup>285</sup> Foucault’s underlying anti-Christian aggression occasionally lashes out. His opposition to the religion possesses a mythological (or meta-theoretical) dimension—the myth of power’s supremacy over all sacredness, whether sacredness found in the individual or in a civilization’s traditions. Foucault continues Nietzsche’s work of sacralizing power, especially intellectual power, since deconstructing, in the former’s view, can destroy institutions and any sacred canon, as it is the whole point to these institutions and canons in the first place.

Sacralizing power leads to a certain pre-eminence of humans, though his humans do not possess all the dimensions that the pontiff attributes to them. Foucault remains the realist and rationalist, and shares John Paul’s observation that modern philosophy has dropped metaphysics, and that its scholars concern themselves now with people: “Empirical studies have taken life and become established and have quickly been overtaken by a discourse that takes quite far their claims to transcendence. And it is under this cover that philosophy has fallen into a new trance, no longer that of dogmatism but that of anthropology.”<sup>286</sup> The French scholar offers no judgment on the moral outcome of this changed disposition, but we can assume he blesses it, as he follows Nietzsche in judging the old mythology as, ironically, dehumanizing, or at least as not human-centered enough.

Even more than simply an altered intellectual view, Foucault identifies a changed, holistic or deeply-felt, society-wide perception towards humans that arises out of the same movement as the death of God. In contrast to John Paul or even Nietzsche, he offers no moral or spiritual judgment on this transformation: “Nietzsche had found the point where God and humans belong to one another, where the death of the first is synonymous with the disappearance of the second, and where the promise of the Superman signifies first of all the imminent death of humanity.”<sup>287</sup> Foucault treats the removal of God from history as simply the subject of intellectual analysis, when in fact from a Christian perspective much deeper reflection needs to occur with such a sweeping change in Western civilization’s outlook and identity. Foucault identifies no spiritual or intellectual crisis in modern thought: “Nietzsche, proposing a future simultaneously as a challenge [echéance] and task, marks the threshold from which contemporary philosophy can start to think again. If the discovery of the Eternal Recurrence of the Same is the end of philosophy, the end of humanity is the return to the start of



philosophy.”<sup>288</sup> Foucault has no trouble completely eliminating tradition and society’s roots. His observation that philosophy can, in a sense, start over from the beginning possesses surprising optimism, though he never fully explains his positive view.

## *2) Differences:*

The epistemologies of Foucault and John Paul diverge at the anthropological level. The former objectivizes humans where the pope subjectivizes them. The latter regards history as being holy and full of spiritual meaning. The former explains intellectual events with value-neutral paradigmatic models, whereas John Paul interprets them with a view towards humanity’s struggle to find meaning, and ultimately God, throughout the ages. Values are everything for the pontiff and nothing for Foucault. The Frenchman’s following words reflect the difference between the two: “No philosophy, no political or moral option in the seventeen and eighteenth centuries ever encountered anything like humanity, since humanity did not exist (as neither did life, language, or work).”<sup>289</sup> This statement makes its fullest sense within the strict boundaries of Foucault’s writing. It offers evidence of his tendency to deconstruct reality and thought itself into myriad sections or movements, judging them against the major intellectual paradigms of their day. John Paul, in contrast, repeatedly takes a holistic stance as, for instance, in his habit of discussing human nature when talking of the divine, and vice versa. Foucault dehumanizes women and men by disintegrating our intellectual traditions, and using what he wants of the resulting mess.

The Holy Father applies a pastorally-oriented epistemology to every sort of issue, big or small. In Crossing the Threshold of Hope he responds to doubt about God and every element of Christian faith, including the papacy, with a pastoral and personal (or, philosophically-speaking, personalist) exhortation. In this response, John Paul concerns himself with people, and even with his own interviewer, first, before considering any intellectual paradigm: “Your question is infused with both a lively faith and a certain anxiety. I state right from the outset: ‘Be not afraid!’ This is the same exhortation that resounded at the beginning of my ministry in the see of Saint Peter.”<sup>290</sup> John Paul centers his epistemology on the person rather than on power or theory. Epistemology reflects a person’s relationship with the world at multiple levels.

The Holy Father answers the big, anxiety-filled questions about the meaning of life with spiritual exhortation. He identifies a spiritual dimension to epistemology that goes beyond intellect and power. Bertrand Russell’s words, in relation to an analysis of John Dewey and American philosophy, shed light on the issue here between Foucault and John Paul that arises from their different theories of knowledge:

Man, formerly too humble, begins to think of himself as almost a God. The Italian pragmatist Papini urges us to substitute the ‘Imitation of God’ for the ‘Imitation of Christ.’ In all this I feel a grave danger, the danger of what might be called cosmic impiety. The concept of ‘truth’ as something dependent upon facts largely outside human control has been one of the ways in which philosophy hitherto has inculcated the necessary element of humility. When this check upon pride is removed, a further step is taken on the road towards

a certain kind of madness--the intoxication of power which invaded philosophy with Fichte, and to which modern man, whether philosophers or not, are prone. I am persuaded that this intoxication is the greatest danger of our time.<sup>291</sup>

John Paul's epistemology celebrates in Christian tradition the countless hearts, souls, minds, emotions, and other attributes of individuals, families, and entire societies. To demean or relentlessly critique a given tradition violates the sacred core of the individual. John Paul carries his notion of the dignity of the person over to the dignity of tradition, history, and culture, because these all extend from the individual person. History's dignity issues from human dignity. The pope's belief in human dignity informs his epistemology, but this epistemology cannot be understood by secularists unaware of or indifferent to the pontiff's personal faith. Dulles thus writes: "For the postcritical theologian the affirmations of faith cannot be rightly probed except from within the horizon of faith...The contents of faith are known not by merely detached observation but by indwelling or participation."<sup>292</sup>

John Paul celebrates humanity's intellectual achievements, including those of non-Christian Asia (FR 1), but Foucault examines Western civilization with scientific dispassion. He takes no spiritual, emotional, or personal interest in this tradition, outside of his declared intention of discussing power relations. He defines Western epistemology according to this formula. Foucault's discussion on sex exemplifies his one-sided approach, where he is indifferent to the emotional or social upheavals that changed perceptions undoubtedly caused. He focuses uniquely on power and sex, as in the following citation: "Since the eighteenth century, we have had ever-increasing discourse on sex, in the arena of the exercise of power itself: institutional inspiration to speak of it, and to speak of it more and more. This includes many instances of power seeking to increase this discussion and for itself to influence the manner of speaking about it and the indefinite accumulation of details about sex."<sup>293</sup> Where John Paul takes a pastoral approach to his discussion of Western thought (even, as already stated, in his philosophically-oriented writings such as Veritatis splendor and Fides et ratio), Foucault cares nothing for the spiritual-emotional-psychological welfare of his reader. His unemotional, distant approach concerns his scrutiny of both humans and the truth: "Thus, only one truth appears before our eyes: wealth, fertility and sweet strength in all its insidious universality. In contrast, we are unaware of the prodigious machinery of the will to truth, with its vocation of exclusion."<sup>294</sup> The pontiff identifies with the subject he is analyzing, whereas Foucault stays at arms length, dehumanizing, in this above statement, the human will and the drive to know more, making it sound instinctive or even machine-like. John Paul regards the search for truth as a spiritual journey involving every aspect of the individual and society.

In Madness and Civilization Foucault treats madness and "mad people" as objects for his intellectual analysis and enjoyment. In his discussion of power structures, he dehumanizes people by only seeing them in relation to these structures he aims to expose and discuss. He parallels the Marxists described by John Paul in Centesimus annus who regard people as cogs in an ideological wheel. Foucault writes that "We must try to return, in history, to that zero point in the course of

madness at which madness is an undifferentiated experience, a not yet divided experience of division itself.”<sup>295</sup> “Madness” here possesses, for Foucault, an ideological or theoretical basis, and seems separate from the people who suffered from mental illness or whom their society judged as such. Foucault does not mention the inner worth and dignity of people here. In returning to a “zero point in the course of madness” he does not aim to uncover the human dimensions of mental illness, such as whether people were still treated with respect and honor rather than objectivized into an “other.”

Although Foucault participates in the recent Western trend of critiquing the mainstream’s prejudice and rejection of “the other,” he turns “mad people” into “the other,” which is confusing given his apparent concern with the place and abuse of power in society. He offers no moral or spiritual judgment that “from the fifteenth century on, the face of madness has haunted the imagination of Western man.”<sup>296</sup> He fails to discuss the dignity of individuals in light of their relationship with these structures. He studies madness rather than the humans whom society considered “mad.” Foucault’s mythology of meaninglessness appears to make him indifferent to humans, and to focus only on power structures.

### **3) Similarities**

Foucault and John Paul agree on the bigger issue addressed by contemporary thinkers. Behind new methodology or the criticism of traditional viewpoints, postmodern thinking attacks, with absolute conviction, many aspects of Western culture, and especially Christianity. These two thinkers seem to agree on the destructive nature of this opposition even when such aggression appears indirect or unconcerned with religion.<sup>297</sup> Once we have begun to undermine religious or traditional moorings, we will not return to its worldview or to a respect and reverence for the religion’s views, as Foucault asserts: “The systematic erasure of all given unities enables us first of all to restore to the statement the specificity of its occurrence.”<sup>298</sup> Foucault calls for analytical free reign on all articles and particles of history.

Foucault and John Paul both acknowledge a mythological vacuum in the West. Similar to other intellectual and cultural leaders (such as Jacques Derrida or Richard Rorty), their work interprets or re-interprets these signs, symbols, and statements of history that have fallen off of their accustomed place of rest. In *Centesimus annus* and elsewhere the pontiff offers the world his view of Pope Leo XIII’s *Rerum novarum* for which opposing interpretations exist. He attempts to return the latter encyclical to its familiar position in Catholic tradition and to show us its relevance today. He aims to refill the mythological vacuum with reinvigorated Church teaching. Rather than a dead product of history, something for scholars to deconstruct into their own mythologies, the encyclical holds vision and the energy to build a society of love and truth. It contains a spirit and depth that goes beyond its mere words. John Paul works to re-Christianize all those elements of history that Foucault deems as simply individual droplets which contain only the meaning that each of us gives to them--meanings

which anyone can challenge or change at any moment. The pontiff aims to reconnect these droplets and build a tradition whose sum is greater than its parts.

#### **4) John Paul's reverence for tradition**

Congar sees religion and spirituality in holistic and constantly expanding terms, and not only of the head but of the heart also: “The tradition of which the theologian speaks is something other than a matter of human moral heritage or social cohesion. Tradition originates from the sphere of religion itself, which is not only liturgy but faith and which proceeds wholly from a revelation given at a specific moment.”<sup>299</sup> Following these words of Congar, we can say that John Paul loves his tradition, something to which Foucault could never relate. The pontiff loves his tradition because he loves God, and identifies God with this tradition. Jean Daniélou says the same thing in indicating that history for Christians is sacred history. “Thus the interpretation of Christian history requires more than an understanding of outward and visible events; it must take account of what happens in the hearts of men, which is revealed to us by the Holy Spirit—and chiefly in the Scriptures.”<sup>300</sup>

More specifically then, the pontiff's theory of knowledge issues mainly from his Catholic Polishness, and his place as a Catholic ethics and philosophy professor and bishop of an ancient and traditional Polish see. As we have seen already, epistemology and spiritual identity go together for the pope. John Paul's reverence for Western and specifically Christian tradition contrasts with Foucault's one-sided understanding of it: “The treasure is the great outpouring of the Church's Tradition, which contains ‘what is old’ — received and passed on from the very beginning — and which enables us to interpret the ‘new things’ in the midst of which the life of the Church and the world unfolds.” (CA 3) The Holy Father offers a multilayered view of tradition, embracing it at individual, familial, and social levels, as well as in its ethical, political, and spiritual dimensions. His epistemology is just as multi-dimensional. Again, we cannot understand John Paul's thought without understanding his Catholic spirituality and its link to this all areas of his theology. Congar gives us a sense of how big the gulf is, then, between Foucault and John Paul when it comes to discussing tradition: “Even when limited to its doctrinal sense, 'tradition' signifies a reality too large and rich to be understood with a simple definition. When Bossuet wrote that 'tradition is always bequeathed and continued in the Church's doctrine, he said a lot, and yet expressed only one aspect of reality.’”<sup>301</sup>

John Paul builds his epistemology largely on countering the common current notion that philosophy should reject metaphysics. The current that brought us countless things, including Nietzsche's death of God and superman, lies on top of an even greater, more powerful depth or working spirituality whose unchanging truth needs the Church to communicate it to the world in new and different ways. In one word, this can be defined as faith, as Daniélou indicates: “For Christians, the structure of history is complete, and its decisive event, instead of coming last, occupies the central position. Nothing can ultimately go wrong.”<sup>302</sup> It bears repeating that epistemology for John Paul

possesses a spiritual, faith dimension; epistemology possesses its own spiritual faith attributes, and is affected by spiritual matters, including the spiritual health of its practitioners.

John Paul judges the Enlightenment and its epistemology from the view of this deeper, spiritual current: “The spiritual journey and, in particular, the moral patrimony of Christianity were thus torn from their evangelical foundation. In order to restore Christianity to its full vitality, it is essential that these return to that foundation,”<sup>303</sup> he writes in Crossing the Threshold of Hope. Epistemology can and must contain some aspect of revelation. The upper epistemological level on which Nietzsche and Foucault rest offers nothing definitive; it is a bump on the timeline of Christian and Western history, since these thinkers have betrayed the true richness of Western philosophy and epistemology. Congar citing Saint Irenaeus gives us a sense of the intellectual horizons of a faithful son of the Church such as John Paul:

The Church's proclamation remains the same and equal at all times and places, supported by the testimony of the prophets, the apostles, and all the disciples from the beginning, the middle period, and the end. Simply put, it follows the divine economy, according to the way that God works, who has brought about the salvation of humans and remains at the interior of our faith, a faith received from the Church and that we guard, always under the action of the Holy Spirit. This faith is as precious as an expensive liquor kept in an expensive vase, with both the liquor and the vase both having aged.<sup>304</sup>

John Paul addresses the Enlightenment and its aftermath with strikingly harsh words: “*The rationalism of the Enlightenment was able to accept a God outside of the world primarily because it was an unverifiable hypothesis. It was crucial, however, that such a God be expelled from the world.*”<sup>305</sup> The Enlightenment, Nietzsche and Foucault, and modern utilitarians base their epistemology on a faulty spirituality. The last sentence--“*It was crucial, however, that such a God be expelled from the world*”--hints at the pope's suspicion that something deeper than a thought process or rational world view was at work during and after the Enlightenment and up until today. Epistemologies influenced by the Enlightenment possess faulty spiritualities. The pontiff, then, sees epistemology as holding a spiritual dimension. Westerners should base their theories of knowledge on the spiritual currents of the Judeo-Christian tradition.

Moral judgment contains a deeper, unchanging component that Foucault ignores by choice, indifference, or ignorance. The pontiff judges one-hundred year old encyclicals, based on this deep, unchanging truth, as worthy of a fresh interpretation and proclamation: “The present Encyclical seeks to show the fruitfulness of the principles enunciated by Leo XIII, which belong to the Church's doctrinal patrimony and, as such, involve the exercise of her teaching authority.” (CA 3) Both Foucault and the pope work from within Western civilization, but the latter's gaze goes much deeper and is much more ambitious. The pontiff has a different relationship with Western tradition than Foucault does. John Paul insists on the metaphysical nature of history: “The history of salvation not only addresses the question of human history but also confronts *the problem of the meaning of man's existence*. As a result, it is both *history* and *metaphysics*. It could be said that it is the *most integral* form of theology, the theology of all the encounters between God and the world.”<sup>306</sup>

John Paul views history as the story of individual humans with souls, dreams, minds, emotions, and relationships. This personalist view is that of a romantic who wants more love in the world. The pontiff's romanticism not only contributes greatly to his epistemology and helps set him off as countercultural not only to Foucault but to American philosophers such as John Dewey and Richard Rorty. His romanticism adds to the biblically-based Christian spiritual ideals of love and justice. Foucault, long on justice, has no time for love and romantic visions of Poland or other countries and their mythological battles for existence. Negatively, John Paul's critics accuse him of wanting the world to turn its back on the Enlightenment and become like the Poland of his dreams.

History and tradition possess deep anthropological and epistemological dimensions for the pope. Because human nature does not change, regardless of technological or philosophical transformations, the truth does not change. While epistemology should take account of change, it must also consider immutable factors of life. The same problems confront humans today as they did millennia ago, John Paul notes in Crossing the Threshold of Hope: "Man is always the same. The systems he creates are always imperfect, and the more imperfect they are, the more he is sure of himself. Where does this originate? It comes from the human heart. Our hearts are anxious."<sup>307</sup> In the Holy Father's personalist reading of history, the heart and soul of each individual plays some role in and is deeply affected by history. This follows the words of tradition of the Swiss Catholic theologian Hans Urs Von Balthasar (1905-88): "Each Christian vocation builds the foundation of new vocations. Each one constitutes the indispensable base for a future construction."<sup>308</sup> This spiritualized sense of history contrasts with Foucault's arms-length, paradigm-oriented view--Foucault's "im-personalism."

## **5.2 John Paul II and Foucault: The History of Thought**

### ***1) Foucault's profundity***

Foucault ignores the spiritual issues and problems of post-Enlightenment thought, or does not see them as problems in the same way that the Holy Father does. He approaches Western civilization from one limiting angle--intellectual history, or the history of interpreting the world. Foucault sees Marx, for instance, not as representing a spiritual or metaphysical challenge, despite Marxism's rational materialism, but only as a stage in the development of intellectual history:

Marxism never introduced a real rupture at a deep level in Western knowledge; it took its place without difficulty as a rich, tranquil, comfortable, and satisfying figure for a time within an inner epistemological disposition that welcomed it favorably. In return, Marxism never troubled or had the power to change this disposition.<sup>309</sup>

The Frenchman cannot bring himself to admit the terrible atrocities committed by Marxists all over the world; John Paul, particularly in Centesimus annus does not only this, but examines the deeper spiritual problems of the ideology.

Foucault lacks John Paul's holistic approach. Thought, for the former, is more real than the truth: "A century later (the seventh-century BCE), the highest truth no longer resided in what discourse *was*, nor in what it *did*: it lay in what was *said*. The day dawned when truth moved over

from the ritualized act—potent and just—of enunciation to settle on what was enunciated itself: its meaning, its form, its object and its relation to what it referred to.”<sup>310</sup> Foucault measures new currents of thought not against an unchanging truth, but solely within the context of other currents of thought that move inexplicably through history: “Marxism is in nineteenth-century thought like a fish in water, which means that everywhere else it ceases to exist.”<sup>311</sup> Foucault explains Marx’s acceptability to the nineteenth century, but his explanation only remains at the surface.

He fails to explain changing intellectual currents in light of basic human needs, something on which John Paul as a pastor-pope concentrates. Foucault does not regard Western civilization’s intellectual history as a spiritual quest or tied to Christianity or metaphysics. Discourse itself has produced this history, dating back to the Greeks and Plato’s break with an earlier tradition “separating true discourse from false [in the ancient Greek view]; it was a new division for, henceforth, true discourse was no longer considered precious and desirable, since it had ceased to be discourse linked to the exercise of power.”<sup>312</sup> He then names the real underlying current to intellectual history without giving it sacred or metaphysical meaning: “This historical division has doubtless lent its general form to our will to knowledge. Yet it has never ceased shifting: the great mutations of science may well sometimes be seen to flow from some discovery, but they may equally be viewed as the appearance of new forms of the will to truth.”<sup>313</sup> Is the “will to truth” some enigmatic or invisible hand of history? As so often, he does not pursue this.

Unlike John Paul or even Nietzsche, Foucault does not concern himself with what such intellectual movements say about human nature (including on how they impact the hearts and souls of people) or history’s purpose. This seems strange because he had some experience and training in psychology and his books, addressing sexuality, prisons, and mental health focus on humans. Human nature and the purpose of history remain the two great unexplained phenomena of history for Foucault’s readers. In explaining the intellectual climate of the nineteenth century, he feels content to keep the discussion at a superficial level: “The essential is that at the beginning of the nineteenth-century knowledge shifted towards economic historicism..., limits on human existence..., and the expiry date of an end of history.”<sup>314</sup> He fails to address the origins of this disposition and its link with the larger historical tradition and with human nature itself. He leaves unexamined, for instance, whether this nature changed at this time and thereby brought about such alterations in intellectual currents. Foucault does not satisfy these basic, necessary questions, where, as a pastor-pope, John Paul would have made the difference of addressing these deeper issues surrounding the basic make-up of people. Being power-oriented, Foucault deals with the surface issues that change perceptions of human interest groups.

Foucault presents thought as incestuous: It inspires and gives meaning to itself, and currents of thought are analyzable only in light of other currents of thought: “The great dream of an historical epoch [that of the nineteenth-century] is the utopia of causal thinking, just like the dream of the eighteenth-century was the utopia of classified thinking.”<sup>315</sup> Tradition and philosophy are no better

than dogs chasing their tails with no anchor or center. Largely by separating thought from humans, his approach lacks the belief in human dignity that John Paul's possesses. The major currents of this approach lack meaning or spiritual depth. The approach avoids analyzing human nature, turning only to discourse, power, and the institutions that house these: "But this will to truth, like the other systems of exclusion, relies on institutional support: it is both reinforced and accompanied by whole strata of practices such as pedagogy ..., the book-system, publishing, libraries."<sup>316</sup> Foucault remains indifferent to the spiritual dimension of the will to truth of institutions. Tradition, therefore, lacks a spiritual dimension from this perspective. Instead, Foucault turns his discussion back to his concern for power: "This will to knowledge, thus reliant upon institutional support and distribution, tends to exercise a sort of pressure, a power of constraint upon other forms of discourse—I am speaking of our own society."<sup>317</sup> His discussion remains incomplete and unbalanced because he concerns himself with power but stops there, and refuses to examine metaphysical, supernatural, or spiritual dimensions to history and power.

Not surprisingly then, Foucault reads Nietzsche with this same one-dimensional lens, seeing nothing deeper in the latter's most important observations: "The death of God and the advent of the superman, the promise and fear of a great year, expressed element by element the thinking of the nineteenth-century and form its archeological network."<sup>318</sup> Foucault interprets the meaning of Marx, Nietzsche, and other thinkers of the nineteenth century as simply the eclipsing of the previous way of thinking: "In this way the project of a general taxonomy disappeared."<sup>319</sup> One era passes on to another, inexplicably and with no deeper sense. He lacks a concern for the deep spiritual and psychological effects on individuals that such paradigm-shifts cause. This cold, largely meaningless dissection of Western thought and tradition portrays people as unrelated to thought and tradition. The mechanics of thought supersede the meaning of thought, as well as the meaning brought about in the eclipsing of one thought over another. The *taxonomic* table parallels the Elementary Table for chemists; Foucault is a chemist of the humanities. The Discourse on Language indicates the roots of his attitude towards Western civilization and its search for the truth: "And yet we speak of it least. As though the will to truth and its vicissitudes were masked by truth itself and its necessary unfolding ... The reason is perhaps this: if, since the time of the Greeks, true discourse no longer responds to desire or to that which exercises power in the will to truth, in the will to speak out in true discourse, what, then, is at work, if not desire and power?"<sup>320</sup>

## **2) John Paul and human profundity**

John Paul's personalist, spiritual view of intellectual history dismisses as absurd the apparent absence or presence of humans. "Be not afraid" as a basic epistemic stance gives philosophy and human knowledge a profoundly personal standpoint. In stating that at a certain point humans make their appearance in intellectual history, Foucault is only treating a certain branch of intellectual history. However, in Les mots et les choses and L'archéologie du savoir Foucault fails to identify a



human place for people, and coldly separates humans from their intellectual process or progress. “Be not afraid” implies that intellectual paradigms participate in only a limited aspect of history, and that a deeper wellspring exists, one that eventually touches God. Intellectual history cannot be examined separately from studying and appreciating humans, but must be placed within the wider spiritual struggles of humans, of which intellectual history is just one expression.

Ultimately, John Paul roots his method, epistemology, and sense of history, in the person, life, and teachings of Jesus: “*Christ addressed this invitation (‘Be not afraid’) many times to those He met. The angel said to Mary: ‘Be not afraid!’ (cf. Lk 1:30)... Christ said the same to the apostles, to Peter, in various circumstances, and especially after His Resurrection... These are not words said into a void. They are profoundly rooted in the Gospel. They are simply the words of Christ Himself.*”<sup>321</sup> John Paul bases his epistemology on “Christ Himself.” Spirituality--particularly Christian spirituality--inheres to his epistemology. Humans cannot appear in intellectual history, as Foucault claims, at a given point in history, because the Holy Father cannot separate intellectual history from humans. Intellectual history, like every other facet of human history, *is* human. History for John Paul possesses a soul that is ultimately grounded in Christ and with which Foucault never identifies or connects. John Paul ultimately grounds history in the truth: “*Of what should we not be afraid? We should not fear the truth about ourselves.*”<sup>322</sup>

The Holy Father cannot make epistemology abstract and impersonal because it issues from the truth. The truth, from Christ, is personal, concrete, and even inescapable: “Peter was not the only one who was aware of this truth. Every man has learned it. Every successor to Peter has learned it. I learned it very well.”<sup>323</sup> John Paul thus concludes this train of thought with a certain prophetic boldness: “Man is always the same. The systems he creates are always imperfect, and the more imperfect they are, the more he is sure of himself. Where does this originate? It comes from the human heart. Our hearts are anxious.”<sup>324</sup> Here John Paul's epistemology goes where Foucault and countless moderns and post-moderns cannot or dare not go: “Christ knows our anguish best of all: ‘Christ knows that which is in every man’ (cf. Jn 2:25).”<sup>325</sup> He adds: “Against this background, a historical background, expressions such as ‘Supreme Pontiff’; ‘Your Holiness’, and ‘Holy Father’ are of little importance. What is important originates in the Death and Resurrection of Christ. What is important is that which comes from the power of the Holy Spirit. For example, Peter, together with the other apostles, and (after his conversion) Paul became *authentic witnesses of Christ, faithful unto the shedding of their blood.*”<sup>326</sup>

In Fides et ratio (3) John Paul’s anthropology allows great place to philosophy, as he believes humans think about the truth in many ways, and that this action reflects deep, mysterious, dignified aspects of human nature. By taking philosophy and the natural human capacity for philosophical thought so seriously, the pontiff counters Nietzsche’s view of Christians as suffering from a herd mentality. The pope respects the intellectual capacities of Christians, and believes that the gospel demands much of the intellect. Theology and philosophy enrich each other. With the help of the latter,

theologians can explain the faith coherently and counter superstition. They can push philosophy into areas it would otherwise never have thought of going.

At the heart of every culture lies the attitude man takes to the greatest mystery: the mystery of God. Different cultures are basically different ways of facing the question of the meaning of personal existence. When this question is eliminated, the culture and moral life of nations are corrupted. (*Centesimus annus*, 24)

Foucault never addresses the meaning of personal existence. Rather than enriched by revelation, philosophy serves power interests.

John Paul sees mixed results from modern intellectual movements. Positive aspects include an emphasis on people's dignity, religious choice, and the respect of each conscience. The pope warns, however, against making freedom the absolute value because then we will lose the sense of the transcendent and perhaps become atheists. We will then forget the reason for liberty's importance and why every individual is worthy of it. Freedom means much more than power-sharing or the proper ordering of government institutions. A God-given spiritual good, it originates in a deep place in a person. If we remain at a superficial, power-oriented understanding, each conscience becomes the supreme moral guide without any reference outside of itself. The belief in reason's sovereignty threatens to rupture the essential link between morality and Scripture.<sup>327</sup>

### **3) *The gospel and profundity***

The highest truth becomes ever clearer over the centuries of inspired tradition rather than through Nietzschean instincts of life lived in the here and now. John Paul limits the place of reason and refuses to pass beyond the boundary of revelation.<sup>328</sup> The Good News, worthy of belief, needs no proof or argument, but is something we must live. Philosophy and knowledge must, ultimately, serve the truth rather than build independent, solipsistic power bases. Research and philosophy that humbly and truthfully serve this revelation reach a certain intellectual and spiritual worthiness and maturity. Faith, then, should in a deep way participate in modern thought. Reason must cede to the mystery of *kerygma*.

John Paul sees recent intellectual history, uprooted from the truth, as disintegrating into anti-Christian and inhuman ideologies. Such intellectual movements play to the darkest of human nature: "[I]t is only when hatred and injustice are sanctioned and organized by the ideologies based on them, rather than on the truth about man, that they take possession of entire nations and drive them to act." (*CA*, 17) The Catholic Church, John Paul mentions more than once, opposes such ideologies: "*Rerum novarum* opposed ideologies of hatred and showed how violence and resentment could be overcome by justice." (*CA*, 17) Unlike Foucault, who dispassionately observes the vagaries of intellectual history, John Paul outlines a clear moral response to intellectual developments, including not only Marxism and other totalitarian systems, but apparently lightweight intellectual attitudes such as consumerism:

In reality, while on the one hand it is true that this social model shows the failure of Marxism to contribute to a humane and better society, on the other hand, insofar as it denies an autonomous existence and value to morality, law, culture and religion, it agrees with Marxism, in the sense that it totally reduces man to the sphere of economics and the satisfaction of material needs. (CA 19)

## Conclusion

John Paul and Foucault differ in where they stand vis à vis Western spirituality. Richard Rorty's just definition of Foucault's atomistic spirituality and ethics demonstrates the anti-Christian nature of the French thinkers writing. Foucault assumes that "unless there is some interesting connection between what matters most to an individual and her purported moral obligations to our fellow human beings, she has no such obligations."<sup>329</sup> The French scholar stands outside of Western civilization, peering in as a clinician studying a body. He betrays no sentimental ties to his subject matter, whereas the Holy Father receives and preaches his inherited tradition with great affection and vulnerability. They approach the written word of civilization differently. John Paul searches for an objective truth in it, whereas Foucault treats any sort of truth as issuing from within a given body of writings and as being truthful only in relation to those writings:

[I]n what we generally refer to as commentary, the difference between primary text and secondary text plays two independent roles. On the one hand, it permits us to create new discourses ad infinitum: the top-heaviness of the original text, its permanence, its status as discourse ever capable of being brought up to date, the multiple or hidden meanings with which it is credited, the reticence and wealth it is believed to contain, all this creates an open possibility for discussion. On the other hand, whatever the techniques employed, commentary's only role is to say *finally*, what has silently been articulated *deep down*.<sup>330</sup>

Since the pope attempts to live the gospel rather than analyzing it at arms length, he cannot criticize it without first transforming himself. He reveals in his writings a relationship with the Bible and Christian heritage that Foucault does not have with his subject matter. John Paul accepts Christ as the Master, and since the Church and related traditions keep and proclaim this tradition, we must not endlessly, irresponsibly critique them: "The mission is never destruction, but instead is a taking up and fresh building, even if in practice there has not always been full correspondence with this high ideal. And we know well that the conversion that is begun by the mission is a work of grace, in which man must fully find himself again." (Redemptor hominis 12) The pontiff proclaims construction over deconstruction, and reverence over critique: "We have, in particular, a great sense of responsibility for this truth. By Christ's institution the Church is its guardian and teacher, having been endowed with a unique assistance of the Holy Spirit in order to guard and teach it in its most exact integrity." (Redemptor hominis 12)

John Paul celebrates (and lives) what he sees as the dignity in tradition. He often prefers commentary rather than criticism when reading Christian tradition or scripture. This way of reading things, especially in reference to the Bible, is a spiritual exercise, a *lectio divina*, that allows him to let the Bible's words address his life and the contemporary world: "Peter uttered these words through the power of the Holy Spirit. The Church also continues to utter them through the power of the Holy

Spirit.”<sup>331</sup> Reading scripture and reflecting on a passage involves more than critical thought and scholarly erudition since sacred writing impacts one deeply and personally. The pope finds that words reflect the Holy Spirit. Through his commentary he searches for the mind and Spirit of Christ, and he does this by searching for his deepest self and finding it in the words of scripture.

Foucault finds nothing so personal in his readings of the documents of Western civilization and, scientifically combing through words, even adopts scientific language (geological, more precisely): “Criticism analyzes the processes of rarefaction, consolidation and unification in discourse; genealogy studies their formation, at once scattered, discontinuous and regular.”<sup>332</sup> Commentary—even spiritual and religious commentary—is just another series of words ready for analysis: Commentary “must ... say, for the first time, what has already been said, and repeat tirelessly what was, nevertheless, never said.”<sup>333</sup>

The pontiff interweaves history, spirituality, and traditional *lectio divina*: “Christ did not reject Peter; He valued his profession of faith at Caesarea Philippi and, with the power of the Holy Spirit, He led him through His Passion and beyond his denial.”<sup>334</sup> John Paul actually still works within the paradigm of commentary, including the spiritual reading of the Bible, *lectio divina* (as in his validation of Thérèse de Lisieux' spiritual, un-academic reading of the Bible) whereas Foucault, as we see, steps outside of this practice, analyzing the function and epistemological purpose of commentary.

## Chapter 6

### John Paul II: Irenicist and Uniter

John Paul's manner and methods of preaching parallel the words of Yves Congar: "Following Thomas Aquinas, we can place the fact 'tradition' first of all in the network of communication of the divine mystery to humans."<sup>335</sup> In trying to re-introduce Christian metaphysics into Western culture, John Paul differentiates his writing and overall communication approach from Michel Foucault (and other Nietzscheans). More precisely, the attitude of the pontiff's address to the world, including those with whom he strongly disagrees, forms an important part of the message itself. His pastoral, irenic, and uniting writing style helps Christianity regain its orientation by presenting an alternative to modern scholarship's critical, fragmentary style. The assumptions of gratitude, reverence, and respect behind John Paul's tradition-affirming, relationship-building approach underscore his attempt at rebuilding and reorienting Christian tradition by living its values and making the Word come alive in more than just books and doctrine: "Recalling the teaching of Saint Paul (cf. *Rom* 1:19-20), the First Vatican Council pointed to the existence of truths which are naturally, and thus philosophically, knowable; and an acceptance of God's Revelation necessarily presupposes knowledge of these truths." (FR 67) The key word in this neoscholastic formula is "acceptance."

John Paul's simple and traditional manners and methods usually avoid trying to break new ground because he prioritizes the simple and traditional aims of which Congar writes: "God's plan is to share with many the saving doctrine by using those few witnesses for which there is a direct revelation. This is done in such a way that every human benefiting from this teaching and faithfully accepting it form spiritually one people and body, that is, a Church. This does not happen simultaneously or in a short period of time, but throughout generations and centuries."<sup>336</sup> Knowledge follows the Augustinian-Anselmian "faith seeking understanding" formula. True understanding, knowledge, and philosophy acknowledge this higher good. John Paul uses many types of thinking, above all personalist and phenomenological, neoscholastic, and historical, to make his pastoral point. The main issue for this study is not his theological method, but that he subordinates every method to his pastoral outreach. John Richard Neuhaus' observation, though, does rightly situate the pope in the contemporary world: "Whether it is called modern or postmodern, however, John Paul's approach begins with and builds upon contemporary circumstances."<sup>337</sup> Avery Dulles observes that this openness to the contemporary world includes openness to science and theology, where the pope "rejects the position of conflict, in which it would be necessary to choose either science or religion to the exclusion of the other."<sup>338</sup>

Perhaps another clue to the irenic nature of the Holy Father's thought comes from Derek Jeffreys, who notes "John Paul II's insistence that spiritual values cannot be measured, an argument that he draws directly from [Max] Scheler."<sup>339</sup> In other words, it is not within the Holy Father's mentality or intellectual character to approach these issues and ideas polemically, but to seek harmony and the truth behind even things with which he disagrees. Jeffreys offers a more specific way to

understand this: John Paul “argues that we must *will* to give ourselves to others and accept them as a gift...John Paul II uses this capacity to love to establish a hierarchy of values. Appreciative but critical of Scheler's idea of an *ordo amoris*, he defends a hierarchy of value that makes spiritual values preeminent.”<sup>340</sup> The pontiff's irenic disposition, in other words, issues from the fact that his ideas themselves are irenic, even if this sounds overly-simplistic. Nietzsche, in contrast, argues aggressively for aggressive ideas. This does get to the heart of this thesis, since its central questions are, How does John Paul preach and teach the truth? and Why does he do it that way? If the truth leads to spiritual conversion, love, reaching out to others, and countless other traditional Christian virtues, the nature of that truth demands that it be presented or argued for in a certain manner. In other words, John Paul demonstrates that there is a truthful way of arguing for the truth. Jeffreys writes, in a slightly different context, that “Rather than becoming a player, John Paul II challenges the game's legitimacy.”<sup>341</sup>

## 6.1 Fides et Ratio

### 1) *Reverence and Faith: Tradition*

John Paul adopts a holistic evangelical attitude for his discussion of faith and reason that rests upon a basis of faith that touches one's entire life, including the intellect. Reason and faith are not truly in tension or competition because John Paul envisions reason as a part of divine revelation and even as a part of the divine itself. The pontiff approaches the dialogue from a pastoral, prayerful, and spiritual stance (“spiritual” can refer, for instance, to his approval of prayer-oriented *lectio divina* in addition to the historical-critical approach to the Bible). He broadens this discourse beyond the intellect by inviting us to adopt Christian attitudes such as that noted by Congar: “The role thus given to the Holy Spirit is to bring to fruition and interiorize that which was said and done by Christ.”<sup>342</sup> John Paul warns that one can engage in polemics forever but that this argumentation inevitably becomes useless and a spiritual problem in its own right, though the following statement addresses not polemics but more broadly the lack of a central reference point which can underscore a useless, never-ending exchange:

A legitimate plurality of positions has yielded to an undifferentiated pluralism, based upon the assumption that all positions are equally valid, which is one of today's most widespread symptoms of the lack of confidence in truth. Even certain conceptions of life coming from the East betray this lack of confidence, denying truth its exclusive character and assuming that truth reveals itself equally in different doctrines, even if they contradict one another. On this understanding, everything is reduced to opinion; and there is a sense of being adrift. (FR 5)

“A sense of being adrift” applies, one assumes, to more than just an intellectual problem—to a spiritual problem. The discussion between faith and reason must be founded on a firm spiritual disposition and belief.

This sturdy belief, while issuing from one place, has many aspects to it. Faith has a simple nature, but the pontiff's writings exhaust every aspect and angle of it. The faith and reason debate, in John Paul's vision, encounters countless aspects of faith. Polemics fail to make the truth more true or comprehensible because the nature of John Paul's truth demands that one approach it with more than

the intellect: “But our vision of the face of God is always fragmentary and impaired by the limits of our understanding. Faith alone makes it possible to penetrate the mystery in a way that allows us to understand it coherently.” (FR 13)<sup>343</sup> In contrast to polemics, evangelization, a central part of his discussion of faith, must consider above all the human dimensions and respect for individuals and freedom of conscience, as in the following words that provide a model for outreach that is based on personalist philosophy:

[M]en and women are on a journey of discovery which is humanly unstoppable—a search for the truth and a search for a person to whom they might entrust themselves. Christian faith comes to meet them, offering the concrete possibility of reaching the goal which they seek. Moving beyond the stage of simple believing, Christian faith immerses human beings in the order of grace, which enables them to share in the mystery of Christ, which in turn offers them a true and coherent knowledge of the Triune God. In Jesus Christ, who is the Truth, faith recognizes the ultimate appeal to humanity, an appeal made in order that what we experience as desire and nostalgia may come to its fulfilment. (FR 33)

Polemicists attempt to forcefully, aggressively convince our thinking. For the most part, John Paul does not try to persuade us intellectually and avoids, therefore, inundating us with facts, statistics, or sophisticated philosophical opposition to specific modern thinkers. He focuses, for one thing, more on our general disposition. Pastorally, he confidently and energetically invites us towards acceptance of the truth of dogma, usually by referring to heart-oriented, traditional imagery (the Fall; Mary’s obedience to the Holy Spirit; Christ on the Cross; the struggles of various saints); honoring Christian history by borrowing from every era and especially highlighting Vatican II and the teachings of his immediate papal predecessors; and by respecting us by inviting our own decisions on moral, spiritual, and doctrinal issues.

Rather than attempting to create something new, John Paul emphasizes continuity, as in Fides et ratio 32: “In believing, we entrust ourselves to the knowledge acquired by other people...[B]elief is often humanly richer than mere evidence, because it involves an interpersonal relationship and brings into play not only a person’s capacity to know but also the deeper capacity to entrust oneself to others, to enter into a relationship with them which is intimate and enduring.” Joan Desmond notes the pontiff’s “heavy reliance on scriptural references to affirm the truth and staying power of moral absolutes” in Evangelium vitae,<sup>344</sup> a reliance which exemplifies this use of tradition. Tradition, which he sees primarily in human terms, concerns people, and we need therefore to nurture it just as we need to nurture relationships and community. Avoiding the post-Enlightenment intellectual focus on doctrine and its deconstruction and critique, he repeatedly uses tradition to inspire his readers, enliven people’s faith, and shed light on various issues. He does this by teaching the linearity of history, the truthfulness and authority of the magisterium, and the grave and potentially violent results of failing to follow Church teaching. Centesimus annus Chapter II directly engages in this latter topic, emphasizing the violence of atheistic societies such as in Central and Eastern Europe between 1945-89. Even when not directly engaging this issue, his pastoral stance remains.

The discussion between faith and reason, rather than being a zero-sum argumentation game or simple opposition to secularism, offers another opportunity to reach out to people and spread the gospel. Inasmuch as Fides et ratio addresses philosophers, it also pastors the reader and intends to inspire faith. In this encyclical's Introduction he avoids a dispassionate, scholarly approach, and invites his reader to encounter the spiritual heritage of the worldwide search for knowledge and truth:

In both East and West, we may trace a journey which has led humanity down the centuries to meet and engage truth more and more deeply. It is a journey which has unfolded—as it must—within the horizon of personal self-consciousness: the more human beings know reality and the world, the more they know themselves in their uniqueness, with the question of the meaning of things and of their very existence becoming ever more pressing. This is why all that is the object of our knowledge becomes a part of our life. (FR 1)

These words envision a unity behind the complex, often divisive and violent search for sense-making and epistemology engaged in by every culture. Rather than feeling threatened by the divergent paths to searching the truth, these words celebrate and open the reader to an exciting adventure that regards human curiosity as a good thing. This citation represents the pontiff's own brand of “diversity” which, as so often with his writing, adopts a profoundly human-centered, personalist stance.

John Paul's evangelization also envisions diversity by reaching beyond Latin Christianity, though aside from his deep desire for ecumenical reconciliation, the pontiff abstains from establishing new theological or intellectual ground in this outreach. His encyclical Slavorum apostoli, on the evangelization of the Slavic peoples, addresses as much this modern call for spreading the Good News as it does the historical foundations of Eastern Christians: “The events of the last hundred years and especially of the last decades have helped to revive in the Church not only the religious memory of the two holy Brothers (Saints Cyril and Methodius) but also a historical and cultural interest in them. Their special charisms have become still better understood in the light of the situations and experiences of our own times.” (SA 3) Our present spiritual experiences stand on a diverse wealth of spiritual tradition, which we need to understand not only intellectually. We must accept and connect with this tradition on a deeper level.

John Paul recycles Christian events through time as a way not only of ensuring continuity but even more importantly of seeking inspiration in our post-Christian civilization:

In the light of the magisterium and pastoral orientation of that Councils [*sic*] we can look in a new way—a more mature and profound way—at these two holy figures, now separated from us by eleven centuries. And we can read in their lives and apostolic activity the elements that the wisdom of divine Providence placed in them, so that they might be revealed with fresh fullness in our own age and might bear new fruits. (SA 3)

Saints Cirillo and Methodius offer a blueprint for us in our most trying times as Christians: “They undertook among these peoples that mission to which both of them devoted the rest of their lives, spent amidst journeys, privations, sufferings, hostility and persecution, which for Methodius included even a period of cruel imprisonment.” (SA 5) The pontiff offers Christian imagery of the suffering servant to galvanize us. As modern evangelists, we can follow in the footsteps of two of the greatest missionaries in Christian history, heroic preachers who changed the face of entire cultures.



His anti-critical, irenic approach strives for unity among Christians rather than division and old theological arguments. He celebrates the early medieval harmony between the two distinct Christian traditions, Latin and Greek, while ultimately reminding his reader of Rome's primacy. However, he avoids perseverating on this latter point of contention or theologically developing it more deeply. The pontiff throughout *Slavorum apostoli* refers to the unity of Western and Eastern Christianity during the time of Cyril and Methodius: "Having undertaken their mission under orders from Constantinople, they then in a sense sought to have it confirmed by approaching the Apostolic See of Rome, the visible center of the Church's unity." (SA 13) Rather than a rationally-argued call for reconciliation, he takes a poetic view of this unity of the tradition:

We can say without fear of contradiction that such a traditional and at the same time extremely up-to-date vision of the catholicity of the Church-like a symphony of the various liturgies in all the world's languages united in one single liturgy, or a melodious chorus sustained by the voices of unnumbered multitudes, rising in countless modulations, tones and harmonies for the praise of God from every part of the globe, at every moment of history-this vision corresponds in a particular way to the theological and pastoral vision which inspired the apostolic and missionary work of Constantine the Philosopher and of Methodius, and which sustained their mission among the Slav nations. (SA 17)

This describes the pontiff's vision of a reunified East and West. Rather than focusing on power, hierarchy, and doctrine, this togetherness possesses a spiritual beauty and energy beyond mere dogma and preaching. He approaches the dialogue between faith and reason with the same concern for unity. He aims to touch our creative rather than angry or polemical side. His ecumenism, like his new evangelization and reconstruction of the truth as a whole, calls for creative, poetic solutions rather than power-oriented conclusions.

Adopting a neoscholastic stance, he holds such reverence and imagination for the heritage because of what lies at its core. His neoscholasticism does not prevent him from reflecting poetically when referring to the effect on human spirituality: "The Church is catholic also because she is able to present in every human context the revealed truth, preserved by her intact in its divine content, in such a way as to bring it into contact with the lofty thoughts and just expectations of every individual and every people." (SA 18) These words reveal a core foundation of the pontiff's irenic stance: Contexts change, and people demand—or should demand--much of Christianity and the Church, just as the gospel asks much of people. Christians cannot accept this challenge with indifference because their religion's customs, containing priceless treasures, must live on through the centuries: "Moreover, the entire patrimony of good which every generation transmits to posterity, together with the priceless gift of life, forms as it were an immense and many-coloured collection of tesserae that together make up the living mosaic of the Pantocrator, who will manifest himself in his total splendour only at the moment of the Parousia." (SA 18) Again, rather than power, doctrine, and hierarchy, the pontiff takes a poetic, artistic view, emphasizing inner meanings. His approach to faith and reason possesses the same unconcern for power or the sense that he or Christianity will lose something in the dialogue.

## 2) *Reverence and Faith: The Human Dimension*

Despite this pastoral approach, the pope holds strong, even romantic, opinions. This romanticism, in fact, issues from his tendency to focus on people in his writings. Congar's following words describe the pontiff's gratitude- and honoring-oriented disposition towards tradition. "Tradition as life of the Church in the communion of faith and liturgy, tradition as warm milieu where the Catholic faith is formed, expressed, and conserved, tradition conceived as being, in its base, 'the interior gaze that recreates the human race,' of which Péguy speaks."<sup>345</sup>

While the pope acknowledges the importance of intelligence, he describes a heroic, will-oriented quality to faith as well. He often uses the word "heroic" when referring to the leadership of Poland's Church or when describing the place and importance of ancient or twentieth-century martyrs, as in Rise, Let Us Be On Our Way: "These were both great churchmen (in Poland) who, in difficult times, gave an example of personal greatness and bore faithful witness to Christ and to the Gospel. How could I fail to be moved by this heroic spiritual heritage?"<sup>346</sup>; and again in Gift and Mystery, where he singles out an individual, something that he does repeatedly in some of his books, writing that "Saint John Vianney surprises above all because in him the power of grace that works among the poverty of humanity reveals itself. What touched me deeply, in particular, is his *heroic service in the confessional*."<sup>347</sup> This heroic quality to the faith possesses a dynamism that, it often seems, interests the pope more than doctrine does. This relates to the centrality not only of the individual but of imagery for the pontiff, with each individual or nation struggling courageously against evil. His romantic and poetic imagery offers an alternative to the reason-faith dichotomy. Sometimes we can best describe John Paul's religious vision as faith-reason-romanticism or faith-reason-imagery rather than faith-reason. This exemplifies his personalism and his historical, inductive approach to faith, where real people have witnessed to the faith. Their lives, more than pontifical neoscholasticism, can convince us of the truth.

Faithful to his personalism, John Paul aims to take theology out of the ivory tower and put it among practicing Christians who can talk about God and other theological topics without an over-reliance on academics, neoscholasticism, and natural law. He strongly and specifically directs Catholic thinkers to put faith above all else: "It is not an array of human opinions but truth alone which can be of help to theology." (FR 69) In Fides et ratio (68) the counter-cultural pontiff characterizes the fruits of faith rather than simply arguing for this virtue from a rational perspective: "Life in the Spirit leads believers to a freedom and responsibility which surpass the Law." In the context of the pope's new evangelization, following the Way of Jesus overshadows the importance of reason. Reason cannot wholly validate belief in the Holy Spirit or in biblical authority, and we must, in certain instances, live suspended in mystery, and allow ourselves to depend on revelation.

To assist reason in its effort to understand the mystery there are the signs which Revelation itself presents. These serve to lead the search for truth to new depths, enabling the mind in its autonomous exploration to penetrate within the mystery by use of reason's own methods, of which it is rightly jealous. Yet these signs also urge reason to look beyond their status as signs in order to grasp the deeper meaning which they bear. They contain a hidden truth to

which the mind is drawn and which it cannot ignore without destroying the very signs which it is given. (FR 13)

Though reason still plays a crucial role in people's spiritual lives, we must treat the truth with reverence, since it lies beyond reason's scope.

An effective practice of faith fulfills a philosophically-correct or modern use of reason, which, if starved of religious commitment, would vastly minimize belief of any kind. Pastoral needs define the concern of offering a rational argument for faith. Speaking more to believers than to the academy, the pope does not try to escape or deny circular reasoning, but displays this method openly, exemplifying one use of reason in the Catholic faith. Adopting Christian imagery, he writes of baptism with wonder and certainty rather than with polemics or a reasoned attempt to convince Christianity's detractors:

The formula reflects the intimate mystery of God, of the divine life, which is the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, the divine unity of the Trinity. The farewell discourse can be read as a special preparation for this Trinitarian formula, in which is expressed the life-giving power of the Sacrament which brings about sharing in the life of the Triune God, for it gives sanctifying grace as a supernatural gift to man. Through grace, man is called and made 'capable' of sharing in the inscrutable life of God. (DV 9)

Imagery plays a comparably important role to reason in our understanding of the faith. We cannot use reason or any other intellectual tool to reduce or infinitely analyze the truth, as Foucault seems to do with his subject matter, for instance. We cannot follow Foucault and objectify the truth by sifting through it, putting it into understandable formulas, or hypothesizing about it. At a certain point, the pope challenges us to suspend our critical, rational thinking. His circular thinking challenges contemporary thought in its search for loopholes and logical weakness in every assertion, including assertions of faith. We can, as modern, scientifically-oriented humans, also faithfully choose to believe in and live by something with intellectual honesty and rigor. We must not fall prey to the tendency to criticize with abandon. After evoking the image of the Eucharist, in Fides et ratio 13 he concludes that "the knowledge proper to faith does not destroy the mystery; it only reveals it the more, showing how necessary it is for people's lives." The issue centers on the attitude we bring with our knowledge to faith.

Other forms of thinking and feeling besides reasoning can offer assurance. When discussing the sacraments, the pope offers both dogma—which he cannot avoid—and a pastor's touch. He mixes reverence with mystery and certainty when writing of the sacrament of the Eucharist: "The Church draws her life from the Eucharist. This truth does not simply express a daily experience of faith, but recapitulates *the heart of the mystery of the Church*." (EE 1) John Paul's acceptance and comfort with not understanding everything inheres to this stance. In fact, he builds his spirituality and therefore his papal instruction around not fully understanding and explaining everything, but simply leaving some questions unanswered in their mystery: "A great and transcendent mystery, indeed, and one that taxes our mind's ability to pass beyond appearances. Here our senses fail us: *visus, tactus, gustus in te fallitur*, in the words of the hymn *Adoro Te Devote*; yet faith alone, rooted in the word of Christ

handed down to us by the Apostles, is sufficient for us.” (EE 59) In boldly celebrating mystery, he builds the need for faith into his teaching program and asserts thereby the inauthenticity of a completely comprehensible Christianity. John Paul’s mystery of salvation must contain faith, which in turn must contain an intellectual letting-go.

In this encyclical he thus warns against too ambitious or inventive a spirituality, borrowing from his *Novo millennio ineunte*: “At the dawn of this third millennium, we, the children of the Church, are called to undertake with renewed enthusiasm the journey of Christian living. ‘It is not a matter of inventing a ‘new programme’. The program already exists: it is the plan found in the Gospel and in the living Tradition; it is the same as ever.’” (EE 60) Rather than a complicated spirituality, these words reflect the simplicity of his Christianity. Maintaining his focus on Christ, the core of his simplicity, his confidence in traditional spirituality issues from his confidence in Christ: The tradition “has its centre in Christ himself, who is to be known, loved and imitated, so that in him we may live the life of the Trinity, and with him transform history until its fulfilment in the heavenly Jerusalem.” (EE 60) He expresses certainty in this perfection not with reason or polemics but by expressing faith in the sacrament, something that appeals to the hearts of all of his readers whose spiritual lives revolve around the Eucharist: “The implementation of this programme of a renewed impetus in Christian living passes through the Eucharist.” (EE 60) “A renewed impetus in Christian living” implies will more than reason. Here again we see his pastoral outreach that goes beyond reasoned argument. He bases his pastoral “argument” on a solid, willful practice of the faith and reverence for the mysteries of the Church--above all the sacraments as powerful imagery and the most visible action--rather than on the the Bible and other Christian writings.

A great force issues from the Spirit acting through the sacraments and an action-based spirituality, and arises only secondarily through polemics and scholarship: “Every commitment to holiness, every activity aimed at carrying out the Church’s mission, every work of pastoral planning, must draw the strength it needs from the Eucharistic mystery and in turn be directed to that mystery as its culmination.” (EE 60) Commencing with the earliest days of the Church, Christian life has centered on the Eucharist rather than on polemics and argumentation. (EE 3) From the sacramental grace it bestows, the pontiff describes the action: “At every celebration of the Eucharist, we are spiritually brought back to the paschal Triduum: to the events of the evening of Holy Thursday, to the Last Supper and to what followed it.” (EE 3) The act evokes the faith-building imagery that the pope centers in centuries of tradition. As in so many of his writings, instead of focusing on reason, the pontiff turns to other aspects of the faith.

### ***3) Reverence between faith and reason***

In the context of religious imagery, sacraments, and prayerful action, John Paul unsurprisingly invites a reverential relationship between faith and reason. Reason’s power of manipulating not only individuals but whole societies and even the course of history demands responsibility and not

carelessness, since its nefarious effects could result in catastrophe: “The problems of other times have returned, but in a new key. It is no longer a matter of questions of interest only to certain individuals and groups, but convictions so widespread that they have become to some extent the common mind.” (FR 55) Scientific or philosophical advancement and the belief in progress and reason’s own power to transform do not change human nature and metaphysical truths. Not surprisingly, the same problems keep appearing under different guises. The pontiff’s discussion between faith and reason encompasses spiritual issues first of all.

Dysfunctional reason, one that mocks or ignores a metaphysical side to life, has encouraged, on one extreme, an over reliance on the Bible by some groups of Christians avoiding a direct confrontation, and on another extreme, an outright rejection of the Church’s teachings by those who define Christianity according to narrow views of, for instance, piety or Scripture:

There are also signs of a resurgence of *fideism*, which fails to recognize the importance of rational knowledge and philosophical discourse for the understanding of faith, indeed for the very possibility of belief in God. One currently widespread symptom of this fideistic tendency is a 'biblicism' which tends to make the reading and exegesis of Sacred Scripture the sole criterion of truth. (FR 55)

Just as the pope demands much of theology and the faithful, so he warns against a limited approach to philosophical inquiry, warning of “the deep-seated distrust of reason which has surfaced in the most recent developments of much of philosophical research, to the point where there is talk at times of 'the end of metaphysics'. Philosophy is expected to rest content with more modest tasks such as the simple interpretation of facts or an enquiry into restricted fields of human knowing or its structures.” (FR 55)

As a solution, the pope invites, rather than triumphalism, a holistic and humble approach to the faith where, with gratitude, we guard and serve the tradition that witnesses to the truth: “The ‘supreme rule of her faith’ derives from the unity which the Spirit has created between Sacred Tradition, Sacred Scripture and the Magisterium of the Church in a reciprocity which means that none of the three can survive without the others.” (FR 55) This balanced perspective, where each side influences and inspires the other, prevents faith from degenerating into angelism or superstition.

Through the wisdom of faith and the authority of various Catholic teaching bodies, this attitude also keeps reason from arrogating to itself too much influence:

Nonetheless, in the light of faith which finds in Jesus Christ this ultimate meaning, I cannot but encourage philosophers—be they Christian or not—to trust in the power of human reason and not to set themselves goals that are too modest in their philosophizing. ... [I]t is necessary not to abandon the passion for ultimate truth, the eagerness to search for it or the audacity to forge new paths in the search. It is faith which stirs reason to move beyond all isolation and willingly to run risks so that it may attain whatever is beautiful, good and true. Faith thus becomes the convinced and convincing advocate of reason. (FR 56)

Faith lends reason a dimension that this latter lacks—a human or passionate dimension. Faith gives meaning and impetus to reason. Each aspect limits the other and uses the other’s perspectives and methodology. In contrast, Michel Foucault fails to take account of such a holistic approach in his analysis of history, which distorts his interpretations. He wishes to tear histories and traditions apart

into meaningless fractions, or concentrate on virtues sacred to him such as power at the expense of other comprehensive views. A holistic approach, in contrast, allows for the domination of no single outlook or methodology. It puts reason, and all else, into the context and continuity of the wider faith tradition and all of the aspects that it contains.

In his discussion of faith and reason, John Paul takes personal license to Christianize or spiritualize reason, aiming to change the very nature of reason as used by modern secularism. This spiritual dimension of reason attempts to tie together the human and divine dimensions. This supersedes both a reason-faith dichotomy and one that seems to bring reason under the sphere of faith, thereby turning it into the lesser of the two approaches, though as we have seen above, John Paul seems to emphasize the superiority of faith in some of his writings. He seems to relegate reason to a secondary place in Dominum et vivificantum when he addresses the testimony of the Holy Spirit: “The ‘image of God,’ consisting in rationality and freedom, expresses the greatness and dignity of the human subject, who is a person. But this personal subject is also always a creature: in his existence and essence he depends on the Creator.” (36) John Paul spiritualizes reason or moves it under the sway of faith in the following manner, then: Revelation cannot speak only with human reason, but revelation itself contains the purest reason because of the reasonable quality of the divine. Pure reason, as an intrinsic part of revelation, extends from the divine self. For its fullest realization and maturity, earthly reason, tainted by human nature, must accept the Holy Spirit’s guidance because, the pope claims, this is the most reasonable thing to do. It would be unreasonable for reason to reject this divine offer.

Human reason's limitations contrast with the unlimited reasoning capacities of the Holy Spirit: “[T]he tree of the knowledge of good and evil’ was to express and constantly remind man of the ‘limit’ impassable for a created being.” (DV 36) Reason must limit its ambitions because humans themselves must curtail some aspects of their ambitions and give themselves over to God: “‘Disobedience’ means precisely going beyond that limit, which remains impassable to the will and the freedom of man as a created being.” (DV 36) In fact, in one of his more confrontational passages the pontiff warns of a damaging counter-movement to the truth, though he does not specifically state that this issues from reason in some way:

Here we find ourselves at the very center of what could be called the ‘anti-Word,’ that is to say the ‘anti-truth:’ For the truth about man becomes falsified: who man is and what are the impassable limits of his being and freedom. This ‘anti-truth’ is possible because at the same time there is a complete falsification of the truth about who God is. God the Creator is placed in a state of suspicion, indeed of accusation, in the mind of the creature. For the first time in human history there appears the perverse ‘genius of suspicion.’ He seeks to ‘falsify’ Good itself; the absolute Good. (DV 37)

His discussion on the relationship between faith and reason reflects John Paul’s pastoral and spiritual tendencies, which issues from his irenic disposition. Rather than trying to offer a different methodology, he outlines a space above methodology by describing the outcome at spiritual and metaphysical levels. He adopts the role of prophet rather than picking at the finer points. This way

appears less than polemical. If he does descend from metaphysics in this passage, he does so as the personalist-oriented pastor again, offering his concern for how an incorrect intellectual and spiritual disposition harms people. He concerns himself not with scoring academic points but with how this erroneous disposition affects individuals.

Unhealthy reason becomes ideology, and this process symptomizes the unwell spirituality transmitted to reason:

Man will be inclined to see in God primarily a limitation of himself, and not the source of his own freedom and the fullness of good. We see this confirmed in the modern age, when the atheistic ideologies seek to root out religion on the grounds that religion causes the radical 'alienation' of man, as if man were dispossessed of his own humanity when, accepting the idea of God, he attributes to God what belongs to man, and exclusively to man! (DV 38)

Reason, like all thought, threatens the very existence of humans when revelation does not shape it. Only thought and reason based on God's revelation provide an exit from our spiritual or intellectual ailments. Unhealthy reason is sinful and harmful because spiritually-starved people introduce into their thinking aspects of the divine that belong solely to God. Reason, in other words, must not trespass on the sacred, but must accept and operate from its lesser, well-defined space.

## 6.2 Modern Discourse

John Paul believes that modern humans can live a full life by surrendering to God. In Fides et ratio (76) he bluntly casts aside Nietzsche's human-based pretensions to knowledge and spiritual growth and power: "Revelation clearly proposes certain truths which might never have been discovered by reason unaided, although they are not of themselves inaccessible to reason." As mentioned, circular logic marks John Paul's discourse. He points with faith to a transcendent reality. He places human reason, and humans therefore, under something ultimately unknowable through this faculty, and sees futility without revelation. Any human-based effort left to its own devices, such as a given stream of philosophy, cannot attain the truth.

### 1) *Scientism*

An overly aggressive and empowered science, or *scientism*, as John Paul refers to it in Fides et ratio, (88) cannot replace divine revelation, even if science in the intellectual arena has gained primacy:

This is the philosophical notion which refuses to admit the validity of forms of knowledge other than those of the positive sciences; and it relegates religious, theological, ethical and aesthetic knowledge to the realm of mere fantasy. In the past, the same idea emerged in positivism and neo-positivism, which considered metaphysical statements to be meaningless.

John Paul rejects what he regards as the untamed place of reason in the order of knowledge and life. This leads him to directly challenge the modern world's materialism and its definition of spirituality as a secondary or nonexistent concern. He calls for a redefinition of how we live our lives, order our

societies, and process information. Spiritual or faith-based knowledge is not inferior to reason or science, despite the common opinion.

Faced with a powerful science industry and mindset, the pope remains irenic rather than trying to match what he regards as the aggression of scientific ideology. The pontiff's rejection of science's domination of society may seem, at a superficial glance, to be pre-modern. However, once again his style of communication and his disposition towards his audience belie a contemporary thinker, someone respectful of the reader's dignity and intelligence. As we also see in *Evangelium vitae*, he does not order Catholics to adopt this approach. He prepares his argument step-by-step and thus treats his reader with respect, rather than as *Herdenthier* (herd animals). As a starting point, he warns that science's rejection of metaphysical realities will eventually lead to a more general, society-wide rejection of these realities. Science's imperialism intends to dominate all areas of public life through technological advancements: "Science would thus be poised to dominate all aspects of human life through technological progress. The undeniable triumphs of scientific research and contemporary technology have helped to propagate a scientistic outlook, which now seems boundless, given its inroads into different cultures and the radical changes it has brought." (FR 88) John Paul invites his reader's engagement with his agenda only after offering a sophisticated analysis of society, and of the need for his readers' participation.

John Paul demonstrates the modern yet timeless nature of his beliefs in the face of science's limited approach. He rebuffs those who call his metaphysical world-view outdated in this scientific world, asserting that his creed has a place in contemporary society: "Regrettably, it must be noted, scientism consigns all that has to do with the question of the meaning of life to the realm of the irrational or imaginary." (FR 88) Science, and not the pope and Catholicism, must change and face challenges and criticism at every stage. Contemporary society must answer to some higher authority based on divine revelation, rather than simply consigning the Church and the revelation that it proclaims to a minor or nonexistent role. He also regrets that scientism brands questions about the meaning of life as irrational. Issues of the meaning of life, including those originating from a faith perspective, are indeed rational.

## **2) A holistic approach**

As part of his irenic disposition, the pontiff does not challenge the style with which leaders address their audience. As a personalist John Paul follows current democratic, individualistic practice in calling his reader and science to personal responsibility. He will not as pope try to order society, though he offers a clear blueprint and words of inspiration which refer unceasingly to God and ecclesia. John Paul envisions a modern Church in that, like himself, it proposes rather than imposes; it inspires rather than scolds. John Paul not only conceives of a mature, responsible laity; he assumes that they already are responsible and mature.



The holistic approach also reflects John Paul's modernity. As some writers such as Frederick Copleston have pointed out, nineteenth-century philosophy and ideology, which greatly influenced John Paul's century, tended to develop imbalanced methodology or perspectives. Marx, for instance, concentrated too much on economics.<sup>348</sup> The pope's holistic approach is current yet timeless in refuting this potentially violence-fraught and outmoded tendency of recent philosophy by examining issues from individual, social, and spiritual perspectives. John Paul ends his caution against scientism and its imbalance with his holistic approach, warning of the moral consequences of an uncontrolled science:

No less disappointing is the way in which it approaches the other great problems of philosophy which, if they are not ignored, are subjected to analyses based on superficial analogies, lacking all rational foundation. This leads to the impoverishment of human thought ... And since it leaves no space for the critique offered by ethical judgement, the scientific mentality has succeeded in leading many to think that if something is technically possible it is therefore morally admissible. (FR 88)

Interestingly, he argues with these above words that the constraints placed on thinkers and on wider society by scientism might actually lead to more irrationality. Here again we have the sense that reason must know its proper bounds if it is to be a mature reason. The pontiff senses a very slight boundary between reason and unreason; the movement between these two dispositions is fluid, and an unhealthy intellectual climate, including one that is seemingly rational, does not guarantee stability in the disposition towards reason. Intellectual fragmentation, or the fragmentation of the intellectual sphere from the metaphysical, spiritual, and ethical spheres, leads to unhealthy ways of thinking.

The above citation from FR (88) reflects that elements of "out-dated" hierarchical thinking nevertheless do abound in the teaching of the pontiff. In this case John Paul reverses the tables on modernity: Whereas the Church normally faces criticism from contemporary scientific and philosophical elites, especially concerning its bioethics, John Paul adopts a neoscholastic approach and claims that authority for himself towards science and philosophy. He argues that the medieval hierarchy with the Church at society's summit dispensing moral judgment on whomsoever remains a valid, even contemporary, model. In this sense he does seem to lose touch with his reader. One cannot ultimately decide whether he is modern or not. This belies a striking originality and tension to his thought, where he listens simultaneously to tradition and modernity. He follows his heart. This originality is also, then, strikingly individualistic and modern in that John Paul mapped out this style himself.

### **3) *Inclusiveness***

This teaching is also modern in its inclusiveness. Liberal voices in the media have rarely viewed John Paul as inclusive. But he approaches the intelligence of his readers and the entire faithful with great respect. Repeatedly, he invites his audience to participate in the moral, intellectual, and spiritual journey he envisions, and does not reserve this work for the Catholic hierarchy and its pastors alone. His post-synodal apostolic exhortation Christifideles laici (1988) even expresses great urgency

and dependency on the actions of the laity in the life of the Church and the world: “A new state of affairs today both in the Church and in social, economic, political and cultural life, calls with a particular urgency for the action of the lay faithful. If lack of commitment is always unacceptable, the present time renders it even more so. *It is not permissible for anyone to remain idle.*” (5) He defines the Church in a modern way by calling us all to responsibility. We have no choice but to actively participate. In this respect his modernity parallels or compares favorably with Foucault’s or scientists’, who deeply respect the dignity, intelligence, and capacity of the common person.

His rejection of a democracy that asserts relativism and truth-by-majority-vote has little bearing on his modernity because he envisions a different yet equally democratic practice. The laity can only understand its place in public life from the perspective of the Catholic Church: “Only *from inside the Church's mystery of communion is the 'identity' of the lay faithful made known*, and their fundamental dignity revealed. Only within the context of this dignity can their vocation and mission in the Church and in the world be defined.” (Christifideles laici 8) He calls for a morally-mature democracy. He wants the system to become more than it is. Even if one disagrees with his moral outlook, one can hardly argue with his respect for people and their voices. He wishes to put democracy within a different framework than its present model. While truth’s contents cannot serve as an object of debate, as in his unilaterally ending the debate on female ordination, the pope calls us to implement the results of that truth democratically and with tremendous personal responsibility:

The catholicity of the Church is manifested in the active joint responsibility and generous cooperation of all for the sake of the common good. The Church everywhere effects her universality by accepting, uniting and exalting in the way that is properly hers, with motherly care, every real human value. At the same time, she strives in every clime and every historical situation to win for God each and every human person, in order to unite them with one another and with him in his truth and his love. All individuals, all nations, cultures and civilizations have their own part to play and their own place in God's mysterious plan and in the universal history of salvation. (SA 26)

This passage calls for the same acceptance of cultural diversity for which countless liberals also call, where people of different cultures have their own voice and space.

Just as John Paul puts his personal spin on democracy, so he also does on diversity, a key issue in the modern West. Love, and the tradition of truth that it has generated, binds us in our diversity so that we need not fear disintegration: “Saints Cyril and Methodius have held out to us a message clearly of great relevance for our own age, which precisely by reason of the many complex problems of a religious, cultural, civil and international nature, is seeking a vital unity in the real communion of its various elements.” (SA 26) Real community does not issue from humans, and so we can relinquish our fears in searching for Christian harmony. The pontiff, in referring to East-West Christian harmony, writes of “Unity in perfect and total communion, ‘the unity which ... is neither absorption nor fusion’. Unity is a meeting in truth and love, granted to us by the Spirit.” (SA 27) Unity is metaphysical rather than primarily political or power-oriented. Centered in truth and love, John Paul celebrates diversity: “For full catholicity, every nation, every culture has its own part to play in the

universal plan of salvation. Every particular tradition, every local Church must remain open and alert to the other Churches and traditions and, at the same time, to universal and catholic communion; were it to remain closed in on itself, it too would run the risk of becoming impoverished.” (SA 27) These words are the opposite of triumphalism.

John Paul calls on Christians to build concord in our era that celebrates diversity: “Being Christians in our day means being builders of communion in the Church and in society.” (SA 30) As an irenic thinker, he focuses on a poetic, tolerant, and positive view of certain differences, rather than on an ecclesiastical or political authority that, as has occurred often in the past, sweeps away all originality and difference for the sake of a superficial harmony.

#### **4) Modern Catholic Discourse**

Despite this lack of papal triumphalism, neoscholasticism nonetheless inheres to John Paul's teaching on the truth. Some deeper issues lie outside the scope of democratic discussion because they run deeper than the majority's opinion. Democracy serves not to debate but to implement such truth. Contrary to so many today who attack Christianity's historical record as racist, misogynist, and power-oriented, John Paul celebrates the irreplaceable voice of truth that Christianity has fulfilled in Western civilization: “The Christian proclamation of human dignity, equality and freedom has undoubtedly influenced modern philosophical thought.” (FR 76) Although he does not state it outright in this passage, he implies that Christianity itself is the originator of democracy in many aspects.

This defense of the religion's contribution to European democratic thought emphasizes that the Catholic faith demands not only thoughtful consent but intellectual boldness so that we can grow more deeply in the reality of the Good News and God's love. Rather than being non-reflective sheep, the pontiff calls us to take the intellectual initiative. This will help advance not only our own spiritual journey, but that of the entire Church. This, again, testifies to the pontiff's modernity. He calls Catholics to studious, adventurous responsibility where the faithful can speak for their faith rather than blindly obeying. The pope envisions the Church of the Second Vatican Council, that of the whole people of God, which he also finds in the words of an earlier era:

Pius XII once stated: 'The Faithful, more precisely the lay faithful, find themselves on the front lines of the Church's life; for them the Church is the animating principle for human society. Therefore, they in particular, ought to have an ever-clearer consciousness *not only of belonging to the Church, but of being the Church*, that is to say, the community of the faithful on earth under the leadership of the Pope, the head of all, and of the Bishops in communion with him. *These are the Church ...*'. (*Christifideles laici* 9)<sup>349</sup>

These words convey a sense of risk, contrary to how Nietzsche portrayed the Church, yet somewhat in common with that philosopher's call to risk. The pontiff rejects the notion that the laity can sit back and take things for granted, happy and satisfied as “Sunday Christians.”

Keeping to his holistic view, John Paul also invites an intellectual risk that encompasses spiritual dangers. Among other things, he calls us to use reason to examine our innermost movements, where we meet the Holy Spirit. “Among the objective elements of Christian philosophy we might also

place the need to explore the rationality of certain truths expressed in Sacred Scripture, such as the possibility of man's supernatural vocation and original sin itself.” (FR 76) Those who practice a spiritual life can incorporate reason; and irrationality, one presumes, would hurt their spiritual discipline. We cannot isolate from reason any aspect of our faith, not even God’s word or our spiritual experiences. This openness transcends intellectual freedom and is actually a spiritual disposition.

John Paul acts as a present-day leader in avoiding cultural, intellectual, or religious imperialism, and allowing for some academic specialization or boundaries. For instance, he calls on philosophers to remain philosophers and theologians to remain theologians. “In speculating on these questions, philosophers have not become theologians, since they have not sought to understand and expound the truths of faith on the basis of Revelation. They have continued working on their own terrain and with their own purely rational method, yet extending their research to new aspects of truth.” (FR 76) *Fides et ratio* (77) even urges theology’s humility in its relationship with philosophy: “Theology in fact has always needed and still needs philosophy’s contribution.” The two domains need each other to pursue their highest callings. Each offers the other elements from within its own sphere.

### **6.3 Reverence and Contemplation**

The pope's reverence for God, Christian tradition, the Bible, and humans contrasts sharply with the more detached scientific or critical polemics of many contemporary philosophers and with Nietzsche’s passionate anti-Christianity. Given the three-hundred years of relentless undermining of the Church’s teaching and position in Western society, John Paul’s simplicity and lack of aggression towards the religion’s detractors provides a strong example for Christians. We read simple, direct words reassuring us of the steadfastness of Christ, the Church, and the truth: “Within the unity of the Church, promoting and preserving the faith and the moral life is the task entrusted by Jesus to the Apostles (cf. *Mt* 28:19-20), a task which continues in the ministry of their successors.” (VS 27) The pontiff does not use philosophical argumentation or polemics to revivify the tradition that Nietzsche rejects. John Paul simply restates what he regards as the obvious, and invites us to belief. He also displays patience here, avoiding calls to immediate revolution because the real transformation for which he calls takes place within each person.

In *Fides et ratio* (70) John Paul does not call for a limiting neoscholasticism, but aims to continue Vatican II’s openness to the modern world:

Faith's encounter with different cultures has created something new. When they are deeply rooted in experience, cultures show forth the human being's characteristic openness to the universal and the transcendent. Therefore they offer different paths to the truth, which assuredly serve men and women well in revealing values which can make their life ever more human.

John Paul honors human instincts and the will, and prizes diversity. Rooting his thought not only in the transcendent but in humans, culture and multiplicity offer a shared perspective with Foucault, Nietzsche, and other representatives of modern philosophy. This diversity provides a way for Catholic

thinkers to address the concerns of secular writers, and rebuffs those who criticize the magisterium as closed or disrespectful of other traditions.

John Paul holds up Saints Methodius and Cyril as exemplifying openness towards other cultures while faithfully preaching the truth of Jesus:

At this point it is an unusual and admirable thing that the holy Brothers, working in such complex and precarious situations, did not seek to impose on the peoples assigned to their preaching either the undeniable superiority of the Greek language and Byzantine culture, or the customs and way of life of the more advanced society in which they had grown up and which necessarily remained familiar and dear to them. (SA 13)

The pope celebrates what he identifies as the mutuality these two saints practiced in living with the cultures to which they brought the Good News: “Making use of their own Greek language and culture for this arduous and unusual enterprise, they set themselves to understanding and penetrating the language, customs and traditions of the Slav peoples, faithfully interpreting the aspirations and human values which were present and expressed therein.” (SA 10) Here again we have the idea of integrating the entire person into the work of evangelization. The brothers preached to the Slavic peoples not only from the pulpit but also by sharing their lives, and thereby their Christian beliefs, with their followers.

## Conclusion

Nietzsche (and Foucault more indirectly) succeeds by contorting, attacking, and minimizing the achievements and mysteries of Catholicism. John Paul, in contrast, aims to present his faith in a sensible and inspiring way to his present-day followers. Even in the context of a discussion between faith and reason, the pontiff evokes a powerful and timeless symbol for Christian self-transcendence and human liberty—Christ crucified. This spiritual underpinning to both faith and reason influences the way the Holy Father discusses these two goods. Liberty, though real, has boundaries even in this scientific age. No absolute, unconditional point independently originates in humans. People enjoy, then, the freedom of a creature, a freedom given to us as a starting point for us to mature into something else: “*The Crucified Christ reveals the authentic meaning of freedom; he lives it fully in the total gift of himself* and calls his disciples to share in his freedom.” (VS 85)<sup>350</sup> This image counters the self-contained superman. Saddled with creaturely limitations, no person possesses supernatural or Zarathustra-like powers of transcendence. We must see human reason within this context of limitations.

The pontiff's language creates a different way of discussing contentious issues by inviting us out of the critical mindset. He stakes out a Christian way of thinking about society, religious issues, and humans; he creates, then, a Christian philosophy or Christian style of thinking about things. He proposes a spiritual way of addressing life and philosophy. He does not reject philosophical critique, as followed from Kant, Nietzsche, Foucault, and countless others, but simply avoids practicing them for the most part. His message, by proposing community and outreach, is counter-cultural.

## Chapter 7

### John Paul II's Pastoral Language

Pope John Paul's reconstruction of the truth adopts the language of Christian symbols and pastoring rather than of secular philosophy or academic scrutiny, even when discussing deconstruction or atheism. He avoids, in other words, the dense prose of his pre-pontifical philosophical words, including The Acting Person. One cannot separate the pope's pastoral language from his evangelical efforts. With a pastor's touch he defends the faith, evangelizes the world, and reintroduces Christianity as a reference point in Western culture. His direct, plain, Christocentric language addresses all people and not solely the intellectual elite. John Paul avoids arguing against Friedrich Nietzsche's attacks on Christianity, as this could reduce his own language to the same hostility and vulgarity, and would invite division. Is it possible, after all, to argue with aggressive atheism without becoming aggressively doctrinal?

Instead, the pontiff maintains his identity as a Christian and a pastor, and answers Nietzsche from these roots. He boldly, consistently, and even lovingly proclaims the Lord and invites us to deeper community. Veritatis splendor (10), for instance, identifies God's goodness in history from the covenant with Israel onwards, rather than arguing as to why this is so and why secularists are incorrect.<sup>351</sup> John Richard Neuhaus notes how this holistic thinking challenges public life in ways that many people find uncomfortable: "His manner is not to throw out scattered dicta of do's and don'ts, of rights and wrongs. He proposes, rather, a coherent way of thinking about politics, and therefore about morality. Politics and morality are inseparable."<sup>352</sup> John Saward writes that "Pope John Paul's Christocentricity is soteriological...Like St. Thomas and St. Bonaventure, he maintains an attitude of *pietas fidei*: he restrains speculation and modestly concentrates on what Scripture tells us of the mysterious will of God."<sup>353</sup> Saward correctly identifies John Paul's real agenda: the pontiff is not interested in winning arguments, since polemics cannot win or change people's hearts. He never used the Office of Peter as a professor's or referee's chair, but for pastoral outreach.

#### 7.1 Apologist and Evangelist

John Paul's theology borrows from different Catholic and papal methodologies, yet he is beholden to none. He is beholden only to the need for evangelization and therefore the efficient explanation and proclamation of the gospel. His energetic, person-centered pastoring offers no theological surprises in terms of substance.<sup>354</sup> His methodological diversity arises from the fact that he uses a variety of stances to get the truth across, whether it be the personalist philosophy of the twentieth century and that so heavily impacted him and Vatican II, or the Thomism of one hundred years ago that seemed to create a sense of a-historical authority in some pontificates, something that contrasts sharply with this day's secular relativism and uncertainty.

On the one hand, his approach invites a personal response from the reader, and therefore continues Vatican II's move away from the Catholic classicist, or neo-scholastic, approach. For

Bernard Lonergan, “When the classicist notion of culture prevails, theology is conceived as a permanent achievement, and then one discourses on its nature.”<sup>355</sup> The pontiff avoids a solely classicist viewpoint while also honoring the contribution of that piece of history to the Church. He tends to see historical events, such as the Second Vatican Council, as “spiritually still in being, and it is this that gives rise to a sense of indebtedness.”<sup>356</sup> As Archbishop Karol Wojtyła of Krakow, John Paul writes in Sources of Renewal: The Implementation of the Second Vatican Council, that “Nothing determines more effectively the process of the Church's self-realization than the reality of faith and its gradual enrichment.”<sup>357</sup> In other words, the substance--”the reality of faith”--stays the same, but a “process of the Church's self-realization” occurs, that is, a change in some of the outer ways that the Church relates to the world.

On the other hand, the Holy Father does tend to relate to the world on many occasions in a specifically traditional and a-historical, that is classicist manner. For example, he places providential history at the core of evangelization. Adopting a simple, direct, and traditional approach, he characterizes the Decalogue as a gift, sign, and promise of the new covenant, the latter of which then wrote the law, eternally, on human hearts. This day saw a new disposition because it proceeded from the spirit of renewal, the Holy Spirit.<sup>358</sup> The pontiff roots the new covenant of God’s kingdom, proclaimed specifically with the Sermon on the Mount, in the Decalogue:

In the Old Covenant the object of the promise was the possession of a land where the people would be able to live in freedom and in accordance with righteousness (cf. *Dt* 6:20-25). In the New Covenant the object of the promise is the ‘Kingdom of Heaven’, as Jesus declares at the beginning of the ‘Sermon on the Mount’ — a sermon which contains the fullest and most complete formulation of the New Law (cf. *Mt* 5-7), clearly linked to the Decalogue entrusted by God to Moses on Mount Sinai. (VS 12)

The pontiff “confronts” Nietzsche, in some instances, with non-confrontational, conventional, and unoriginal neoscholastic theology. The pontiff avoids both nineteenth-century triumphalism and twentieth-century theological innovation *ad nauseam*. He tries to minimize obstructions to the message, rather than using it for a specific political agenda or to create a new theology or movement. He sometimes uses one style—neoscholasticism or traditional folk piety—and then another—the personalism of Vatican II and beyond.

John Paul’s abrupt, immediate descriptions of historical events paint powerful images for the modern Christian. This abruptness attempts to make the Incarnation as real and urgent today as it was 2000 years ago and contains a neoscholastic a-historical sense to it—that a Christian meta-history propels all of history forward: “Yes, the Jubilee has made us realize that two thousand years of history have passed without diminishing the freshness of that ‘today’, when the angels proclaimed to the shepherds the marvelous event of the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem: ‘For to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord’ (*Lk* 2:11).” (Novo millennio ineunte 4) In evangelizing, Catholics can claim that we are following in and living the original *kerygma* of Jesus, and that the Catholic tradition has ever remained faithful to Jesus' proclamation. This is important to reconstructing truth since countless people in Western countries condemn Christian history or

elements thereof, while admiring and loving Jesus. A direct link between present-day Catholicism and Jesus can address these people's spiritual hunger.

This mystical view of history transcends the documents and archeology that secular scholars sift through, critique, and deconstruct. In his bold pastoral outreach, John Paul reverses the agenda and holds up these biblical events themselves as the point of critique on everything in history, using Christological imagery in his understanding of providence: "Understood in his divine and human mystery, Christ is the foundation and centre of history, he is its meaning and ultimate goal. It is in fact through him, the Word and image of the Father, that 'all things were made' (*Jn* 1:3; cf. *Col* 1:15)." (Novo millennio ineunte 5) The pope, with this Christological center to his truth, possesses a specific way of viewing history that conflicts with Michel Foucault's fragmented rendering of history: "For the 'fullness of time' is matched by a particular fullness of the self-communication of the Triune God in the Holy Spirit." (DV 50)<sup>359</sup> John Paul simply and boldly proclaims the primary, timeless happenings of the Christian story with their spiritual power and moral relevance rather than attempting to reshape them. He aims to re-fashion society's view of the old stories rather than to re-fashion the old stories to reflect society's view of them and society's values.

As part of this acknowledgment of the truth in the face of aggressive secularization, the pontiff's pastoral reconstruction of the truth does not argue with secular history's judgments of some of the Church's sins, but confronts these sins in a pastoral manner. He avoids upholding a superficial understanding of the truth and history, a problem that could arise if he failed to identify past sins of the Church. Memory reconstructs the truth in the present and future:

Study congresses helped us to identify those aspects in which, during the course of the first two millennia, the Gospel spirit did not always shine forth. How could we forget *the moving Liturgy of 12 March 2000* in Saint Peter's Basilica, at which, looking upon our Crucified Lord, I asked forgiveness in the name of the Church for the sins of all her children? This 'purification of memory' has strengthened our steps for the journey towards the future and has made us more humble and vigilant in our acceptance of the Gospel. (Novo Millennio Ineunte 6)

This humility in the face of ecclesiastical sin addresses the strong criticism of, for instance, many American feminists who incessantly recall witch burnings and other forms of misogyny, and often imply that such events are normative for Catholicism rather than sins and errors. The Holy Father's public penitence establishes humility, truth, and pastoral outreach as the Catholic norm. John Paul's public acts of contrition for these sins attempt to resolve the issue in a Catholic-friendly way but without directly confronting Church opponents. A pastor hopes to bring everyone into the fold, and a direct attack on certain feminist groups would harm evangelization attempts on many of these groups.

The pope roots his sincerity in his human-centered, pastoral approach. Liberty derives from the lived, freely-chosen moral response to the Sermon on the Mount:

The commandments of which Jesus reminds the young man are meant to safeguard *the good* of the person, the image of God, by protecting his *goods*. 'You shall not murder; You shall not commit adultery; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness' are moral rules



formulated in terms of prohibitions. These negative precepts express with particular force the ever urgent need to protect human life, the communion of persons in marriage, private property, truthfulness and people's good name.

The commandments thus represent the basic condition for love of neighbour; at the same time they are the proof of that love. They are the *first necessary step on the journey towards freedom*, its starting-point. 'The beginning of freedom', Saint Augustine writes, 'is to be free from crimes... such as murder, adultery, fornication, theft, fraud, sacrilege and so forth. When once one is without these crimes (and every Christian should be without them), one begins to lift up one's head towards freedom. But this is only the beginning of freedom, not perfect freedom'. (VS, 13)

This leads us to participate in the divine being itself, which is eternal life. God responds to the futility of human self-sanctification, as in an overly-rigorous observance of the law or a reason-based pursuit of the truth, with the free offer of salvation.

## 7.2 Metanoia

The pope's writings invite metanoia without Nietzschean intellectual polemics. John Paul speaks to the heart about faith. He aims for intellectual transformation but, even more, for heart-centered change: "This is truth which sets one free in the face of worldly power and which gives the strength to endure martyrdom." (VS 87)

### 1) *Metanoia and the truth*

John Paul asserts that the truth, even in this post-Enlightenment era, issues from the same spiritual deposit as practiced throughout Christianity's history: "Thus, in the Holy Spirit-Paraclete, who in the mystery and action of the Church unceasingly continues the historical presence on earth of the Redeemer and his saving work, the glory of Christ shines forth." (DV 7) These words aim to strengthen members of the faith in the face of an anti-Christian, pluralistic culture by reminding us of the martyrs who in different eras lived and died with resolute, uncompromising belief. (VS 76, 89) While John Paul confronts his audience with these tremendous effects of faith, in Centesimus annus (1991) and other writings, he also discusses the results of a lack thereof:

Socialism likewise maintains that the good of the individual can be realized without reference to his free choice, to the unique and exclusive responsibility which he exercises in the face of good or evil. Man is thus reduced to a series of social relationships, and the concept of the person as the autonomous subject of moral decision disappears, the very subject whose decisions build the social order. From this mistaken conception of the person there arise both a distortion of law, which defines the sphere of the exercise of freedom, and an opposition to private property. A person who is deprived of something he can call 'his own', and of the possibility of earning a living through his own initiative, comes to depend on the social machine and on those who control it. This makes it much more difficult for him to recognize his dignity as a person, and hinders progress towards the building up of an authentic human community. (13)

As the corollary of his pastoral penitence regarding the Church's past sins, he bluntly addresses the spiritual problems of materialistic, post-Christian societies. He calls them to change in tandem with his own admission of the Church's faults.

It becomes apparent when examining the wider corpus of the pontiff's writings that, echoing Vatican II, John Paul clearly avoids forcing an argument or dogma on his reader. He discusses the theological importance of his own life as one way to avoid a triumphalistic or judgmental style. He writes with humility in Dono e Mistero (III) citing, among other things, World War II's importance to his vocation: "It helped me see another perspective to *the value and importance of a vocation*. From witnessing the evil and atrocities of war it became ever clearer to me the sense of the priest and his mission in the world."<sup>360</sup> He proclaims the risen Christ rather than bogging his words down in the finer whys and wherefores--proclamation rather than argument. Jesus himself, more than the Savior's words or those of Paul and later Christian theologians, offers new life. Jesus' self-giving existence and his *agape* love liberate us. John Paul borrows an ancient argument, urging us to *imitatio Christi*. He announces spiritual conversion rather than purely intellectual or rational transformation as the primary route to deeper living, using the language of personalism in the following words: "Every individual must give this response, which constitutes the apex of his humanity, and no social mechanism or collective subject can substitute for it. The denial of God deprives the person of his foundation, and consequently leads to a reorganization of the social order without reference to the person's dignity and responsibility." (CA 13)<sup>361</sup> His own spiritual growth issued not from books and intellectual training foremost: "The veneration of the Mother of God in its traditional form comes to me from the family and the parish of Wadowice."<sup>362</sup>

Though it would be incorrect to refer to John Paul as anti-intellectual, inspiration from the Holy Spirit, rather than primarily from libraries, plays a central role here: "[T]he Holy Spirit will be the Counselor of the Apostles and the Church, always present in their midst-even though invisible-as the teacher of the same Good News that Christ proclaimed." (DV 4) The Holy Spirit foremost enlightens the faithful and, as the central reference point, interprets the Good News: "The words 'he will teach' and 'bring to remembrance' mean not only that he, in his own particular way, will continue to inspire the spreading of the Gospel of salvation but also that he will help people to understand the correct meaning of the content of Christ's message" (DV 4)

As so often, the pontiff boldly leaves unanswered the specifics, this time concerning the Paraclete's method of education and inspiration. In this sense, his writings are more inspirational than dogmatic or philosophical. Does this process of instruction follow the Pentecostal churches' understanding, inviting a great deal of individual freedom and a minimal role for the clergy and sacraments? One would expect that in his vision the Church hierarchy plays a large role in interpreting for individuals and Catholic communities the teaching and inspiring work of the Holy Spirit, as in his book on the episcopacy, Rise, Let Us Be On Our Way. John Paul does not define the Holy Spirit and its work too closely. As mentioned, in many ways, he is not an ambitious theologian. Nor is he always

a precise theologian, probably because of his trust and optimism in humans. The pontiff simply shares his confidence that this work will get done, even without his explicit pastoral or theological micromanagement: The Paraclete “will ensure continuity and identity of understanding in the midst of changing conditions and circumstances. The Holy Spirit, then, will ensure that in the Church there will always continue the same truth which the Apostles heard from their Master.” (DV 4) Once again, we see John Paul's teaching contrasting Nietzsche's idea of Christianity treating people as dimwits and herd animals.

This faith in humans is actually faith in God. The Holy Spirit works with the human through the individual's faith: “For the mystery of Christ taken as a whole demands faith, since it is faith that adequately introduces man into the reality of the revealed mystery.” (DV 6) The intimacy of the Holy Spirit and the Christian working together accomplishes the transformation of a human: “The ‘guiding into all the truth’ is therefore achieved in faith and through faith: and this is the work of the Spirit of truth and the result of his action in man.” (DV 6) As already mentioned, John Paul's anthropology and theology run together; he cannot talk about God without talking about humans, and vice versa.

## **2) *Metanoia and human integration***

John Paul proposes deep engagement with Christian truth. Already a part of us, we must answer the truth with both head and heart. His re-Christianizing insists on action, not passivity. It demands personal accountability—including that of the laity--rather than clerical empowerment. Confronted by the truth's immutability, we cannot escape our need to react:

Our response must be: Our spirit is set in one direction, the only direction for our intellect, will and heart is-towards Christ our Redeemer, towards Christ, the Redeemer of man. We wish to look towards him-because there is salvation in no one else but him, the Son of God-repeating what Peter said: 'Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.' (RH 7)

The intellect, anchored in the direct words of truth, plays a balanced role in the holistic view of John Paul. The pontiff's words, “there is salvation in no one else but him,” parallel Nietzsche's boldness rather than arguing with the philosopher.

This re-Christianizing is concrete, specific, and earthly, rather than abstract, ideological, and supernatural-otherworldly. Our relationship to the truth determines our identity and character in the here and now, as individuals and society reap immediate spiritual benefits from this link. We must avoid a flawed view of the truth or of related virtues such as freedom. The wrong decision carries grave and concrete results for our lives:

Freedom is not only the choice for one or another particular action; it is also, within that choice, a *decision about oneself* and a setting of one's own life for or against the Good, for or against the Truth, and ultimately for or against God. Emphasis has rightly been placed on the importance of certain choices which 'shape' a person's entire moral life, and which serve as bounds within which other particular everyday choices can be situated and allowed to develop. (VS 65)

Our decisions do not result passively from our unchanging character. We shape ourselves through our choices. While the truth of ultimate reality, of the Good News and of natural law, stays constant, we are malleable in an almost tragic way.

This argument comes around full circle, from centering on humans to emphasizing Christ. Jesus bridges the gap between the steadfast truth of God and our own equivocating, superficial nature: “Jesus’ call to ‘come, follow me’ marks the greatest possible exaltation of human freedom, yet at the same time it witnesses to the truth and to the obligation of acts of faith and of decisions which can be described as involving a fundamental option.” (VS 66) Humans live under freedom and obligation. Our free assent and metanoia lie in our acceptance of Christ.

## 7.3 Intimacy

### 1) *John Paul as spiritual guide*

The pontiff builds a relationship with his audience by emphasizing diversity. He singles out various groups in the Church. In Novo millennio ineunte, which addresses the Great Jubilee year of 2000, he speaks directly to some of the groups of pilgrims whom Rome will receive, starting with youth and sympathizing with their plight: “Yet again, the young have shown themselves to be for Rome and for the Church *a special gift of the Spirit of God*. Sometimes when we look at the young, with the problems and weaknesses that characterize them in contemporary society, we tend to be pessimistic. The Jubilee of Young People however changed that, telling us that young people, whatever their possible ambiguities, have a profound longing for those genuine values which find their fullness in Christ.” (9)

A second basis of his relationship to the faithful centers on his traditional spirituality, which he shares with his reader. In Dominum et vivificantum (51) he counsels participants in the Great Jubilee that “The Church cannot prepare for the Jubilee in any other way than in the Holy Spirit. What was accomplished by the power of the Holy Spirit ‘in the fullness of time’ can only through the Spirit's power now emerge from the memory of the Church.” The pontiff in many of his instructions holds Mary as an example of how to live a good Christian life: “Mary entered the history of the salvation of the world through the obedience of faith. And faith, in its deepest essence, is the openness of the human heart to the gift: to God's self- communication in the Holy Spirit.” (DV 51) In Dono E Mystero he refers to his spiritual growth through Mary, and of the influence of Saint Luis Maria Grignon de Montfort.

The tangible, present reality of following Christ holds consequences even for John Paul himself. In reflecting on his spiritual life, he witnesses with vulnerability to Christianity’s interior, personal, and concrete nature. His heartfelt reflections on his life and ministry, where he offers himself as a personal spiritual guide to his audience, contrast with impersonal dogmatic theology. He invites the reader into his innermost spiritual journey in Rise, Let us Be on Our Way (2004) from his first words: “I set off in search of the source of my vocation. It is beating there ... in the Upper Room in

Jerusalem.”<sup>363</sup> He offers a private insight into his Episcopal ordination: “The year is 1958. I’m on a train traveling toward Olsztyn with my group of canoeists.”<sup>364</sup>

The intimate, personalist, Christian anthropology from his encyclicals comes to completion with Rise, Let us be on Our Way: “As soon as I meet people, I pray for them, and this helps me in all my relationships”; and again: “I welcome everyone as a person sent to me and entrusted to me by Christ.”<sup>365</sup> His anthropology begins with love and pastoral concern for others. Through this profoundly interconnected spirituality, the pontiff counters Michel Foucault’s deconstruction and Hans Küng’s cynicism. By making faith, not reason or deconstruction, the issue, he calls us to choose a way of being, and not only an intellectual stance. He considers the choice for Christ and for brotherly love the most important element.

## 2) *Building intimate community*

This concrete, immediate aspect of following Christ invites others to vulnerability. The Catholic hierarchy’s behavior, especially towards the laity and secular culture, greatly impacts re-Christianization. It must act differently than government, bureaucratic, or corporate management. Yet, echoing Nietzsche, many in society, Church members or not, lay or ordained, view Catholic authority as power-oriented, unfeeling, or stuck in the past. John Paul aims to remodel the Church leadership (to the extent that he feels it needs remodeling) and demonstrate a more pastoral, familial, and loving side. This vision counters the observations of Nietzsche and others.

John Paul begins his 2003 Apostolic Exhortation to the Catholic bishops, Pastores gregis, by referring to a fraternal activity with his fellow bishops:

The image of the Good Shepherd, so dear also to ancient Christian iconography, was very much present to the Bishops from throughout the world who gathered from 30 September to 27 October 2001 for the Tenth Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops. At the tomb of the Apostle Peter, they joined me in reflecting on the figure of The Bishop, Servant of the Gospel of Jesus Christ for the Hope of the World. We were all agreed that the figure of Jesus the Good Shepherd represents the primary image to which we must constantly refer. (1)

“We were all agreed” implies affection rather than a power relationship. Nor does this letter resemble a businesslike administrative directive. It implies that theology and Church hierarchy foster brotherhood. The hierarchy consists of a spiritual, loving brotherhood and fellowship that Nietzsche and other naysayers of Catholicism fail to see.

The pontiff reminds the reader that the Church, even its episcopacy, is primarily a fellowship united in Christ and tradition. As in Rise, Let Us Be On Our Way, the pontiff in Pastores gregis describes the heritage in which he participates as something intimate and personal. If he were to criticize aspects of Catholicism, he would not do so in a Nietzschean analysis. He roots his relationship with others and friendship with readers in the unity we receive from Christ: “No one, in fact, can be considered a pastor worthy of the name, *nisi per caritate efficiatur unum cum Christo*” [“except by that charity that unites one with Christ”]. (Pastores gregis 1)

The pontiff links himself so closely to the tradition because he sees Christ in it. The hierarchy holds great communal feelings for him because it is the leadership and community of Christ rather than of an impersonal authority structure. Rather than arguing directly against feminists, Nietzsche, or renegade theologians, the Holy Father sets up his own holy vision of Catholic leadership, borrowing heavily from tradition and Vatican II. John Paul invites metanoia for the reader with such an attitude, in part since his view contrasts so strikingly with feminist or Nietzschean depictions of the Catholic hierarchy, where authority seems to mean everything. The pope invites metanoia regarding power and hierarchy, specifically regarding Catholic power and hierarchy. He leaves the reader with the sense that ministry means *ministerium*, service; he brings out the idea of vocation. The hierarchy is a vocation, where the bishops and magisterium are called by God to serve the People of God and the entire world. This counters the feminists' professionalization of the ministry in many churches. The pope does not call for a muscular Church with professionalized, worldly-ambitious leadership, but with Christ-centered community and service. Rather than debating issues of ecclesiastical jurisdiction, this approach invites reflection on the gospel, on God in our lives, and on Jesus' suffering and resurrection. This counters an attitude of simony, where professionalized people seek Church office or bemoan a lack thereof based on their view of power—which then feeds into the Nietzschean paradigm of Christianity as a religion preoccupied with power.

The pope contrasts a depersonalized, influence-oriented view of ecclesiastical authority, as described by Nietzsche, with a more fraternal, loving attitude. He reflects in Pastoris gregis on the Church leader as pastor:

This is the fundamental reason why 'the ideal figure of the Bishop, on which the Church continues to count, is that of the pastor who, configured to Christ by his holiness of life, expends himself generously for the Church entrusted to him, while at the same time bearing in his heart a concern for all the Churches throughout the world (cf. 2 Cor 11:28)'. (1)

John Paul avoids characterizing the bishop as primarily an administrator, indoctrinator, or theological policeman. The bishop, as pastor, must open his heart, like the pope himself, with vulnerability to his audience. This openness invites metanoia. He envisions a servant leadership that converts people to Christ, rather than writing of an authority that seeks power and spheres of influence. Ecclesiastical office allows church officials to follow the gospel by serving others. John Paul's vulnerability and openness in this writing and others addressed to the bishops invites his readers to this vulnerability.

## SECTION III CREDO UT INTELLEGAM

### Chapter 8

#### John Paul II's Epistemology and Religious Language

We have seen a steadily more defined return to the golden age of medieval thought, to that of a Saint Thomas and a Saint Bonaventure. This movement of return, in gaining strength, has restored to us a little of the climate of 'mystery' that was the great light of patristic thought. In all these domains, we feel the need to dive once again into the deep sources, to study them with instruments other than single clear ideas, to rediscover the vital and productive contact with the nurturing soil.<sup>366</sup>

Henri de Lubac's words seem a bit misplaced or overly optimistic for those wanting such a shift. Despite the renewed Thomism of the nineteenth- and early twentieth-centuries, with Vatican II and its fall-out, Catholic culture and theology seem to have become more enamored or comfortable with modernity.

Though traditional spiritual language does not necessarily mean medieval language, a sense of mystery frequently inheres to it. Is there still a place in this post-modern world for such traditional spiritual language? How does that language sound? In avoiding polemics and in frequently emphasizing mystery, Pope John Paul doubly opposes Friedrich Nietzsche in style as much as substance. Both writers regard style as part of their message, inseparable from substance. The pontiff's contemplative or pious language distinguishes purpose, style, methodology, and spirituality from critics such as Nietzsche and Michel Foucault. John Richard Neuhaus has remarked that "this Pope, more than his predecessors, has employed encyclicals not so much to set forth authoritative teaching as to invite reflection. For example, *Redemptoris Mater*...and *Dominum et Vivificantem*...are for the most part theological-devotional exercises. They are more in the nature of spiritual writings than of pedagogical or juridical pronouncements."<sup>367</sup>

Concerning the importance of community, the pope writes from within his religious framework about spirituality and the wider world, paralleling Catholic teachers such as Catholic priest and spiritual writer Henri Nouwen (1932-96). The latter emphasizes unity and a holistic perspective, highlighting the interconnection of all things: "I found I was writing about myself, my friends and family, and my God, all connected in many intricate ways."<sup>368</sup> Nouwen aims for "a coherent vision of the spiritual life," which he describes as a mosaic, where every piece and person, no matter how seemingly insignificant, plays an integral, valuable part.<sup>369</sup> Valuing the least-of-all contrasts with a Nietzschean hierarchy of supermen-and-herd.

In terms of the energy of language, tradition holds power when its words possess spiritual energy. Nouwen wonders, "Why is the attentive repetition of a well-known prayer so helpful in setting our hearts on the kingdom? It is helpful because the words of such a prayer have the power to transform our inner anxiety into inner peace."<sup>370</sup> This contrasts with Michel Foucault's arms-length

archeological analysis of language that cuts across boundaries and disintegrates centuries-old traditions. Conversely, Nouwen parallels the pontiff and brings things together into a whole. This language contains an intuitive aspect that seems outside of Foucault's imagination of deconstruction. Congar seems to highlight the tacit, or *sensus ecclesiae et theologiae*, of religious language: "Whereas the Old Testament minutely detailed the rite of Paschal and sacrificial celebrations, the New Testament determined nothing: people followed the living model, transmitted by the same reality that they celebrated. They therefore practiced the Eucharist a good thirty years without discussing it. It was the object of tradition *par excellence*. The rite and action preceded the writings, if not doctrine itself."<sup>371</sup> John Paul masters this type of language; rather than succumbing to hyper-rationality and unending criticism, he searches the depths of long-standing mystery and tries to develop it theologically and spiritually. He understood this as Archbishop of Krakow: "Awareness of faith is not identical with knowledge, even with a complete knowledge of the content of revelation; rather it is based on the existential factor, since it is faith that gives meaning to human existence. The believer's whole existence constitutes his response to the gift of God which is revelation."<sup>372</sup>

## 8.1 Merton and the Truth

### 1) *Merton's critique of modern Western thinking*

Some Catholics confront secular society as directly as secular society confronts Catholics. Thomas Merton's discussions of the world's limitations and the spiritual life dispute post-Nietzschean civilization. He disavows parts of the anti-metaphysical materialism and scientific empiricism that modern philosophers often take as givens, writing as though the spiritual truths remain impervious to secularism and are almost patently obvious: "The desire for unworldliness, detachment, and union with God is the most fundamental expression of this revolutionary spirit"<sup>373</sup> that he identifies not in worldly ideologies or technological change but in the spiritual lives of Christians. As part of his spiritual boldness, Kentucky-based Trappist monk Merton (1915-68) challenges not only our materialist society, but also its intellectual underpinnings: "It is a strange paradox indeed that modern man should know so much and still know practically nothing. The paradox is not strange because men in other times, who have known less than we know, have in fact known more."<sup>374</sup> Calling this ignorance of the modern world "barbarism," his language confronts the secular, spiritually-immature world that denies metaphysics and transcendence, and exalts economic and technological progress. Nietzsche calls Christianity absurd, and Merton returns the compliment.

Merton, a mid-twentieth-century Cistercian monk based in Kentucky, challenges Nietzsche's characterization of Christianity as overburdened with dogma and moralistic rules by presenting monastic spirituality as equally opposed to such an outlook. He warns, for instance, against religious dogmatism: "You cannot save the world merely with a system. You cannot have peace without charity. You cannot have order without saints."<sup>375</sup> Merton celebrates the Holy Spirit providing sense, purpose, and inspiration.



## **2) Merton: Spirituality and God**

Is it possible to be modern *and* religious? Authentic Catholic spirituality places great demands on the laity, rather than treating people as sheep. Merton identifies the Holy Spirit with the truth, and from that starting point demands much of humans: “*We must know the truth, and we must love the truth we know, and we must act according to the measure of our love.*”<sup>376</sup> This contemplative language forms the basis of knowledge and of a meaning of life. Merton’s epistemology, or theory of knowledge, does not start with positivist-like empiricism or a belief in human freedom independent from God. Rather, “the truth to which it (contemplation) unites us is not an abstraction but Reality and Life itself. The love by which it unites us to this Truth is a gift of God and can only be produced within us by the direct action of God.”<sup>377</sup> The contemplative who acknowledges and seeks the truth follows an empirical, scientific path without being positivist or atheist. Merton outlines an epistemological model at ease with modernity but that also incorporates Christianity’s truth.

A pastoral-oriented language inheres to the monk's writing. He characterizes the truth, and the contemplative life that seeks after it, as more concrete and achievable than we suppose, and calls his readers to spiritual growth: “Since we ourselves are real, this Truth is not so far distant from us as one might imagine.”<sup>378</sup> Nietzsche’s depiction of a rigid Christian hierarchy where only insiders grasp some apparent truth misrepresents authentic Catholic spirituality. Merton also rejects the notion that we should scientifically analyze the truth. Rather, we can *know* the truth.

Nouwen, Merton, and John Paul demonstrate the error or brittleness of Nietzsche's criticisms. Nietzsche portrays Christian life as pseudo-spirituality and dim-witted thinking. These writers, in countering the philosopher’s portrayal, show the fraudulent nature of his criticism and the connection of Catholic practices to a vibrant laity.

## **8.2 What does epistemology serve?**

### **1) Merton: Epistemology serves humans**

De Lubac's words demonstrate the ample resistance and resources within the Catholic tradition to the Nietzschean-Faucaultean agenda: “We know that simple abstract principles do not contain a place of mystique, that the most penetrating critique does not make one atom of being, that an unceasing exploration of history and human diversity does not suffice in the 'development of humanity' that is the goal of every culture. We no longer want a separation between knowledge and life.”<sup>379</sup> Merton falls into this tradition. He makes sense of his world by rejoicing in God through everything and musing on humans’ incomplete response to supernatural love. Our feelings, thoughts, and desires towards this world fail to fully reflect the higher, divine truth; “[T]he earthly desires men cherish are shadows. There is no true happiness in fulfilling them. Why, then, do we continue to pursue joys without substance?”<sup>380</sup> Merton turns to Christian tradition to supplement this world view,

citing Blaise Pascal, Saint Gregory of Nyssa, and *Ecclesiastes*. Those who look solely to the world for meaning and direction fail to lead an authentic life, since “man was made for the highest activity, which is, in fact, his rest. That activity, which is contemplative, is immanent and it transcends the level of sense and of discourse.”<sup>381</sup> Only the contemplative life, and the fruits it bears, can unearth the truth.

As with John Paul, Merton defines love and transcendence in concrete, here-and-now terms, rather than as abstract and reserved for another existence. Merton cherishes earthly goods, pointing out that in the *Rule of Saint Benedict* “we find the humblest material things handled with reverence, one might almost say with love.”<sup>382</sup> This world, the monk concludes, even reflects something of God:

The humble stone buildings, the cloister set in the peaceful valley, the plain wooden furniture of the monastery, the bare little table and the trestle of planks in the monk’s cell, far from being merely despised as ‘vain creatures’ are respected and valued and even loved, not for their own sakes but for the sake of God to whom they belong.<sup>383</sup>

As with all else, we must interpret material things through Christian teaching and acknowledge their metaphysical value. The eyes of love enable us to perceive the truth in things.

## 2) *Epistemology serves modern humans*

Confronted with modern thought and science, the pontiff, like Merton, identifies the Creator’s work everywhere, and witnesses to de Lubac’s words: “Every Christian philosophy is a ‘metaphysics of the light [“*métaphysique de la lumière*”].”<sup>384</sup> Knowledge of the world does not issue from Nietzschean instincts and will or Foucault’s reasoned deconstruction, but from revelation and faith in providence. Contemporary thought cannot deny the substance of *kerygma* or the Paraclete’s work: “Within Tradition, *the authentic interpretation* of the Lord’s law develops, with the help of the Holy Spirit. The same Spirit who is at the origin of the Revelation of Jesus’ commandments and teachings guarantees that they will be reverently preserved, faithfully expounded and correctly applied in different times and places.” ( VS 27) John Paul grounds his knowledge of the world in the consistent, supernaturally-inspired teachings of his tradition: “Nevertheless, it can only confirm the permanent validity of Revelation and follow in the line of the interpretation given to it by the great Tradition of the Church’s teaching and life, as witnessed by the teaching of the Fathers, the lives of the Saints, the Church’s Liturgy and the teaching of the Magisterium.” ( VS 27)

The pontiff, however, avoids getting caught up in false, otherworldly mysticism. *Fides et ratio* opens by inviting a human-centered way of knowing the world: “The admonition *Know yourself* was carved on the temple portal at Delphi, as testimony to a basic truth to be adopted as a minimal norm by those who seek to set themselves apart from the rest of creation as ‘human beings’, that is as those who ‘know themselves’.” (1) Epistemology must address people’s deepest needs, rather than serving Catholic clericalism or triumphalism. John Paul enjoins scholars to assist the Church in expressing doctrine in meaningful, lively, and comprehensible ways, and in bridging the gap between revelation and humans. Epistemology aids the proclamation of the gospel, thereby serving men and women.

John Paul demands a different kind of epistemology from that of the secular world without denying the need for intellectual vigor and independence. Revelation and a scriptural sense of humility can actually invigorate and renew the subject in its attempts to solve the more pressing concerns of our world: “The philosopher who learns humility will also find courage to tackle questions which are difficult to resolve if the data of Revelation are ignored—for example, the problem of evil and suffering, the personal nature of God and the question of the meaning of life or, more directly, the radical metaphysical question, ‘Why is there something rather than nothing?’” (FR, 76) Rather than conforming theology to modern philosophy, and the latter subject’s need for independent, rational verification, modern thinkers should follow Christian spirituality and tradition, and take a leap of faith. This echoes Paul’s characterization of the Gospels as either bold in truth or absurd (1 Corinthians 1:17-1:30). Unlike so many Christian leaders of late, the pope does not surrender to the temptation of relativism. He challenges modern epistemology to reengage with the transcendent and with revelation. He does not ask for a complete disavowal of post-Cartesian thought, but for greater balance within philosophy, including within epistemology.

More generally than epistemology, Fides et ratio offers two complementary and legitimate streams of philosophy, both of which can aid us in understanding the mystery of our faith and in explaining it to the world. The first, pre-Christian in origins, functions independently: “We see here philosophy’s valid aspiration to be an *autonomous* enterprise, obeying its own rules and employing the powers of reason alone.” (FR 75) This autonomy does not threaten theology, and should inspire us for its own sake: “Although seriously handicapped by the inherent weakness of human reason, this aspiration should be supported and strengthened. As a search for truth within the natural order, the enterprise of philosophy is always open—at least implicitly—to the supernatural.” (FR 75) The second stream, Christian philosophy, “includes those important developments of philosophical thinking which would not have happened without the direct or indirect contribution of Christian faith.” (76) John Paul writes in this part of Fides et ratio more like a pastor than a scholar-pope in linking the spiritual and intellectual fruit of such practice. The pope only provides room for a holistic epistemology that, taken in its entirety, must encompass certain inclinations, including humility, and avoid reduction to simple intellectual processes. In contrast to Foucault’s fragmentation which tries to render the tradition meaningless, epistemology, the pope advances, must issue from and serve the entire person. The pontiff warns in Fides et ratio that “A philosophy which no longer asks the question of the meaning of life would be in grave danger of reducing reason to merely accessory functions, with no real passion for the search for truth.” (81) Identifying the spiritual aspect of philosophy, the pontiff calls on epistemology and philosophy more generally to help convert individuals, and on Catholics to embrace and assist it.

## 8.3 The Prophet

### 1) *A new morality*

John Paul reconstructs the epistemology behind the Catholic truth of morality by stressing human dignity rather than subservience to ecclesiastical authority or to philosophical or theological principles. The pontiff accentuates, then, the reasoning and spiritual truths underlying moral teaching, and emphasizes life and growth rather than limitation and control. He emphasizes the person, and how the truth impacts her or him. Admonishing the faithful about errors and ethical dangers plays only a part in effective direction. Before all else leaders must proclaim Jesus Christ as the splendor of truth: “Dear Brothers in the Episcopate, we must not be content merely to warn the faithful about the errors and dangers of certain ethical theories. We must first of all show the inviting splendour of that truth which is Jesus Christ himself.” (VS, 83) While a negative bottom threshold does exist, in Veritatis splendor and elsewhere he accentuates the higher, transcendent values and spiritual realities far above this level.

John Paul portrays his religion as anything but a static dogma or a hierarchy of philosophical or theological truths, and invites us to understand the world in terms of the living truth. Our revelation-based knowledge of the world contains a transcendent and therefore prophetic aspect. A good life can actually reflect divine glory: “[T]he moral life, caught up in the gratuitousness of God's love, is called to reflect his glory.” (VS, 10) Rather than Nietzsche's non-thinking puppets, John Paul demands great responsibility and action from Christians. Morality witnesses to God's glory and actually defines us.

## 2) *A new spirituality*

Epistemology aids religious practice because it is more than a philosophical epistemology. John Paul's theology for the third millennium leads to a spirituality for the third millennium: One filled with moral and epistemological courage and certainty. The following words ring loudly in a modern society of people as irresolute as Pilate. “Pilate's question: ‘What is truth’ reflects the distressing perplexity of a man who often no longer knows *who he is*, *whence* he comes and *where* he is going.” (VS 84) The pontiff does not want cowards. Our actions must respond to the freely-given love of God: “*The moral life presents itself as the response due to the many gratuitous initiatives taken by God out of love for man. It is a response of love.*” (VS, 10) Perhaps the pontiff implies the faint-heartedness of any relativistic intellectual outlook.

The vigor of John Paul's prophetic voice challenges Nietzsche's notion of a *Herdentier* (a herd animal). The pontiff empowers individuals by calling Christians to full responsibility through a conscience that stands on these firm eternal truths. He does not treat Christians as imbeciles, contrary to Nietzsche's observations of the religion. His epistemology, as found in his papal writings, follows the larger current of his pontificate and is a pastoral epistemology—an epistemology he uses to reach out and pastor to his reader. He develops a more traditional, philosophical epistemology in his pre-pontifical career, particularly in The Acting Person.

## 8.4 Religious Language

The pope's theology parallels his epistemology in being holistic and from the deepest spiritual well of each person, and not only from the intellect. Ultimately, John Paul offers himself and his story as theology and Christian history, but not superficially or without admitting that his own journey possesses a dimension that even he does not fully understand, as he writes in Dono e Mistero (I): “The story of my priestly vocation? God ultimately knows it.”<sup>385</sup> The pontiff offers his humility before all else when trying to explain his priestly ordination, noting at the beginning of this book about his and others’ ordination that “human words cannot define the value of the mystery that the priest holds within himself.”<sup>386</sup> He ties this to the “impenetrable mystery of God.”<sup>387</sup> This is theology as spiritual exercise rather than theology as exegesis or systematic inquiry of the tenets of faith.

Dono e Mistero’s personal and social theology echo his thoughts on the individual and communal aspects of God’s love. He repeatedly mentions his fellow priests or superiors, such as Archbishop Adam Sapieha of Krakow, enlivening and personalizing Catholicism. He personalizes by reaching out to these people and to his tradition by offering thanksgiving: “I have thoughts full of gratitude for all my superiors, spiritual fathers and professors who during my seminary studies contributed to my formation.”<sup>388</sup> He ends this thought by turning these people over to God: “The Lord will reward their force and sacrifice!”<sup>389</sup> John Paul’s theology, an act of self-giving, proclaims his love for these people and is, as this last citation demonstrates, an act of faithful prayer as well. He avoids the notion of “critique” as found in modern scholarly research, including in modern theological scholarly research, and describes the seminary itself and his priestly formation as foremost a spiritual formation. This parallels his epistemology, which again does not serve as a basis for critique, but of understanding of the whole person.

Emphasizing the prayer and love dimension of theology as primary, the pontiff offers his thanksgiving and sense of gratitude for his devout father and their life together in his childhood and adolescence, which the pontiff terms a sort of pre-seminary. He also finds spiritual meaning from his forced labor for the Nazis in the Solvay factory, for instance in meeting his fellow Polish workers: “Having been a manual laborer, I know well what physical fatigue really means. I worked everyday among people who worked to the limit. I knew the environment of these individuals, their families, interests, human values and dignity.”<sup>390</sup> For the pontiff, this spiritual community echoes the spiritual community of Israel, and he notes, unsurprisingly, “I therefore had the occasion to note how much religious feeling was born in them and how much wisdom too.”<sup>391</sup> By focusing primarily on his Polish compatriots rather than on the Nazis, John Paul offers an anti-critique, a way of viewing history through loving, thanksgiving eyes, even during the most evil of circumstances. Further emphasizing the role and gifts of the laity, he also offers thanks to a lay spiritual master, Jan Tyranowski, who led rosary prayer groups and who “was a man of a particularly profound spirituality.”<sup>392</sup>

Thus the pontiff’s deep spiritual connections to others who adhered faithfully to Poland’s Catholic spiritual heritage formed his identity. He inherited his tradition through people and their acts of kindness and love, rather than primarily through his intellect. The Polish mysticism that he shares

so openly in some writings was handed down to him from others who in turn offered him their Polish mysticism. This includes a priest, Father Figlewicz, for whom “in that difficult period the signification of the cathedral, the royal tomb, the altar of Saint Stanislaw, bishop and martyr became even more clear.”<sup>393</sup>

When he does mention a book in Dono e Mistero he refers to its spiritual teaching rather than offering an intellectual critique. The pope finds theological meaning from his personal spiritual growth and struggles. His youthful worry that his Marian devotion took away from his devotion to Christ was allayed by San Luigi Maria Grignion de Montfort’s treatise on devotion to Mary. The pontiff concludes that “Mary moves us closer to Christ, leads us to Him, if we live her mystery in Christ...De Monfort's mariological thought is diffused with the trinitarian mystery and in the truth of the Incarnation of the Word of God.”<sup>394</sup> Here the pontiff combines his intensely personal, mystical faith and devotion, learned from his family and the parish of Wadowice, with a mystical tract written by an early modern saint. He uses this experience, both spiritual and intellectual, to teach his reader his faith. Books, tracts, and theological issues have spiritual, mystical dimensions that he fearlessly shares with his audience.

The eternal struggle between good and evil, central to John Paul’s theology, manifests itself in concrete, historical terms, as in twentieth century Poland's two fascist dictatorships, the Nazis and the communists. The pontiff centers this struggle on the Church, which guided Poland through these troubled years not through abstract, divine love and grace, but through specific people: “Thanks to the sacrifices of bishops, priests and of countless laity; thanks to the Polish families 'strong in God.’”<sup>395</sup> He specifically honors the leadership of Cardinals Sapieha (during the war) and Stefan Wyszynski (in the communist period). The pontiff relates his war experience and its tragedies with his vocation: The tragedy of the war gave maturation of my life decision a particular sense,<sup>396</sup> as “Faced with the spreading evil and atrocities of war always gave me a clear sense of the priesthood and its mission in the world.”<sup>397</sup>

Dono e Mistero exemplifies John Paul’s ability to make heart-centered rather than head-centered theology. He offers a short, holy ecclesiology of his Polish Church through his personal Church that nurtured him and that in turn as Archbishop of Krakow he helped to nurture: “It is a *Church that has defended humans*, their dignity and fundamental rights; it is a *Church that has faithfully fought* for the right of the faithful to profess their faith.”<sup>398</sup> He universalizes his personal experience of Church, making normative and public his version or interpretation of the Catholic Church, and at this point offers, again, his thanksgiving for personal relationships that helped him in his spiritual, Catholic journey: In Krakow “Examples of their sanctity and pastoral zeal have been greatly edifying for me.”<sup>399</sup> Church history is the history of people as God's people.

Portraying an intimate, personal, and fraternal ecclesiology, he boldly emphasizes the importance of priestly community for himself as a priest: “The community of priests, rooted in true *sacramental fraternity*, constitutes an environment of primary importance for spiritual and pastoral

formation.”<sup>400</sup> This politically-incorrect, hierarchical thinking emphasizes the importance of the priest, as does the entire book, as he largely fails to single out the laity (except Jan Tyranowski, who was a lay leader dedicated to the rosary): “How could one not express, on the occasion of the golden jubilee [of my priestly ordination], my gratitude for their contribution to my priesthood.”<sup>401</sup> He does at the end of this chapter (VII) acknowledge the place of the laity in the Church’s apostolate, albeit in less personal and more general terms.

He reveals in this book his understanding of the spiritual power of the priesthood, and as so often, it is concrete, action- and prayer-oriented, and heart- rather than book-centered. The spiritual precedes reason. Confession—public confession—is theology for John Paul. This word has two Catholic meanings. First, John Paul testifies in so many of his writings to his personal faith, especially in *Dono e Misterio* and *Rise, Let Us Be On Our Way*. Second, confession also means the sacrament of reconciliation. He refers many times in *Dono e Misterio* to the importance of this sacrament (something he also does in his last encyclical, *Ecclesia de eucharistia*, and the important connection between these two sacraments).

Confession is important for priests in this second meaning because the pontiff intimately links the sacrament to conversion (and conversion is central to the first meaning of confession—of his personal confession): “In the confessional every priest becomes a personal witness to the great miracles of divine mercy operating in the soul (anima) that accepts the grace of conversion.”<sup>402</sup> We get a glimpse of the goal of John Paul in being so confession (as a sacrament)-oriented, which offers us a glimpse into his orientation towards confession-as-proclamation-of-faith: “Each priest, at the service of a fraternity of the confessional, must experience himself this mercy of God, through his own regular confession and spiritual direction.”<sup>403</sup>

John Paul ties the two notions of confession together by emphasizing mystery and transcendence, and by using mystical language rather than reason: “Administrator of the divine mystery, the priest is a special *witness of the Invisible* in the world. In fact the priest is the administrator of invisible and immeasurable goods that belong to the spiritual and supernatural orders.”<sup>404</sup> John Paul liberally employs the mystical language by emphasizing the basics of this priestly power and existence: “As an administrator of such goods, the priest is in permanent, particular *contact with the sanctity of God*.”<sup>405</sup> He concludes this mystical theology of the priesthood by turning solely to God: “The majesty of God is the majesty of sanctity.”<sup>406</sup> This leads to the truly grand nature of the priest: “The priest lives every day, in continuity, the descent of this sanctity of God towards humans.”<sup>407</sup>

Prayer links God’s holiness with the priest: “Prayer creates the priest and the priest creates himself through prayer.”<sup>408</sup> The pontiff calls priests to be men of prayer. In other words, they must approach the world how he has—from the vantage point of this mysterious, mystical inner light.

## Conclusion

By repeatedly drawing fresh meaning from the source stories of Christianity, John Paul retakes back control of the debate about the meaning of life and the direction of culture and society for the Catholic milieu, rather than allowing the Church's critics to define Christianity and its source stories. He writes prophetically and prayerfully rather than defensively. After 300 years of relentlessly increasing secular moral relativism, he sometimes sounds pre-Enlightenment, or perhaps timeless, in his call to faith. As a modern thinker deeply aware of the Enlightenment and its fallout, he acts prophetically by rejecting the American-style biblical fundamentalist opposition to scientific progress and modern Western philosophy. Conversely, he argues that science and modern thought offer no spiritual alternative to Christ's message, though he does treasure much that both have to offer.

In *Veritatis splendor* (30) he claims that Jesus' response to the rich young man, which the Church has inherited, "possesses a light and a power capable of answering even the most controversial and complex questions." Jesus' prophetic invitation to the rich young man addresses the same issue in today's world. Humans need something deeper and more divine than earthly, legalistic perfection. He offers a renewed view of the Church and its message. Neuhaus helps pinpoint the power of John Paul's teachings for those whom the pontiff has so deeply inspired:

[M]odern folk have an extraordinarily difficult time distinguishing between the authoritarian and the authoritative. The difficulty becomes acute in connection with Church teaching. The radical 'turn to the subject' in modern thought has produced what might be described as a severe crippling of the mind. The turn to the subject has come to mean not simply the self at the center apprehending reality but the self at the center creating reality. Truth that is not authenticated by the autonomous self, even *invented* by the autonomous self, is thought to be alien and therefore false. To the mind so crippled, the Church's teaching cannot help but seem authoritarian.<sup>409</sup>

In other words, the problem with John Paul's epistemology is not with John Paul's epistemology, but with the world's (and especially the West's) move away from—and outright rejection of—traditional Christian thinking. The pontiff has offered a worthwhile, human-centered, and even progressive theory of knowledge and general philosophy, but one wonders if anyone outside of his culture bubble is really listening. Does his epistemology affect the work and life of Richard Rorty, not to mention the MTV crowd? Successful World Youth Days aside, the evidence is not overwhelming. Then again, the pope has simply sown the seeds that may not be harvested for another generation or two, and maybe only through the evangelical activities of non-Western Christians on Westerners.



## Chapter 9

### John Paul II's Spiritual Journey of Truth

Is John Paul anti-intellectual in his reconstruction of the truth? Does he reinforce Friedrich Nietzsche's accusation of Christianity as disrespectful of the intellect and as guilty of keeping people's horizons as limited as possible? How does his challenge to his reader work? Perhaps it is only from an incomplete view that we could infer or state that the pontiff disrespects his reader's intellect. In this case, the Holy Father demonstrates the incompleteness or inadequacy of Nietzsche's outlook. John Paul refutes Nietzsche by opening up a much vaster horizon and vertical vista than the German philosopher wrote about. John Paul wrote about things that Nietzsche did not, could not, or refused to see. The pope refutes Nietzsche by pushing us to go beyond the German's thought and the inadequacies of the Enlightenment views. John Paul invites us to be bigger humans by seeing more to life than power and the material world. The intellect, for John Paul, goes far beyond what modern secularists see, because his holistic view roots the intellect in many spiritual aspects of men and women.

This and the next chapter argue that John Paul's theology follows the aspects of postcritical theology offered by Avery Dulles (1918--): "Postcritical theology, aware of the tacit dimension, avoids the rationalism of critical and countercritical apologetics. It does not seek to argue people into faith by indisputable evidence."<sup>410</sup> John Paul's appreciation of the tacit notion of faith directs his writing beyond critical and counter critical practices. What does John Paul say in what he avoids saying? In other words, to follow an Avery Dulles point of thinking, what tacit or silent communication does the pontiff powerfully relay to his readers?

The pontiff wades into the very polemical public arena with his irenic invitation to faith. He brings his call for faith and appreciation of the mystery of the unfathomable into a public arena that demands proof for everything. He offers a new model of knowledge and "seeing" than the one promoted by modern and even postmodern society.

### 9.1 A Traditional View

#### 1) *Truth and the individual*

Richard Rorty offers a precise framework for the anti-traditional intellectual arena in which John Paul's teaching must work:

[O]ne way of becoming more sensitive to the achievements and the promise of one's own time is to stop asking questions that were formulated in earlier times. The great Western philosophers should be read as therapeutic rather than as constructive: as having told us what problems *not* to discuss...It would be an oversimplification to say that philosophy is to stop people from thinking of things in obsolete terms inherited from great dead philosophers...But that is certainly a large part of their job...To sluff off an obsolete terminology makes us more sensitive to the life about us, for it helps us to stop trying to cut new, recalcitrant material to fit old patterns.<sup>411</sup>

Contemporary philosophy, following Nietzsche, is a philosophy of “sluffing off” and constant change in response to the constantly shifting sands of hyper-individualism, -consumerism, and -capitalism, and ever-quickening scientific and technological progress—the new meta-ideals, for want of a better term. Rorty rejects any philosophical or theological undertaking that tries to form this ever-shifting human ecology into a moral or metaphysical order, Christian or otherwise. Rorty's thinking lacks an ideal; in fact, it is anti-idealistic philosophy. His last sentence from the above citation invites a godless nihilism which John Paul's writings so deeply consider.

John Paul bases his dialogue with post-Christian philosophy and culture on his optimism in the existence and intelligibility of the changeless truth and metaphysics. Yet the *type* of truth that he preaches leads to pastoral outreach more than to intellectual polemics. In Sources of Renewal, Archbishop Karol Wojtyla extends the pastoral aspect of Vatican II to all other Church councils: “[E]very Council in the Church's history has been a pastoral one, if only because the assembled bishops, under the Pope's guidance, are pastors of the Church. At the same time every Council is an act of the supreme magisterium of the Church. Magisterium signifies teaching based on authority.”<sup>412</sup> Wojtyla connects papal authority to pastoral work, though without convincing many feminists, such as Joanna Manning: “[T]he papacy of John Paul II has harbored a concerted effort to use the authority of the papal office to keep women in a second-class position within the Church. In the last decades of the twentieth century, the Vatican has been desperately attempting to isolate the Catholic Church from the course of history.”<sup>413</sup> Manning parallels Michel Foucault in remaining at the spiritually superficial level of history, as we saw in earlier chapters. Michael Novak offers a deeper reading: “Wojtyla proposed the following principles for the development of the Council (and continues to do so as Pope): that the chief ideologies and intellectual currents of modernity are exhausted; that the world needs and seeks a new and authentic universal humanism; and that it is just this humanism that the Church was called into existence to offer.”<sup>414</sup> This outreach forms the heart of John Paul's irenic reconstruction endeavor, as he invites his reader to accept not doctrine but something more intimate, dynamic, and mysterious.

John Paul speaks to the will—the will to conversion—just as much as to the intellect. This is a tough stance for a modern theologian to take given our secularizing world, but it follows Avery Dulles' words: “The postcritical theologian points to the necessity of conversion as a self-modifying act that enables one to look at the world with new eyes. To the extent that faith rests on a specific commitment, it is indemonstrable to outsiders. While the cognitive advantages of believing can be persuasively presented, the truth of the faith cannot be established from within the framework of the unconverted.”<sup>415</sup> In other words, the pope characterizes the truth as eternal *but* knowable by boldly personalizing it in Jesus Christ and anchoring it in Catholic tradition: “[T]here is at the basis of all these ways ... one single way: it is the way that has stood the test of centuries and it is also the way of the future.” (RH 13) The pontiff claims the truth as surely as any of his medieval predecessors and the more recent Pope Leo XIII. Is he, then, a pre-Enlightenment pope, or is he zealously retelling and

renewing the Christian story in the contemporary world? John Paul often seems to write outside of the Enlightenment- and postmodern-based academic establishment and our critical society, taking theology out of the ivory tower and into the realm of faith and its prayerful, liturgical, and prophetic practices. He outlines a holistic history, favoring neither a pre- or post-Enlightenment view. This grounds his traditional view and morality. The pontiff's *style* of instruction itself often teaches. It demonstrates how doctrinal certitude leads to moral and intellectual courage.

Veritatis splendor prefaces Christian morals on an unequivocal, Christ-based theology of God: "The way and at the same time the content of this perfection consist in the following of Jesus, *sequela Christi*, once one has given up one's own wealth and very self." (VS, 19)<sup>416</sup> Some recent currents of thought, the pontiff states, attack human liberty by eliminating its essential connection to the truth. A freedom that the pope bases on one eternal revelation opposes Nietzsche's belief that to attain liberty we must emancipate ourselves from Christianity and any dominant moral idea. The pope's teaching challenges (post)-modern thinking's equivalence of freedom with decreasing obligations and relativistic or inexistent intellectual foundations (other than, in the case of modernism, the foundation of reason).

The pontiff denies the notion that we lose something in following a traditional Catholic way of thinking. The truth, which he reconnects to transcendent revelation, forms a personal, intimate part of our lives because, whether the Enlightenment approves or not, the Creator made it our very identity: "The question is asked: do the commandments of God, which are written on the human heart and are part of the Covenant, really have the capacity to clarify the daily decisions of individuals and entire societies?" (VS 4) John Paul invites us to let this personal truth guide our actions and relationship with the world.

Starting with truth as the basis of our entire being, John Paul even reclaims obedience from the liberal-feminist-Nietzschean dustbin of intellectual history, emphasizing its spiritual dimensions: "Is it possible to obey God and thus love God and neighbour, without respecting these commandments in all circumstances?" (4) Truth and freedom exist inseparably. Obedience to the former, which reveals love and divine grace, promotes love rather than submission or a *Herdentier* (herd-animal) mentality. Obedience unites love, truth, and freedom, and promotes human dignity. This opposes Nietzsche's (and modernity's) domination-based definition of obedience, which accuses the Christian virtue of distorting and attacking our nature. A power-orientation leads Nietzsche to condemn transcendent ideas as oppressive and contrary to human nature.

Veritatis splendor alone mentions *obedience* twenty-seven times. Rather than a reasoned intellectual argument, John Paul offers his pastoral understanding of the concept at the document's beginning, taking the truth of his words as a given. The abrupt nature of his writing here conveys an authority that carefully-reasoned argument sometimes lacks:

This obedience is not always easy. As a result of that mysterious original sin, committed at the prompting of Satan, the one who is 'a liar and the father of lies' (*Jn* 8:44), man is constantly

tempted to turn his gaze away from the living and true God in order to direct it towards idols (cf. 1 Thes 1:9), exchanging ‘the truth about God for a lie’ (Rom 1:25). (VS 1)

The pontiff alludes to another medieval notion, Satan, even in the social science era that, Michel Foucault reminds us, has effaced from Western thought such ideas.

The pope allows the social sciences an important though limited and controlled place. He acknowledges their value in helping us to better understand human nature, though they fail to fully address the cosmic battle the pope describes humans as fighting. John Paul warns of severe, real consequences, aside from living a lesser life, when we do not obey: “[A] close connection is made *between eternal life and obedience to God's commandments.*” (VS 12) This spiritual cosmology does not dehumanize God’s followers or turn Christians into *automatoi*, but comes from the Creator:

Others speak, and rightly so, of *theonomy*, or *participated theonomy*, since man's free obedience to God's law effectively implies that human reason and human will participate in God's wisdom and providence. By forbidding man to ‘eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil’, God makes it clear that man does not originally possess such ‘knowledge’ as something properly his own, but only participates in it by the light of natural reason and of Divine Revelation, which manifest to him the requirements and the promptings of eternal wisdom. Law must therefore be considered an expression of divine wisdom: by submitting to the law, freedom submits to the truth of creation. Consequently one must acknowledge in the freedom of the human person the image and the nearness of God, who is present in all (cf. *Eph* 4:6). But one must likewise acknowledge the majesty of the God of the universe and revere the holiness of the law of God, who is infinitely transcendent: *Deus semper maior.* (VS 41)

The social sciences pale in comparison with this grand cosmology of good and evil, divine wisdom and action, and divine transcendence. The first line echoes the Augustinian-Anselmian-Scholastic *credo ut intellegam*; it gives reason back its sacred duty of illuminating the faith of Christians. The pontiff’s words, reflecting his holistic viewpoint, also reconnect freedom with divine law and truth, thereby re-sanctifying freedom. This worldview challenges the modern separation of reason and freedom from anything religious.

John Paul’s logic characterizes everything good as a gift, and God as everything. We cannot hope to win any battle of resistance because, as the above citation attests, John Paul believes that each person possesses the image of God. We cannot escape from our dignity nor from the gravity of our existence. Paradoxically, we must submit to divine wisdom to be our fullest selves. The pontiff describes a divine ownership of each individual, which in turn grants Peter’s successor the right and duty to prescribe moral standards for individuals and societies. Divine revelation enters humans and possesses us without us ever fully controlling it. We know only through revelation.<sup>417</sup>

We separate ourselves from the truth when we reject it and its author, God. By not submitting, we alienate rather than free ourselves. Estrangement imprisons us, and we can only escape this condition by ending our schism with the truth. We must submit to God’s salvation economy, or we fail as humans to live a full life. Our resemblance to the Creator forces us to accept truth or live imprisoned. Revelation as found in the sacred scriptures and Catholic tradition proves this. John Paul

offers us the path here, and we either accept or reject it. At a certain level, we cannot legitimately debate its truthfulness. Only the human will works here, deciding to obey God and be free, and to participate in the divine plan for history and human salvation, or to rebel and imprison itself in a senseless rebellion.

## 2) *Truth and society*

We can, according to this logic, identify the result of modern society's rebellion against the truth. John Paul warns that obedience to the truth, the state of genuine freedom, breaks down in a cultural environment that encourages undisciplined, pluralistic thinking and moral relativity. As with the above argument over human freedom-through-submission, John Paul argues not in the abstract but by a form of concrete consequentialism, offering what he sees as the inescapable result of failing to follow God's plan:

At the same time a new cultural climate is developing and taking hold, which gives crimes against life a new and-if possible-even more sinister character, giving rise to further grave concern: broad sectors of public opinion justify certain crimes against life in the name of the rights of individual freedom, and on this basis they claim not only exemption from punishment but even authorization by the State, so that these things can be done with total freedom and indeed with the free assistance of health-care systems. (EV 4)

Post-Christian societies, opposed to a centering, unifying Christian mythology, lack love and genuine freedom. Evangelium vitae (1995) warns that such an attitude encourages a shallow life, and contrasts it with a deeper way: "Man is called to a fullness of life which far exceeds the dimensions of his earthly existence, because it consists in sharing the very life of God." (2) This encyclical calls the truth "a sacred reality entrusted to us, to be preserved with a sense of responsibility." (2)

The truth gives important, urgent meaning to our lives, something of which we lose perspective when we reject it. When we lose this, we no longer sense the good, since "*Only God can answer the question about what is good, because he is the Good itself.*" (VS 9) God is the ultimate legitimate reference point for humans, rather than other humans or some material or philosophical aspect of this world.

John Paul uses a mixture of the old and new in reaching out in his pastoral, spiritual way of rebuilding society and its morals. First tradition: Rather than setting up his own relativistic opinion, he argues from secure religious roots. He relates to the contemporary world with present-day bluntness, by rejecting certain practices with concrete moral, philosophical, and psychological reasons based in a solid, traditional belief system. In Fides et ratio (50) he reminds the reader of his reasons for doing this: "In the light of faith, therefore, the Church's Magisterium can and must authoritatively exercise a critical discernment of opinions and philosophies which contradict Christian doctrine."

Second, the connection between the Holy Spirit and the Petrine succession: John Paul argues from something deeper than the Church, addressing the holiest core of the institution: "Entrusting myself fully to the Spirit of truth, therefore, I am entering into the rich inheritance of the recent pontificates." (RH 3) Those recent pontificates receive their legitimacy from a transcendent Creator.

They do not simply keep referring to themselves in a scholarly debate. The pontiffs anchor themselves in the Holy Spirit itself. The Church must deliberately base itself on this core truth about itself in order to authentically reach out to people from here: “[T]he Church's consciousness must go with universal openness, in order that all may be able to find in her ‘the unsearchable riches of Christ’ spoken of by the Apostle of the Gentiles.” (RH 4)

Third, the Church’s confidence in itself, that is, its faith in its mission: Being armed with the truth does not suffice. The Church must boldly proclaim the truth in order to fulfill its mission. People will respond to certainty rather than to sophisticated polemics: “Such openness, organically joined with the awareness of her own nature and certainty of her own truth ... is what gives the Church her apostolic, or in other words her missionary dynamism, professing and proclaiming in its integrity the whole of the truth transmitted by Christ.” (RH 4) In *Redemptoris missio* the pontiff refers repeatedly to the ancient Christian community, drawing comparisons with the modern state of the world and the Church’s place in it, as he calls his institution to remake contemporary society in the same way that the ancient Christians remade ancient civilization. Only the Church’s absolute certainty of itself and its message will lead to success. He outlines a tight relationship between the two basic issues of the Church’s instruction common to the different eras: “The preaching of the early Church was centered on the proclamation of Jesus Christ, with whom the kingdom was identified. Now, as then, there is a need to unite *the proclamation of the kingdom of God* (the content of Jesus' own ‘kerygma’) and *the proclamation of the Christ-event* (the ‘kerygma’ of the apostles). The two proclamations are complementary; each throws light on the other.” (Rmiss 16)

This evangelization cannot succeed with relativistic theological and spiritual fads. John Paul warns the reader in this encyclical that the missionary Church must change culture, rather than having society dictate the content of the gospel to the evangelizing faith community. He criticizes Christian communities that lose sense of the metaphysical meaning of the gospel and offer a more world-friendly theology:

Nowadays the kingdom is much spoken of, but not always in a way consonant with the thinking of the Church. In fact, there are ideas about salvation and mission which can be called ‘anthropocentric’ in the reductive sense of the word, inasmuch as they are focused on man's earthly needs. In this view, the kingdom tends to become something completely human and secularized; what counts are programs and struggles for a liberation which is socio-economic, political and even cultural, but within a horizon that is closed to the transcendent. Without denying that on this level too there are values to be promoted, such a notion nevertheless remains within the confines of a kingdom of man, deprived of its authentic and profound dimensions. Such a view easily translates into one more ideology of purely earthly progress. The kingdom of God, however, ‘is not of this world...is not from the world’ (Jn 18:36). (Rmiss 17)

The pontiff reminds us of humanity’s utter dependence on God and therefore of reality’s vertical dimension. Materialism and the loss of a sense of the transcendent do not change the notion of God’s kingdom, but instead make the proclamation of that kingdom all the more urgent.

## 9.2 A Personal Truth

Yves Congar's words offer a sense that John Paul's theology operates in a different perspective than the (post)modern Western thinker: "Tradition is guarded just as much by the altar as by the professorial chair. The chair—the spoken and even the written word—communicates knowledge by the way of speculative signs and formulas; the altar communicates the body of reality under the signs that contains it or produces its own."<sup>418</sup> John Paul's teachings flow from tradition; they obey and testify to P. Nautin's following words, cited by Congar, regarding the real, spiritual sense of tradition for the Catholic: "The tradition of the apostles is not only a conceptual given, but a sacramental deposit, the faith (*pistis*) of baptism, with its achievement in *agape*, the Eucharist."<sup>419</sup>

More simply, then, John Paul's reconstruction of the truth includes the preeminence within Western culture of the Bible, yet also more recent teachings of the papal magisterium and experiences of the faithful. He sets his moral values in basic, well-rooted structures, writing in *Evangelium vitae* (2) that "the Gospel of God's love for man, the Gospel of the dignity of the person and the Gospel of life are a single and indivisible Gospel." He emphasizes a holistic view of life that centers on Christian spirituality.

The pope humanizes this teaching, contradicting the portrayal of Christianity as impersonally dogmatic that critics such as Nietzsche and feminists so frequently offer their readers. In *Rise, Let Us Be On Our Way*, he recalls Edith Stein's writings and "her extraordinary life and her tragic destiny, intertwined with that of millions of other defenseless victims of our era. A disciple of Edmund Husserl, an impassioned seeker after truth, an enclosed nun, a victim of Hitler's regime: hers is a truly unique human story."<sup>420</sup> The truth encompasses more than theology, philosophy, or, together with science, the university. In Edith Stein's life the pontiff sees the truth operating in a human, and in relationship to philosophy and the great tragedy of Nazism. He values a personal side to the truth. It operates beyond abstraction, academia, or the Bible and papal magisterium. We find it in human lives and history, in the good and the tragic. As John Richard Neuhaus observes, phenomenology, particularly the phenomenology that John Paul not only discusses in this passage but also briefly practices here, is "a philosophy that is determined to attend not so much to grand principles as to the structures and patterns of behavior by which people think and act."<sup>421</sup> In this above example, John Paul the phenomenologist theologian identifies the gospel not in a book or in documents and lofty dogma but in the life, spirit, and actions of one concrete person of living memory.

Nietzsche and John Paul disagree, then, on the nature of Christianity, which the former sees as sterile, impersonal, and unchanging. Nietzsche disavows the apostolic kerygma because he sees it as disconnected from human nature. John Paul, conversely, views this truth intimately, personally connected to humans, as well as to forces for love, community, and self-sacrifice. John Paul emphasizes the higher instincts in his vertical notion of the truth and of humanity's place in that hierarchy, whereas Nietzsche, viewing things only horizontally, promotes what Christian tradition has referred to as base or lower impulses. The pontiff's words work against secularizers other than

Nietzsche too. For Neuhaus, “John Paul views 'the subjectivity of society' rather than 'society' in the abstract: 'In Marxist terminology, society is 'reified.' That is, we begin to attribute to an abstraction a life of its own, as though society were an agent of action...The 'subjectivity of society' underscores the truth that society is composed of persons who are the agents or subjects of human action.”<sup>422</sup>

The pontiff draws from biblical images, particularly from the gospel, in this emphasis on Christianity’s human side. For instance, in *Veritatis splendor*, he personalizes ecclesiastical history and the “Spirit of Truth” (presumably the Holy Spirit) by connecting the rich young man’s spiritual problem closely to our reality: “Jesus’ conversation with the young man helps us to grasp *the conditions for the moral growth of man, who has been called to perfection*: the young man, having observed all the commandments, shows that he is incapable of taking the next step by himself alone.” (VS 17) Human nature has not changed through the millennia, which means that the gospel stories possess the same force as ever. Jesus speaks to us through this character.

This biblically-based invitation to transformation defines transcendence as the love personalized in Jesus: “As he calls the young man to follow him along the way of perfection, Jesus asks him to be perfect in the command of love, in ‘his’ commandment.” (VS 20) Jesus’ work touches human nature, inviting us to reject Nietzsche’s and modern society’s *Einsamkeit* (loneliness) and to draw lessons from scripture. Most importantly, following Christ affects us inwardly: “*Following Christ* is not an outward imitation, since it touches man at the very depths of his being”; and again “Sharing in the *Eucharist*, the sacrament of the New Covenant (cf. 1 *Cor* 11:23-29), is the culmination of our assimilation to Christ, the source of ‘eternal life’ (cf. *Jn* 6:51-58), the source and power of that complete gift of self, which Jesus — according to the testimony handed on by Paul — commands us to commemorate in liturgy and in life.” (VS 21) John Paul does not resurrect the truth’s power and energy by locating it in an ideology or reason-based system developed externally to our lives. He portrays Jesus’ words of truth as an interior, living reality, something that ultimately Nietzsche, Foucault, and others cannot destroy. More than just an intellectual process works here

### **9.3 Proof through Faith**

#### ***1) Proof through holy, liturgical history***

John Paul adopts a liturgical mentality while doing theology, reflecting the following words of the French theologian Yves Congar: “The liturgy is by its nature conserving [*conservatrice*]. It holds the genius of transmission intact for something confined to the faithful and protected from profanation. Its very nature is simultaneously communal and hierarchical, the act of an entire people and the act of ordained men. Liturgy responds therefore remarkably well to the statue that we have discovered to be the *subject* of Tradition.”<sup>423</sup> In the case of John Paul, Congar’s word “*conservatrice*” should be understood as “conserving” rather than “conservative,” which can shed light on the fact that conservatives considered John Paul to be too liberal, and liberals considered him to be too conservative. The pontiff develops elements of both sides of the political spectrum in his philosophy



and spirituality; his liturgical or poetical thinking follows the best of Catholicism in transcending these inelegant political categories. “Liturgical thinking” refers here to the fact that he adopts the conservative penchant for deeply respecting that which was handed down to him and for wanting to preserve that treasure. Liturgical thinking, by being poetic, immediate, and affective, parallels the liberal ideals of being people-centered and “with it” culturally. This latter aspect of John Paul's liturgical thinking opened him to Vatican II and made him adept at opposing Polish Communists on the cultural plane. It opened him to personalism and helped him realize the limitations of a manualist Thomism, that is, the kind of rigid, pre-Vatican II theology still being taught in seminaries when he was a student.

The pontiff portrays the truth as moving through history with a kind of spirit. The truth is therefore historical, and therefore relevant for personalism. Yet because of its divine and eternal nature, the truth is at the same time extra-historical and therefore relevant for a healthy, up-to-date Thomism. History contains a vertical, a-historical dimension, and a horizontal, human and societal dimension. We see this mixture of methods and outlooks most clearly in Veritatis splendor, but also in Fides et ratio and Evangelium vitae. In Rise, Let Us Be On Our Way, he discusses the individuals important to his priestly and episcopal ministry even as he discerns a transcendent presence in Polish history that is obviously the Holy Spirit working to produce values and graces that rise beyond history. We can know this sacred truth when we regard history as more than documents, events, and Foucaultian archeology subjected to scientific analysis and interpretation. Again, Congar's words about liturgy and its function and spirituality help us to see that the pope has a liturgical spirituality, where the proof of the truth is not argued outwardly, but tacitly, poetically, and spiritually:

The style of teaching that the liturgy uses in its confession of the faith, or that of its profession of the faith that it makes in its praising (the profound theology of the doxological texts) is not a professor's or theologian's style: the liturgy proceeds simply, with the assurance of life, to the affirmation of what it does and of the content of what it dispenses when it is celebrated. It is a style original to Tradition, that communicates the conditions of life in communicating life itself.<sup>424</sup>

For example, John Paul sanctifies Church history, community, and teaching with his use of primary texts or acts of the community. The Second Vatican Council has become a part of the bedrock of truth for John Paul but not simply as intellectual or documentary support for his teaching.<sup>425</sup>

Rather than letting the Enlightenment and its agenda set the terms of the debate, the pope proposes that Vatican II and other elements of Church history and tradition energize the discussion, and that each piece of theological or doctrinal growth belongs to a long development of apostolic teaching rather than being simply the object of intellectual debate or scientific progress and investigation. This Council and the leadership of Popes John XXII and Paul VI have given something fresh and great to the Church—a rejuvenated identity and, even more, a renewed Spirit: “The Church's consciousness, enlightened and supported by the Holy Spirit and fathoming more and more deeply both her divine mystery and her human mission, and even her human weaknesses—this consciousness is

and must remain the first source of the Church's love, as love in turn helps to strengthen and deepen her consciousness.” (RH 3) A Christian view of history should have the last word because it centers on something that transcends history, that is, the Holy Spirit and its truth. Here again, as with so many other aspects, John Paul expands rather than contracts intellectual horizons by personalizing history for his reader. Congar's words demonstrate how: “Giving the sense of things is Tradition's most precious role contribution. This is communal and catholic in a significant way.”<sup>426</sup>

John Paul's presentation of the truth within an aggressively secular milieu actually participates in his journey of faith. His discussion of the truth forms part of his spiritual practice, rather than simply being an intellectual issue. Secularism is something he deals with on a personal, spiritual level. Congar delineates the sphere of tradition; while tradition is holistic and therefore reaches out to all areas, it is markedly different from the current secular mentality: “Tradition ... defines its own conditions of existence as a law of saintly life for the Church which holds monastic ideals, rather than for a Church given to exterior or secular rules of existence and where decisions are developed in offices and measured according to geometric or legal standards.”<sup>427</sup> Given its centrality to our lives, not least of which these expanded intellectual horizons, our reverence for God rather than an intellectual stance should have the final say, whatever its source, including scripture, councils, or other “sacred” acts of the Church and Christian history: “Christians have come to an ever deeper awareness of the wealth to be found in the sacred text. It is there that we learn that what we experience is not absolute: it is neither uncreated nor self-generating. God alone is the Absolute.” This idea of the Absolute, from *Fides et ratio* (80), is a daring statement for a pontiff, as some could use it against his office and, for instance, papal infallibility. Yet John Paul does not attempt to prove or defend his core ideal of faith given his belief in the sacred. By not justifying his office intellectually, he calls for belief and relevance. He does not demonstrate the truth through polemics, but asks for faith and religious practice. Rather than deconstructing the deconstructionists, which is so tempting to do, he invites us to the treasure of Catholic spirituality.

This irenic invitation to faith comes close to a proof of the truth by the pontiff. Evidence comes through action and its grace-filled fruits rather than through intellectual reasoning. The heart and head reason together, led by the former. We find the truth in each of us, and we prove its existence with our response to its call. The pontiff, by not reasoning deeply, but repeatedly calling us to faith, once again sets faith as conventional in the same way that Hans Küng and his followers have set a certain critical outlook as normative. John Paul follows the ways of Catholic tradition in presenting Catholic tradition, if we accept Congar's words:

Christ's message to humanity is not totally contained in a holy written document; but it is a doctrine that above all is lived and implicated in life: the sacramental realities in which we live; a discipline that socially organizes the life of the members of Christ according to apostolic customs... Tradition in the Church will above all be its practical life, its way of acting, its participants, its discipline, its sacraments, its prayer, its lived faith throughout the centuries.<sup>428</sup>

With John Paul, the theologian becomes once again the proclaimer of the faith, of the kerygma of Christ, rather than, as with Küng, a perpetual critic. The false, perfectionist, puritanical piety of Küng *et al* is replaced by true, faithful piety which bases theology on an encounter with Christ rather than on all the imperfections and faults, real or imagined, of the Church and Christianity.

In addition, the pope refuses to play the game of Richard Rorty, Nietzsche, and others who teach that because we cannot intellectually prove the answers to our ultimate questions, we engage in futile nonsense by accepting any absolute. The pope expands our intellectual horizons so that we can see that these secular-oriented questions are not the limit of our intellectual or spiritual lives, largely by uniting the intellectual with the spiritual. Congar's words parallel the spiritual practice that John Paul has followed throughout his pastoral career in teaching the tradition:

Tradition passes on more than ideas that are subject to reason: it incarnates a life that encompasses at the same time sentiment, thought, belief, aspirations, and action...It implies the spiritual communion of souls that feel, think and want, under the unity of the same patriotic or religious ideal; and tradition is by that also the condition for progress in the measure where it permits the passing from one to another the implicitly-lived to the explicitly-understood a few pieces of the truth that will never be completely known: since, as the principle of unity, continuity, and fruitfulness, tradition, simultaneously initializing, anticipating, and bringing to end, precedes each reconstructing synthesis and survives each reflective analysis.<sup>429</sup>

The pope argues more through the example of his whole message than through the words themselves. Truth is exemplified rather than preached or reasoned out. The pope's example reflects that the intellectual quest for the truth is a spiritual quest. Therefore, when in the case of Nietzsche *et al* the spiritual underpinnings to an intellectual quest are faulty, we are not obligated to stop everything and try to answer questions whose only point is to attack Christian spirituality. The pope does not call his followers to chase at windmills.

## **2) Proof through the sacred**

In this reconstruction of the truth, John Paul gives sacramental power to words, especially in how they can transform our lives during holy time and space. He opposes the deconstructionist and liberal reformers by valuing the Church's age-old sacred practices. In *Ecclesia de eucharistia* (2003) he bases the truth on liturgy and, more specifically, on the sacrament of the Eucharist: "The Church draws her life from the Eucharist. This truth does not simply express a daily experience of faith, but recapitulates *the heart of the mystery of the Church*." (1) Words originate in a transcendent source, and intellectual fads cannot legitimately tear them apart or criticize without limit.

The pope judges modernity and postmodernity, not tradition, as flawed. John Paul aims to recreate the mystery-oriented, metaphysical universe that prevailing thought has so damaged but that he sees as eternally available. Once again expanding out intellectual horizons, in *Veritatis splendor* (118) he offers a poetic rather than rational view of Christianity's truths, which he connects to evangelization. He links outreach to this metaphysical energy:

This renewal, which gives the ability to do what is good, noble, beautiful, pleasing to God and in conformity with his will, is in some way the flowering of the gift of mercy, which offers

liberation from the slavery of evil and gives the strength to sin no more. Through the gift of new life, Jesus makes us sharers in his love and leads us to the Father in the Spirit.

We perceive the truth through sacramental and spiritual dimensions, and not only through intellectual, rational means.

John Paul claims to rebuild the tradition in multi-layered levels. Such a tradition, more complicated and deep than reason- and power-oriented modern thought (as exemplified by Foucault), can more easily withstand the attacks of reason. God offers us the truth in the Church's sacraments and in the renewal of our spirits. Reason does not always understand their deepest sense, though a rational perspective can evaluate them, just as we can see the sacraments and spiritual renewal as another side to rational dimensions of the faith. Scholars and writers cannot reduce John Paul's multi-faceted argument in favor of the truth to a philosophical or rational analysis. We must understand it through more than philosophical or scholarly means:

By the light of the Holy Spirit, the living essence of Christian morality can be understood by everyone, even the least learned, but particularly those who are able to preserve an 'undivided heart' (*Ps* 86:11). On the other hand, this evangelical simplicity does not exempt one from facing reality in its complexity; rather it can lead to a more genuine understanding of reality, inasmuch as following Christ will gradually bring out the distinctive character of authentic Christian morality, while providing the vital energy needed to carry it out. (VS 119)

Rather than philosophical evidence for the truth, at this conclusion of Veritatis splendor John Paul offers the life resulting from it. He proposes something more than modern philosophy can: he proposes Christ.

## Conclusion

The pope argues beyond the range of modern thought and analysis. He does not try to establish the truth in a manner that would satisfy twentieth (or twenty-first) century philosophers' or scholars' ambitions, but by addressing his audience's deepest spiritual needs. No one can prove this kind of truth, and therefore the pope calls us to live it on faith and to share it. The new evangelization itself entrenches the truth by successfully reaching out and transforming others. The Catholic Church and its tradition do not address philosophy or the ivory tower alone. Above all, the Church through John Paul extends its arms in an open invitation to the world's spiritual hunger:

O Mary,  
Mother of Mercy,  
watch over all people,  
that the Cross of Christ  
may not be emptied of its power,  
that man may not stray  
from the path of the good  
or become blind to sin,  
but may put his hope ever more fully in God  
who is rich in mercy' (*Eph* 2:4).  
May he carry out the good works prepared  
by God beforehand (cf. *Eph* 2:10)

and so live completely  
'for the praise of his glory' (*Eph* 1:12).  
(VS 120)

This ending prayer in Veritatis splendor invites us to an open-hearted reception of the truth before intellectual acceptance. The prayer's rich mental scenery speaks of the truth through its images: The "Cross of Christ" and its unique power which John Paul tirelessly roots in another world; the importance of accepting the truth of human nature and in particular the power of sin; the interplay between human hope and the extraordinary mercy of God; and the importance that this truth leads to changed moral vision and actions in our daily lives. Imagery based on biblical and Catholic tradition supersedes the critic's reason.

## Chapter 10

### John Paul II the Theologian

Hans Urs Von Balthasar offers a holistic view of theological thinking that avoids compartmentalizing: “Every theological concept must be 'catholic', that is, universal, encompassing, attracting in itself every truth, or again opening itself to every truth, breaking its own limits and resuscitating after having passed by a death into the heavenly truth.”<sup>430</sup> John Paul applies this above principle successfully in presenting the many facets of the one truth. Alasdair MacIntyre's words encapsulate the battle the Holy Father has felt called to fight:

Any contemporary attempt to envisage each human life as a whole, as a unity, whose character provides the virtues with an adequate *telos* encounters two different kinds of obstacle, one social and one philosophical. The social obstacles derive from the way in which modernity partitions each human life into a variety of segments, each with its own norms and modes of behavior...And all these separations have been achieved so that it is the distinctiveness of each and not the unity of the life of the individual who passes through those parts in terms of which we are taught to think and to feel.<sup>431</sup>

As one example of this holistic viewpoint in the service of battle against the deconstruction of the Western Catholic and philosophical tradition, *Evangelium vitae*, the pontiff's bioethics encyclical, was as much a philosophical work as *Fides et ratio*. John Paul underscored in this former encyclical the philosophical underpinnings of much of contemporary ethics, particularly as related to the “Culture of Death.”

This holistic style plays a central role for the pontiff. Friedrich Nietzsche attacked Christianity from multiple perspectives, and the religion continues to face criticism from every imagined direction. John Paul responds to this by developing his theology from various approaches, and uses every faculty and level of human existence, from the individual to the social, and from the bodily and psychological to the metaphysical and eternal. He thinks as systematically as does Nietzsche and sometimes writes as unsystematically. Von Balthasar's following remark describes the practice of John Paul: “Every theologian is not held to write a complete theological treatise. But all must have before their eyes the totality and catholicity of the truth, and implicate this truth in each aspect of their thinking.”<sup>432</sup> The pope supplements official papal teachings with personal books and countless sermons. He writes as a prophet and analyst yet also in familiar terms. He addresses the Bible and full sweep of Judeo-Christian theology and spirituality, and also turns for inspiration to individuals such as Thérèse de Lisieux. Reverence for God, people, the Church and its tradition, and his own experiences and Polish Catholic history, characterize his theology of God. Avery Dulles' description coheres with what the Holy Father's writings do:

Theology, then, is a methodical effort to articulate the truth implied in Christian faith, the faith of the Church. The method cannot be pursued by the techniques of mathematics or syllogistic logic, but it depends on a kind of connoisseurship derived from personal appropriation of the living faith of the Church. The correct articulation of the meaning of the Christian symbols is not a science learned out of books alone but rather an art acquired through familiarity by being at home in the community in which the symbols function. To apprehend the meaning of the

symbols, it is not enough to gaze at them in a detached manner as objects and dissect them under a logical microscope. The joint meaning of the symbols cannot be discerned unless one relies confidently on the symbols as clues, and attends to the realities to which they point.<sup>433</sup>

John Paul uses Christian symbols in the manner described by Dulles. In terms of connoisseurship, John Paul as a theologian was as much artist as rational thinker; as mentioned elsewhere in this thesis, he adopts a poetic view of history, for instance. Dulles' words on theological method also lend to that method a kind of artistry, and this too applies to John Paul. His ability to keep focused on the scholastic-personalist tension in his thought, for instance, require a rich spiritual practice and great imagination. As Dulles indicates, "method" when applied to theology does not necessarily compare with scientific method, especially in the case of the pope.

## 10.1 The Bible

The Holy Father uses the Bible in many traditional ways to respond to Nietzsche. He aims biblical teachings at various aspects of life, including concrete social issues, but also at more abstract philosophical topics. The reason for this generalized and universalized use of the Bible has to do with the tacit sense of tradition, and Scripture's place in that, as reflected in Dulles' words: "Consisting predominantly of tacit knowledge, tradition perpetuates itself not primarily by explicit statement but rather by gesture, deed, and example, including ritual actions. The theologian who wishes to draw on the full riches of tradition seeks to dwell within it so as to assimilate the unspecifiable lore that it transmits."<sup>434</sup> These words can apply to the core of John Paul's theology. Dulles' following words apply to the pontiff's use of the Bible: "Postcritical theology treats the Bible in its totality as a set of clues that serve to focus the Christian vision of reality from manifold perspectives."<sup>435</sup>

### *1) The Bible and culture*

The pope's reconstruction of the truth addresses the modern world from Christian history by honoring the Bible's holiness without treating Scripture as an infallible tool or, conversely, solely the object of modern criticism and literary analysis. The pope accords an important place to Scripture in his cultural debate. He reminds us of the renewal of Pauline theology encouraged by Vatican I, thus emphasizing the interplay between tradition and the Bible, with the magisterium as the regulator in any tension between the two: "In Sacred Scripture are found elements, both implicit and explicit, which allow a vision of the human being and the world which has exceptional philosophical density" (FR 80); and again "In studying Revelation and its credibility, as well as the corresponding act of faith, fundamental theology should show how, in the light of the knowledge conferred by faith, there emerge certain truths which reason, from its own independent enquiry, already perceives. Revelation endows these truths with their fullest meaning, directing them towards the richness of the revealed mystery in which they find their ultimate purpose." (FR 67) The Bible speaks to the world, and since it is God's word, the world must listen.

As with every aspect of his theology, he lays the groundwork of the absolute truth of God. In Veritatis splendor (11) John Paul bases his discussion of God on the Hebrew and Greek Testaments. Sacred Scripture testifies in all its pages to the absolute sanctity of God, as in Isaiah 6:3, “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts.” In this encyclical John Paul also confronts the West's secular culture through Paul's words: “Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may prove what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect” (*Rom* 12:2). (85)

The pontiff reiterates the nature of the individual's and society's proper relationship with Scripture, writing in the next sentence of the encyclical that “This effort by the Church finds its support--the ‘secret’ of its educative power--not so much in doctrinal statements and pastoral appeals to vigilance, as in *constantly looking to the Lord Jesus*.” (85) The Bible does not make God holy. It simply expresses the truth of God's holiness; we must worship God and not any canon. This contradicts Nietzsche's portrayal of Christianity as unchanging and dogmatic. The pontiff envisions a religious practice of the heart, accomplished in part through a lively *lectio divina*, but where that type of reading testifies to something greater than itself.

The pontiff interprets current circumstances, including his own as Peter's successor, through the Bible from a somewhat historicist perspective. Yet John Paul presents his *Kulturkampf* as an eternal battle against evil, with the contemporary situation hardly different from that in which Paul himself preached: “Christ... sent me... to preach the Gospel, and not with eloquent wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.... We preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God” (1 *Cor* 1:17, 23-24). (85) The pope presents the biblical view as offering the true sense of the battle he fights: “*The Crucified Christ reveals the authentic meaning of freedom; he lives it fully in the total gift of himself* and calls his disciples to share in his freedom.” (85) This practice enlivens and makes real for today the biblical world, as transcendent reality remains unchanged according to the pontiff, even as it operates within ever-changing human history.

The Bible, containing the story of Christ's redemption, can through focused preaching address makers of modern culture. Fides et ratio emphasizes the importance of Scripture to philosophy. The Bible sheds a mature light on human life by emphasizing the subjective nature of experience in the light of its truths: “It is there that we learn that what we experience is not absolute: it is neither uncreated nor self-generating. God alone is the Absolute. From the Bible there emerges also a vision of man as *imago Dei*.” (FR 80) The pontiff roots the problems of modern philosophy in its rejection of this image. He opposes for instance the feminist attempt to build modern thought on women's experiences alone, an idea that he believes encourages relativist philosophy.



## **2) *The Bible and evil***

John Paul turns in Veritatis splendor to the beginning of the Judeo-Christian tradition when addressing the problem of the truth, and good and evil, interpreting *Genesis* 2, 16-17 in a straightforward, unoriginal manner: “With this imagery, Revelation teaches that *the power to decide what is good and what is evil does not belong to man, but to God alone*. The man is certainly free, inasmuch as he can understand and accept God's commands.” (35) This interpretation assumes, regardless of Nietzsche and Foucault, that we live in the same metaphysical world of the Bible. The conduct of both society and the individual must still adhere to and accept judgment by the same God and ethics: “But his (human) freedom is not unlimited: it must halt before the ‘tree of the knowledge of good and evil’, for it is called to accept the moral law given by God.” (VS 35)

People order their reason towards good and not evil when guided by scriptural teachings on human freedom and truth's constant nature: “Since the created world is not self-sufficient, every illusion of autonomy which would deny the essential dependence on God of every creature—the human being included—leads to dramatic situations which subvert the rational search for the harmony and the meaning of human life.” (FR 80) Armed with the Bible, John Paul defines the problem of evil as a spiritual issue. By promoting a scriptural view of evil, John Paul speaks to a main concern of secular philosophers such as Foucault, Rorty, and Nietzsche, who have through their writings and rejection of a religious world view attempted to deal with this issue. Foucault, for instance, discusses the evils inherent in certain power structures that found expression in early modern Europe's madhouses and hospitals. John Paul does not offer an ideological or power-based solution in Fides et ratio (80), but pastoral concern in emphasizing our woundedness: “The problem of moral evil—the most tragic of evil's forms—is also addressed in the Bible, which tells us that such evil stems not from any material deficiency, but is a wound inflicted by the disordered exercise of human freedom.”

John Paul identifies the roots of Scripture's strength and integrity in facing evil: “The fundamental conviction of the ‘philosophy’ found in the Bible is that the world and human life do have a meaning and look towards their fulfilment, which comes in Jesus Christ.” (FR 80) The relationship between God's Sacred writings and philosophy offers human life a depth and spiritual sense: “The challenge of this mystery pushes philosophy to its limits, as reason is summoned to make its own logic which brings down the walls within which it risks being confined. Yet only at this point does the meaning of life reach its defining moment.” (FR 80) The Hebrew and Christian sacred writings offer us meaning.

## **3) *The Bible and meaning***

Rather than pushing doctrine, rules, or abstract principles on his reader, the pontiff offers biblically-based meaning by reaching out personally to his reader. Fides et ratio (81) addresses the “crisis of meaning” that a non-biblically rooted culture faces. The Bible united Western culture

through its proclamation of the truth. Since the demise of Scripture's position, "Perspectives on life and the world, often of a scientific temper, have so proliferated that we face an increasing fragmentation of knowledge." (FR 81) John Paul's analysis of the resulting intellectual and spiritual landscape sounds strikingly similar to Foucault's analysis in *L'Archéologie du savoir*:

Indeed, still more dramatically, in this maelstrom of data and facts in which we live and which seem to comprise the very fabric of life, many people wonder whether it still makes sense to ask about meaning. The array of theories which vie to give an answer, and the different ways of viewing and of interpreting the world and human life, serve only to aggravate this radical doubt, which can easily lead to scepticism, indifference or to various forms of nihilism. (FR 81)

John Paul himself struggles to find meaning in this critical, deconstructing, and relativizing manner of viewing things. As so often, he concludes with the pastor's love and care of the person, viewing things through his belief in the dignity of the human individual: "In consequence, the human spirit is often invaded by a kind of ambiguous thinking which leads it to an ever deepening introversion, locked within the confines of its own immanence without reference of any kind to the transcendent." (FR 81)

The pontiff invokes a personal and pastoral style in discussing the Bible's ideas of meaning. In his intimate writing, *Rise, Let Us Be On Our Way*, John Paul incorporates the Bible story into his own life, as in referring to his ideal pilgrimage as pope to the Holy Land:

I wanted to make my pilgrimage during the Jubilee Year. It would have begun in Ur of the Chaldees, in present-day Iraq, from where Abraham, following God's call, set out so many centuries ago (*Gen 12:1-3*). Then I wanted to continue toward Egypt, in the footsteps of Moses, who led the Israelites out of that country and the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai as the foundation of the covenant with God. Then I would have completed my pilgrimage in the Holy Land, beginning with the site of the Annunciation, then to Bethlehem, the city of the birth of Jesus, and to other places connected with His life and mission.<sup>436</sup>

This passage also makes explicit the ties between Church history--the time of the Jubilee Year--and the Israelites' story, from which comes the concept of a Jubilee Year. John Paul links his own spiritual journey and the Church's history with Israel and its founding leaders and stories.

This intimacy with the Bible, the pope shows us, can still occur in the age of Biblical criticism and the historical-critical method, in other words, at a time when many churches and people have a less reverential or imaginative view of the Bible. He does not directly challenge this critical method, but simply demonstrates how intimacy with the Bible and its characters and stories has played out in his own inner terrain. By being faithful to this interior world, and using it as a basis for his teaching instead of turning to theory, philosophy, or ideology, John Paul enlivens the Bible. These characters and stories are part of him and his teachings, and they can come alive in his readers' experiences as well. John Paul invites us to personal participation in the Bible stories.

As a writer he has a poetic relationship with the Bible, one expressed, quite literally, through his personal poetry:

*If today we go to these places  
whence, long ago, Abraham set out,*

*where he heard the Voice, where the promise was fulfilled,  
we do so in order to stand at the threshold—  
to go back to the beginning of the Covenant.*<sup>437</sup>

John Paul finds meaning in the promise to Abraham by claiming it as his own and for all Christians. His original, personal poetry comprises an unoriginal theology. This mirrors his pastoral rendering of tradition, where he expresses his spirituality in his style, and this style most effectively constructs meaning.

John Paul offers traditional theology not in the dry tomes of systematic theology but through his heart. He confesses in Rise, Let Us Be On Our Way that “I have always been convinced that if I am to satisfy the people's hunger for the Word of God, I must follow the example of Mary and first listen to it myself *and ponder it in my heart. (Luke 2:19).*” (43) Here the pontiff offers us his own methodology for reading the Bible, one based on humility when confronted with what he believes is the word of God, and on obedience to the tradition of reading the Bible this way, as *lectio divina*. The pontiff regards the Bible's role as countercultural and therefore intimately connected to his aim to influence modern culture: “Amid today's flood of words, images, and sounds, it is important that a bishop not be thrown off course. He must listen attentively to God and to those around him, convinced that we are all united in the one mystery of God's saving Word.” (43)

## **10.2 Saint Thérèse de Lisieux: *Divini Amoris Scientia***

What does John Paul see in Doctor of the Church Thérèse de Lisieux (1873-97)? Something along the lines of Avery Dulles' following words: “Through indwelling in the community of faith one acquires a kind of connaturality or connoisseurship that enables one to judge what is or is not consonant with revelation. In applying this sense of the faith one apprehends the clues in a subsidiary or tacit manner and concentrates on their joint meaning.”<sup>438</sup> John Paul himself as Archbishop Karol Wojtyła wrote that “In speaking of the enrichment of faith and describing it as a fundamental postulate of the Church's activity, we are well aware that we are touching here on supernatural reality, which is in man but does not originate from him...Revelation is, as it were, superimposed on creation, so that the encounter takes on a new supernatural and inter-personal dimension.”<sup>439</sup> These words reflect the pontiff's refusal to relinquish the basic “faith seeking understanding” paradigm of Augustinian and medieval theology. Whereas modern philosophy and society changed their paradigms centuries ago, John Paul simply restates the paradigm for a modern audience, particularly with his acceptance of phenomenology and personalism.

John Paul reflects on Saint Thérèse de Lisieux and her teachings from many different angles, from the personal to the institutional. He celebrates her unconventional life as a Doctor of Theology, as someone far removed from the typical learned and methodological professor or bishop deeply acquainted with the philosophy of the ancients and immersed in the intellectual life of the contemporary Church. Saint Thérèse, as abnormal a Catholic spiritual teacher as one can find, used extraordinary methods, as she taught, according to the pontiff, just as much through her life as through

her writings. She based her unconventional written theology on *lectio divina* and her own experiences of love and community rather than on a deep understanding of Thomistic or patristic theology.

Given that John Paul tends in his writings to rely heavily on Scripture and conventional doctors of the Church such as Saints Augustine, Anselm, and Thomas Aquinas, his reverence for Saint Thérèse's writings might surprise some readers, especially his celebration of her experience. Feminists often accuse the Church of ignoring women's experience, yet here the pope makes an uneducated woman's life a central theological resource for the Church and his own pontifical teaching.

### ***1) Supernatural wisdom***

John Paul's celebration of Thérèse of Lisieux parallels his other writings and his spiritual agenda. He re-appropriates history for his reconstruction of the truth. He shows how post-Enlightenment history remains Christian, and how his world-view can function in this secular era of skepticism, scientism, rationalism, and American pragmatism. John Paul celebrates saints of every era as witnesses to the continued presence of the Creator. Modern saints can still communicate the gospel to society. If the world's hyper-rationalism or its science blocks the reception of the Good News as preached in previous centuries, then the Church and its saints must adapt, but not by conforming to secular society as liberal Protestant churches have done by, for instance, largely accepting the sexual revolution.

The pontiff identifies many sides to the truth that remain constant and powerful throughout history's turmoil, including wisdom, a theology of which he develops through discussing the life and teaching of Thérèse. Wisdom through her example clearly differs from other aspects of the truth. The pontiff defines wisdom as an infusion into the Catholic tradition that, participating in the prayers of saints and mystics such as Saint Thérèse, the Church receives as a supernatural gift: "This science is the luminous expression of her (Thérèse's) knowledge of the mystery of the kingdom and of her personal experience of grace. It can be considered a special charism of Gospel wisdom which Thérèse, like other saints and teachers of faith, attained in prayer." (*Divini amoris scientia*, hereafter DAS, 1) God continues to act within holy history, through divine servants.

*Divini amoris scientia* (1997) in its portrayal of wisdom appeals to the personal, spiritual level before offering an intellectual or doctrinal argument. The pontiff proclaimed Thérèse de Lisieux as a Doctor of the Church not because of her book-learning or Thomism. Her ability to communicate to the world her deep, personal love for God, and resulting moral and spiritual transformation, deepen the Church's doctrinal understanding. Through her, John Paul celebrates the supernatural nature of God's wisdom, and its reception in those the world would not consider intellectually mature: "The science of divine love ... is a gift granted to the little and the humble so that they may know and proclaim the secrets of the kingdom, hidden from the learned and the wise." (DAS 1) Through this particular wisdom, which the pontiff differentiates from academic or institutional-bureaucratic knowledge, the Holy Spirit actually guides the Church with "the whole truth, endowing her with various gifts,

adorning her with his fruits, rejuvenating her with the power of the Gospel and enabling her to discern the signs of the times in order to respond ever more fully to the will of God.” (DAS 1)

Book-learning does not constitute the central way of this path. John Paul emphasizes the Saint’s love for and intimacy with Scripture. Lacking resources and advanced, formal theological training, Thérèse did not base her teaching of the Bible on the scholarship current to her time. Instead, she “immersed herself in meditation on the Word of God with exceptional faith and spontaneity. Under the influence of the Holy Spirit she attained a profound knowledge of Revelation for herself and for others.” (DAS 9) This type of *lectio divina*, a spiritual scholarship that arises from the grace-infused, personal friendship with God, contributes not only to the spiritual journey of God’s people, but to the modern, university level study of the Bible.

This type of scholarship issues from a deeply traditional obedience- and humility-centered Catholic spirituality, denounced by modern thinkers, from Voltaire and Nietzsche to Simone de Beauvoir and Mary Daly, as medieval and outdated. The pontiff views these criticisms as half correct. Such thinking is indeed medieval, but not in a bad way, since the relevancy of some truths and spiritual practices never ceases.

The pope, in this case as in many other places, uses traditional, strikingly unoriginal theological ideas to dialogue with the modern world, starting with a typical Catholic portrayal of a good old-fashioned Catholic girl: “Shining brightly among the little ones to whom the secrets of the kingdom were revealed in a most special way is Thérèse of the Child Jesus and the Holy Face, a professed nun of the Order of Discalced Carmelites, the 100th anniversary of whose entry into the heavenly homeland occurs this year.” (DAS 1) The pontiff recognizes the extraordinary spiritual gifts and religious experience of an uneducated girl: “A few weeks later, on 14 June of that same year, she receives the sacrament of Confirmation with a vivid awareness of what the gift of the Holy Spirit involves in her personal sharing in the grace of Pentecost.” (DAS 5) This approach contrasts with the “progressive” Protestant churches and wings of the Catholic Church, which would prefer to hear almost anything or any source for theology other than someone whom many could construe as a superstitious, immature little girl. John Paul indirectly sets Thérèse against de Beauvoir, Daly, and every other feminist who condemns this way of regarding people, especially women. John Paul also opens himself to the criticism of being naïve about this saint by portraying her and her family as perfect traditional Catholics.

John Paul’s heavy reliance on a woman like Thérèse of Lisieux in a world with so many strong, accomplished women as examples of spiritual and intellectual strength seems almost revolutionary. It is counter-cultural. He identifies her strength not in outer or worldly accomplishments but in her contemplative practices. He writes with obvious admiration: “During a pilgrimage to Italy, after visiting the Holy House of Loreto and places in the Eternal City, at an audience granted by the Pope to the faithful of the Diocese of Lisieux on 20 November 1887, she asks Leo XIII with filial boldness to be able to enter Carmel at the age of 15 years.” (DAS 5) This boldness parallels his own

boldness as pontiff in opposing secularism, both capitalist and communist, and in proclaiming the new evangelization as the appropriate antidote.

He sees strength in her ability and desire to live a spirit-filled counter-cultural life, one which he identifies not with Nietzsche and his twentieth-century followers. He thus implies, however indirectly, that Nietzsche *et al* are not counter-cultural. It is not counter-cultural to be a nihilist or a skeptic. Throughout history, only uncommon people follow Christ, and living a Christian life always demands radical choices. The pontiff succinctly describes her life:

Illumined by the Word of God, particularly tried by the illness of her beloved father, Louis Martin, who dies on 29 July 1894, Thérèse embarks on the way of holiness, insisting on the centrality of love. She discovers and imparts to the novices entrusted to her care the little way of spiritual childhood, by which she enters more and more deeply into the mystery of the Church and, drawn by the love of Christ, feels growing within her the apostolic and missionary vocation which spurs her to bring everyone with her to meet the divine Spouse. (DAS 5)

The pope regards as heroic what countless feminists and other critics of Christian theology, including Nietzsche, would undoubtedly describe as a death-wish or unhealthy and dangerous love of suffering: “On 9 June 1895, the feast of the Most Holy Trinity, she offers herself as a sacrificial victim to the merciful Love of God. On 3 April of the following year, on the night between Holy Thursday and Good Friday, she notices the first symptoms of the illness which will lead to her death.” (DAS 5)

The pontiff stubbornly refuses to reconcile his views on the meaning of suffering and death with modern Western thinkers, and presents himself as the unconventional voice. This boldly and stubbornly challenges Church critics who consistently portray themselves as nonconformist, partly in disobedience to a Christian morality. John Paul defines the unchanging truth centered on Christ and God’s love as true revolution, and the Church’s modern critics as anything but unique. They participate in the opposition to God's work in history. They manifest society's eternal desire to turn away from God and live a false liberty. He concludes that “Thérèse has left us an original autobiography which is the story of her soul. It shows how in her life God has offered the world a precise message, indicating an evangelical way, the ‘little way’, which everyone can take, because everyone is called to holiness.” (DAS 6)

## **2) *Saintly wisdom and the Church***

With Divini amoris scientia the pope illustrates an important method for the development of Catholic theology and spirituality. Significantly, he underlines both the “originality of her doctrine” (DAS 2) and the continued, real-life journey of the Church that is still unearthing and experiencing in new and deeper ways the truth that it espouses, that of Christ’s Cross. Christians must not freeze theology, simply memorizing and guarding it.

Almost 2000 years after the beginning of this Christian journey, God’s people are still discovering divine revelation. Reconstructing the truth in Western history does not attempt to turn back the clock. The pontiff highlights the magisterium’s acceptance of Thérèse’s teaching as a signal

that the Church must examine a particular saint against the deposit of teachings already given by God. Revelation takes on different forms and expressions in succeeding ages, but holds the same message and issues from the same source. These grace-inspired gifts and infusions of the Holy Spirit grant Catholic theology, for the pope, the same power and credibility that the martyrs give it.

The magisterium remains open to new movements of the Holy Spirit, to creative ways of reaching out to the world and teaching the fullness of the truth. The Church must readily accept the direction of the inexhaustibly deep truth. With Saint Thérèse we also see an ill-educated, young village woman—someone from outside of the ecclesiastical mainstream—who instructs with the same authority as the greatest doctors and theologians. John Paul does not limit the truth's possible conduits. It may speak through any son or daughter of the Church. Basing his reconstruction of the truth on the prayerful, faithful lives of simple people who have lived beyond the shadow of the Enlightenment, people whose lives popular culture can deem pre-modern in their adherence to traditional spiritual principles, allows John Paul to sidestep polemics with Rorty *et al.* He offers his argument through real-life witness rather than through argumentation. He shows that such lives can work in the Age of Enlightenment and modernity, because this age does not change the basic meaning and power of the truth.

The pontiff does not shy away from an institutional acceptance of Saint Thérèse's teaching into the Catholic tradition. John Paul highlights two methods of such integration: Guidance from the magisterium and reflection from Catholic theologians. This exemplifies old-fashioned proclamations from the hierarchy and traditional doctrinal development about such an infusion of "new" theology. Saint Thérèse herself, in being a recent subject of Church history, derives from an age-old Catholic tradition:

The Supreme Pontiffs of this century, who held up her holiness as an example for all, also stressed that Thérèse is a teacher of the spiritual life with a doctrine both spiritual and profound, which she drew from the Gospel sources under the guidance of the divine Teacher and then imparted to her brothers and sisters in the Church with the greatest effectiveness. (DAS 3)

John Paul claims in this address that he is simply following Church protocol in bringing Saint Thérèse's experienced-based teaching into the Church tradition by echoing the words that a previous pope said about another Church doctor, Saint Catherine of Siena: "We can apply to Thérèse of Lisieux what my Predecessor Paul VI said of another young Saint and Doctor of the Church, Catherine of Siena: 'What strikes us most about the Saint is her infused wisdom, that is to say, her lucid, profound and inebriating absorption of the divine truths and mysteries of faith.... That assimilation was certainly favoured by the most singular natural gifts, but it was also evidently something prodigious, due to a charism of wisdom from the Holy Spirit.'" (DAS 7) Regarding Thérèse de Lisieux, John Paul's attitude follows the words of Dulles: "Continual creativity is needed to implant the faith in new cultures and to keep the teaching of the Church abreast of the growth of secular knowledge. New questions demand new answers, but the answers of theology must always grow out of the Church's

heritage of faith.”<sup>440</sup> John Paul's thought on Thérèse of Lisieux challenges modern thought by making room for her way of doing theology in the technological, scientific age.

### 10.3 John Paul II's Theology of God

John Paul aims to bring everything together through his theology of God: the foundation for his belief in the truth and its importance for society and culture; the meaning of history; and the real sense of humans.

#### 1) *Divine sovereignty*

Through his theology of God, John Paul invites us to make a Christian sense out of history, in opposition to Foucault and Nietzsche's attempt to read it through the eyes of power. The pope calls us to reject Nietzsche's myth and replace it with our own, though he does not criticize the philosopher directly.

First, a theology of God proclaims the People of God. In *Evangelium vitae* the pontiff claims that the sense of the gospel's teaching on life and its dignity and value was already present in the Hebrew writings and above all in the Exodus, where

Israel discovered the preciousness of its life in the eyes of God. When it seemed doomed to extermination because of the threat of death hanging over all its newborn males (cf. Ex 1:15-22), the Lord revealed himself to Israel as its Saviour, with the power to ensure a future to those without hope... who can exploit it at his despotic whim. On the contrary, Israel's life is the object of God's gentle and intense love. (31)

God ties together the People of God, giving them sense, direction, and a full understanding of themselves.

In *Rise, Let Us Be On Our Way*, the pontiff portrays Poland as a land rich in Christian spirituality. Polish history is a great, lived Christian mythology. This reconstruction of the truth proclaims the Creator as master and goal of time. Holiness inheres to the centuries, both in the Lord's voice and in the story of the Chosen People. The pontiff does take a larger view than that of Polish culture. John Paul bases his theology of God, including Poland's holiness, in the story of Israel.

The pontiff thus develops a theology of God from various perspectives, both modern and pre-modern. With *Evangelium vitae* he applies this theology in concrete terms related to the proper bioethics for a People of God, whereas in *Rise, Let's Us Be On Our Way* he proclaims his reverence and respect for previous Polish and European bishops and celebrates the relationships he developed with his episcopal and priestly colleagues: “These (Bishops Boleslaw Kominek and Franciszek Jop) were both great churchmen who, in difficult times, gave an example of personal greatness and bore faithful witness to Christ and to the Gospel. How could I fail to be moved by this heroic spiritual heritage?”<sup>441</sup>; and again: “Here I wish to mention the archbishop emeritus of Milan, Cardinal Carlo Maria Martini, whose catechesis in the cathedral attracted crowds of listeners to whom he revealed the treasure of God's Word.”<sup>442</sup> John Paul's theology of God issues from every era of history.



The pontiff mixes the poetic and personal with the concrete and historical by reflecting on the words of episcopal consecration he received, citing Lumen gentium:

In fact, from tradition, which is expressed especially in the liturgical rites and the customs of both the Eastern and Western Church, it is abundantly clear that by the imposition of hands and through the words of the consecration, the grace of the Holy Spirit is given, and a sacred character is impressed, in such wise that bishops, in a resplendent and visible manner, take the place of Christ himself, teacher, shepherd and priest, and act as his representatives. (27)

John Paul himself thus shares in God's great plan of history. He calls his reader to participate. The tradition centers on the Holy Spirit, who sustains it throughout the generations.

Second, God holds together the Holy People. Revelation leads to the Covenant with Israel and the law. In the face of constant human sin, God, the only Good, remains our model for the moral life.<sup>443</sup> The pope points to the recognition of the Lord as God as the heart of the law.<sup>444</sup> Contrary to Nietzsche's view, the Judeo-Christian tradition, even its most legalistic element, reveals the living divinity rather than just a series of rules. The commandments proclaim the right relationship we are called to have with each other and with God, and only secondarily offer us rules and doctrine.

In Evangelium vitae John Paul writes that "Freedom from slavery meant the gift of an identity, the recognition of an indestructible dignity and the beginning of a new history, in which the discovery of God and discovery of self go hand in hand." (31) Through knowledge of God, suffering takes on a different meaning. (EV, 31) We fully understand the reality of life from the vantage point of eternal life, and "This first notion of totality and fullness is waiting to be manifested in love and brought to perfection, by God's free gift, through sharing in his eternal life." (EV 31) God holds the divine people together through love and grace.

God's mercy has a social, communal dimension as well as individual and inner aspects. (DM 4) The pontiff reminds us that the prophets preached God's mercy when they decried the sins of the Israelites, since, for the pontiff, "The Lord loves Israel with the love of a special choosing, much like the love of a spouse, and for this reason He pardons its sins and even its infidelities and betrayals." (DM 4)

Third, John Paul takes this relationship-centered approach one step further by linking Jesus with the law. Jesus, here as in every aspect of the pontiff's teaching, occupies the heart of John Paul's re-Christianizing. The Logos most completely reveals divine love and goodness, including that which is found in the commandments. Veritatis splendor (9-10) discusses Jesus' attempt to lead the rich young man away from wealth and a limited, legalistic, or doctrinaire view of Moses' commandments and towards the Kingdom. Jesus links us to Abraham and God's call to us for full life: "We have been chosen and called to *set out*, but it is not for us to determine *the destination* of our journey. He who ordered us to set out will determine that goal: our faithful God, *the God of the Covenant*."<sup>445</sup>

God's love is ultimately a mystery, "the mystery of what God's love has already accomplished in human mystery. At the same time, it is the mystery of the future—that is to say, of hope. The mystery of the threshold we are all called to cross, supported by a faith that never draws back."<sup>446</sup> We

can know this mystery because, for John Paul, Christ offers the final word on God: “In Jesus Christ we see: *fidelity* to the Father’s call, *an open heart* for everyone He meets, *a constant journeying* that provides ‘nowhere to lay his head (cf. *Matt. 8:20*), and finally *the Cross*, through which to attain the victory of the Resurrection.”<sup>447</sup> God, the origin of all proper moral action, is the sole good and end of everything, and the fullness of life. Humans, made in the Creator’s image, find their end in the glory and praise of this being.

## 2) *Mutuality*

John Paul includes humans in his theology of God. With God as the master of re-Christianized history, those who reject Christian teachings fail to live their full humanity. We depend on the Holy Spirit and providential history for full life. When the pontiff reflects on the Creator, he also considers human nature because he believes that it is in the divine nature to seek intimacy with humans by extending itself to us.<sup>448</sup> This intimacy does not impinge on the Supreme Being’s sovereignty. The first commandment, John Paul reminds us in *Veritatis splendor* (11), calls us to recognize the Lord as the unique divinity and to worship God alone because of God’s infinite sanctity.

John Paul notes a connection between secularization and the morality crisis in Western culture that reflects the need for a close relationship between humans and God: “When the sense of God is lost, there is also a tendency to lose the sense of man, of his dignity and his life.” (EV 21) In particular, the human conscience is the most important part of us wounded by post-Christian morality: “The systematic violation of the moral law, especially in the serious matter of respect for human life and its dignity, produces a kind of progressive darkening of the capacity to discern God’s living and saving presence.” (EV 21)

Contrary to Nietzsche’s warning, humans have nothing to lose in a relationship with God but everything to gain, above all finding ourselves through grounding in a merciful divinity. John Paul claims that even confronted with God’s mysterious nature, through the witnesses of the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures, we can confidently know the Creator as merciful and knowable:

Christ confers on the whole of the Old Testament tradition about God’s mercy a definitive meaning. Not only does He speak of it and explain it by the use of comparisons and parables, but above all He Himself makes it incarnate and personifies it. He Himself, in a certain sense, is mercy. To the person who sees it in Him - and finds it in Him - God becomes ‘visible’ in a particular way as the Father who is rich in mercy. (DM 2)

The pontiff warns against moral sterility or moral legalism when faced with such a revelation: “In this instance it is not just a case of fulfilling a commandment or an obligation of an ethical nature; it is also a case of satisfying a condition of major importance for God to reveal Himself in His mercy to man: ‘The merciful...shall obtain mercy.’” (DM 2) God’s power is not based on worldly understanding, but on the divine aspects:

It is significant that in their preaching the prophets link mercy, which they often refer to because of the people’s sins, with the incisive image of love on God’s part. The Lord loves Israel with the love of a special choosing, much like the love of a spouse, and for this reason

He pardons its sins and even its infidelities and betrayals. When He finds repentance and true conversion, He brings His people back to grace. In the preaching of the prophets, mercy signifies a special power of love, which prevails over the sin and infidelity of the chosen people. (DM 4)

We can speak of the Creator through analogy and stories, yet more than that through what we know of Jesus: “Faith in Him (Jesus), then, is a ceaseless opening up to God’s ceaseless overtures into our world, it is our movement towards God, Who for his part leads people towards one another.”<sup>449</sup>

Revelation gives us a definitive sense of the Lord and also of ourselves and our relationships with others. John Paul re-Christianizes history and humanity with a knowable God rather than by dwelling first on morality or doctrine. Action carries a different significance when guided by this kind of Christian spirituality rather than either by apathetic, agnostic, post-modernism or by a controlling, doctrinaire Christian ethics: “‘*Rise, let us be on our way.*’ Let us go forth full of trust in Christ. He will accompany us as we journey toward the goal that He alone knows.”<sup>450</sup> John Paul simplifies matters in regard to Jesus: “Especially through His lifestyle and through His actions, Jesus revealed that love is present in the world in which we live - an effective love, a love that addresses itself to man and embraces everything that makes up his humanity.” (DM 3) This is a concrete rather than abstract love:

This love makes itself particularly noticed in contact with suffering, injustice and poverty - in contact with the whole historical ‘human condition,’ which in various ways manifests man’s limitation and frailty, both physical and moral. It is precisely the mode and sphere in which love manifests itself that in biblical language is called ‘mercy.’ (DM 3)

## Conclusion

John Paul turns to Vatican II once again to examine the mystery of Christ.

And the Council continues: ‘He who is the ‘image of the invisible God’ (*Col* 1:15), is himself the perfect man who has restored in the children of Adam that likeness to God which had been disfigured ever since the first sin. Human nature, by the very fact that this was assumed, not absorbed, in him, has been raised in us also to a dignity beyond compare. For, by his Incarnation, he, the son of God, *in a certain way united himself with each man.* He worked with human hands, he thought with a human mind. He acted with a human will, and with a human heart he loved. Born of the Virgin Mary, he has truly been made one of us, like to us in all things except sin’, he, the Redeemer of man. (RH (8))

As so often with the pontiff, he does not break much new theological ground. The above statement could have been made by countless theologians of various Christian traditions, countries, and eras. This refusal to compete with theological, New Age, or philosophical fads by modifying theology reflects his attempt at portraying the timelessness of revelation and the truth. Though he does analyze God from countless angles, his consistency issues from the great tradition of his Church. He demonstrates that tradition can answer Nietzsche from countless angles and depth. Rather than acting as a theological innovator, the pope often writes as a spokesperson for the ancient Catholic Church. His work reflects Avery Dulles’s words: “Systematization in theology can never be complete, for the true object of theology is the unfathomable mystery of God, attained by tacit rather than explicit

awareness.”<sup>451</sup> The pope navigates his way through Christian history and theology with the search for this “unfathomable mystery” always on his mind, which changes his attitude and method radically from that of other modern thinkers. He moves things from fragmentary and unreasonably critical to irenic and holistic.

## Chapter 11

### The Truth Victorious

Alongside his influence, Friedrich Nietzsche, in both popular and academic circles, personifies a paradigm shift in Western civilization. If John Paul's teachings, arguments, and exhortations avoid his thought or cannot stand up to the philosopher's criticism, then he has missed the point of the paradigm shift and has failed to produce anything more than Catholic triumphalism seeking to retreat behind Polish piety.

Do the pontiff's writings, then, confront Nietzsche's philosophy? The German philosopher, and the historical forces he represents, unleashed a many-sided, anti-tradition mindset. John Paul does answer Nietzsche's major points, but not in an organized or direct way because, as part of his irenic style, he normally avoids confronting individual thinkers. His responds to Nietzsche independently of the theological polemics so characteristic of Augustine and Martin Luther, among others. Avery Dulles, in a sense mirroring Michel Foucault's question "What is being said in what is being said?", offers us another indication:

I conclude, then, that the essential and primary function of Christian tradition is not to transmit explicit knowledge, which can better be done by written documents, nor simply to provide a method of discovery, but to impart a tacit, lived awareness of the God to whom the Christian Scriptures and symbols point. Christian tradition is marked by a deep reverence for its own content, which it strives to protect against any dilution or distortion. The tradition is not a mere method of investigation and discovery.<sup>452</sup>

The pontiff offers us the truth in a style contrary to Nietzsche's manner of destroying the truth because the pope's truth is of a different nature; faithfulness to this tradition means faithfulness to its style of proclaiming itself and handing itself on to the next generation.

The pope consistently and energetically answers Nietzsche from various angles from within that tradition. For instance Ut unum sint, Dominum et vivificantum, and Rise, Let Us Be On Our Way explore ecclesiology as it affects the Church and the author personally. The pontiff also uses different styles of personal, theoretical, and "magisterial" writing to convey various levels of teaching on the same subject. From every conceivable angle of Nietzsche's teaching, especially philosophy, social justice, tradition, history, and politics, John Paul offers a response. He takes a liturgical, synthesizing attitude, which finds reflection in Congar's words: "Action and rite—the liturgy is synthetic...It joins, reconciles, and resolves in simplicity but with an extremely advanced synthesis—not only diverse aspects, but antinomian aspects."<sup>453</sup> Congar's reflection on the spiritual or psychological result of the liturgical mindset also relate to John Paul's mindset: "With the liturgy's genius, a whole range of questions are resolved sanely, catholically, in the joy of a peaceful light, without even having been asked, in any case without having those questions in the tension of difficulty...The liturgy gives to the Church the fullness of its familial climate; it joins itself in this manner with tradition."<sup>454</sup> This liturgical sense inspires John Paul's poetic theological imagination, as in his appreciation and

promotion of Thérèse de Lisieux and her Little Way, which contrasts with modern biblical scholarship, among other things.

## 11.1 John Paul II contra Nietzsche

### *1) Contra Nietzsche through a pastoral call to faith and action*

Nietzsche attacks Christianity on many fronts, and John Paul answers him from various angles, constantly emphasizing the importance of the truth. The pontiff's response mirrors Dulles' assertion that "Tradition is conservative because, by shaping the apprehensive powers of its own bearers, it enables them to see what the community of faith already sees. The tradition is self-confirming, because the trust that people place in it is rewarded by new powers of vision."<sup>455</sup> In this sense the pontiff's truth is eternal. John Paul's teaching goes beyond "conservative" or "liberal." It seeks unchanging wisdom that precedes these categories.

First, human freedom: The pope's emphasis on human freedom, by which he means liberty from sin rather than the modern definition of freedom as license, challenges Nietzsche's view of Christians encased behind dogma and a controlling Church hierarchy. John Paul offers salvation in this postmodern era as a rational, achievable, modern goal for which to strive, though in many writings he offers something transcending reason and modernity.<sup>456</sup> Freedom holds meaning only in its spiritual moorings.

By basing liberty on revelation's immutable truth he also challenges Nietzsche's view of a world in constant becoming and recycling (*ewig Wiederkehr*), an idea that imprisons people (though scholars debate Nietzsche's faithfulness to this later doctrine). The fundamental question for the pontiff lies in the relationship between truth and freedom. People must not only know the truth but must *do* it, and thereby we become free.<sup>457</sup> Christians must accept rather than create, as Nietzsche might claim, their freedom—though for John Paul we do only by following God. By doing the truth, Christians also offer witness to their faith by showing their liberty.

The pontiff opposes modern philosophy's criticism of Christian freedom by examining the spiritual results of failing to live as a Christian. He teaches a paradox between freedom and submission to the truth: "According to Christian faith and the Church's teaching, 'only the freedom which submits to the Truth leads the human person to his true good.'" (VS 84) The pontiff believes that without such a submission humans rapidly and unavoidably lose their freedom: "Hence we not infrequently witness the fearful plunging of the human person into situations of gradual self-destruction." (VS 84) Modern thinkers, in other words, have failed to delve deeply enough into the notion of submitting to something greater than themselves, and condemn it from a superficial or one-dimensional view.

Modern thinkers have failed to see the results of their incorrect view, according to John Paul. The pontiff avoids purely abstract speculation and offers concrete examples, often returning to the same problems of abortion, euthanasia, economic injustice, violence, and war: "According to some, it appears that one no longer need acknowledge the enduring absoluteness of any moral value. All

around us we encounter contempt for human life after conception and before birth; the ongoing violation of basic rights of the person; the unjust destruction of goods minimally necessary for a human life.” (VS 84) The modern world’s spiritual imprisonment does not occur only metaphysically, but all around us now. Redemptor hominis (12) recalls Jesus’ well-known words, “know the truth and the truth will set you free,” before warning of the need for “an honest relationship with regard to truth as a condition for authentic freedom, ... to avoid every kind of illusory freedom, every superficial unilateral freedom, every freedom that fails to enter into the whole truth about man and the world.”

Second, a higher aspect: The pontiff thinks vertically, claiming that metaphysical problems harm us in concrete ways in the here and now. He connects the spiritual to this concrete view: “Indeed, something more serious has happened: man is no longer convinced that only in the truth can he find salvation.” (VS 84) This encyclical offers an analysis of what happens to humans psychologically under such conditions: “The saving power of the truth is contested, and freedom alone, uprooted from any objectivity, is left to decide by itself what is good and what is evil.” (VS 84) This argument takes the reader to the next step, offering theological and moral ramifications: “This relativism becomes, in the field of theology, a lack of trust in the wisdom of God, who guides man with the moral law.” (VS 84)

Things come full circle: We start by losing the sense of the absolute nature of the truth and its place in our salvation, and we end by questioning the goodness of God’s law. (Of course, one could start at the other end and work the opposite way.): “Concrete situations are unfavourably contrasted with the precepts of the moral law, nor is it any longer maintained that, when all is said and done, the law of God is always the one true good of man’.” (VS 84) The higher aspect deeply impacts this world and life. Contemporary problems, according to this latter section of Veritatis splendor, result from an unwell spirituality.

The pope envisions a more human sense of transcendence than Nietzsche accords to Christianity. John Paul denies that we can approach truth’s freedom solely with the intellect, as the truth possesses a force and spirit that invite us beyond indoctrination to action and prayer. Freedom does not originate in humans or their reasoning, but in something incomprehensible: “[T]here can be no morality without freedom: ‘It is only in freedom that man can turn to what is good’ . *But what sort of freedom?* ... ‘Genuine freedom is an outstanding manifestation of the divine image in man. For God willed to leave man ‘in the power of his own counsel’ (cf. *Sir* 15:14).” (VS 34, including citations from Gaudium et spes) John Paul attempts to connect us deeply with the Creator. Our authentic selves proceed from God. While Nietzsche’s humans live for themselves and not for anything transcendent, the pontiff calls each person to live and overcome suffering and limitations for God.

Third, responsibility: John Paul calls us to the truth and the discernment of God's voice. The urgency to moral and spiritual issues proceeds from their eternal significance. Freedom of conscience does not allow us to avoid our responsibility to the truth: “Although each individual has a right to be respected in his own journey in search of the truth, there exists a prior moral obligation, and a grave

one at that, to seek the truth and to adhere to it once it is known.” (VS, 34) Nietzsche calls a certain, chosen people to something higher. John Paul invites everyone, and not only an elite, out of their limitations. He believes in humans as much as he believes in God because we all reflect divine glory and goodness. Contrary to the philosopher, the Holy Father invites us to specific and demanding transcendence through community. The faint-hearted must find courage in the pope's famous dictum *Be not afraid!*

The demanding pontiff defines the right moral path an *obligation*. Nietzsche never obliges the *Übermensch* to do anything because human actions respond to no independent transcendent reality. The pontiff would call this a pseudo-freedom. Even with eternal urgency to our actions, the pope emphasizes the freedom we have in finding our unique spiritual path given revelation's framework. *Redemptor hominis* (21) roots this obligation in the idea that freedom is actually a gift from God: “[F]reedom is a great gift only when we know how to use it consciously for everything that is our true good. Christ teaches us that the best use of freedom is charity, which takes concrete form in self-giving and in service.” We *must* use our gifts, and by doing so we find our freedom.

Action expresses the truth. John Paul's call to faith and the high demands he places on Christians form his argument as much as his consistency does, as these demands complement the power of reason and invite his readers back to their religious roots and away from liberal drift and the latest spiritual or intellectual fad. The ancient Christians, he notes, “coming both from the Jewish people and from the Gentiles, differed from the pagans not only in their faith and their liturgy but also in the witness of their moral conduct, which was inspired by the New Law.” (VS, 26) The esteemed, sanctified quality of the Church also impacts this argument. John Paul places more importance on inspired witness to the gospel than on intellectual proof of God's existence. He puts the responsibility for Christian authentication back with the laity. Witness becomes the proof, and each Christian individual, through action, speaks to philosophy and culture.

Fourth, beyond reason: Freedom and eternity place the pope's message beyond mere argument or reason, though he accepts both as legitimate tools for better understanding the truth. John Paul speaks to the heart, defining the heart through the kinds of actions and spiritual practices that issue from it. He adopts a path that reason, and therefore many modern thinkers, rejects. His communication style and refutation of some aspects of modern philosophy (about which he does not bother with great details or discussions) demonstrates that he directs his reference points, the eternal and the divine, around the challenges of Richard Rorty, Nietzsche, or Michel Foucault. Eternity and unlimited love empty the teachings of these thinkers of any meaning.

## **2) *Contra Nietzsche through language***

Perhaps the pontiff most effectively addresses Nietzsche's world-view with his pastoral style of writing. At least as pope, John Paul addresses people's hearts, and writes secondarily as an intellectual. His exacting scholarly and theological standards complement this central focus rather than



being the pivot. However, given his scholarly gifts, he still pastors to those with strong intellectual needs, an important asset in the increasingly educated, information-oriented world. An over-simplified teaching would turn Catholicism into the religion of the uneducated and superstitious. The pastoral yet erudite John Paul does not take his reader's support or obedience for granted, but greatly respects their minds and not only their spirit.

The pontiff roots his theology with language that evokes a traditional Christian cosmology. Foremost, the pope's vocabulary borrows from traditional Christian spirituality. In Veritatis splendor we read of "the splendor of truth," (Introduction); "obedience to the truth" (1); "the light of God's face" (2); "an appeal to the absolute Good" (7); "God, who is the origin and goal of man's life" (7). This teleological and metaphysical language refers to higher virtues and goods, and reminds us constantly of the Creator. Redemptor hominis's traditional words cover a broad spectrum of topics related to Catholic tradition: "the Spirit of Truth" (3); "rich inheritance" (3); "the 'Everlasting Father'" (7); "Redemption as a new creation" (8); "The good has its source in Wisdom and Love" (8); "the mystery of Christ" (11); "apostolic and missionary unity" (12); "the way" (13). This unoriginal language reflects John Paul's refusal to involve himself in the countless fads of theologians and of society in general. His new-evangelization proclaims the eternal message of the gospel by using timeless language.

John Paul uses intensively personal language to demonstrate truth's connection to the human heart. He refers in Rise, Let Us Be On Our Way to the gentleness with which he views the Church-sanctioned and boundless view of the spirit world of God, writing with child-like wonder and awe that "I have a special devotion to my Guardian Angel. Probably like all children, during my childhood I would often pray: '*Angel of God, my guardian, be always with me ... always stand ready to help me, guard my soul and my body.*'"<sup>458</sup> The pontiff's words portray God's world as warm, caring, and paternal, greatly contrasting Nietzsche's mockery of God: "My guardian Angel knows what I am doing."<sup>459</sup> Based on this power of protection under which he lives, John Paul unashamedly claims devotion and love towards this metaphysical being: "My faith in him, in his protective presence, continues to grow deeper and deeper."<sup>460</sup> The pope witnesses here, at this innocent, childlike level, to the presence of this metaphysical world, rather than offering rational proof: "Saint Michael, Saint Gabriel, Saint Raphael—these are the archangels I frequently invoke during prayer."<sup>461</sup> This heart-felt spirituality feeds the rest of his teaching.

The pontiff's depiction of a new worldview that is based on tradition issues not from reasoned polemics but from something spiritually poetic or artistic; he paints the scene here that supports his evangelization. An incorrect metaphysics has led to the present philosophical and cultural crisis. Polemics, important only secondarily for the pontiff, superficially address human nature if done without recourse to this metaphysical core. John Paul's transcendent language describes or even creates a Catholic cosmology. Rise, Let Us Be On Our Way depicts sacred time by marking events by Christian feasts rather than by the actual date: He was consecrated bishop of Krakow on "the feast of

Saint Wenceslaus, patron of Wawel Cathedral” (13); “the silver jubilee of Archbishop Baziak's episcopate (which he helped to celebrate)... was the Feast of Our Lady of Sorrows” (16); “My ordination to the priesthood took place on the Feast of All saints, which had always been an important feast for me. The goodness of God has allowed me to celebrate the anniversary of my priestly ordination on the day when the Church remembers all the saints in heaven.” (26)

The reader thus enters John Paul's sanctified historical world-view. Criticizing this would equate arguing with John Paul's heart rather than purely rational ideas, which even in this critical age could seem in poor taste and a personal attack. By personalizing faith, John Paul acts rather than thinks; theology, inspired from the truth, is action rather than simply reflection. Countering this would take, in this logic, a counter action rather than simply critical analysis. Theology becomes “the way,” one of the early names for Christianity, rather than doctrinal exposition. Proof comes through living the gospel rather than through words. Doctrines come alive in a fresh vitality.

John Paul's Polish Catholic heritage testifies to “the way.” The pontiff describes Polish geography in sacred terms, as it testifies to the gospel:

Częstochowa is a special place for Poles. In a sense it can be identified with Poland and its history, especially the struggle for independence. Here stands the national shrine called Jasna Góra--the Bright Mountain. *Clarus Mons*: This name refers to the light that dispels darkness, and it took on a special meaning for Poles during the dark times of war, partition, and occupation.<sup>462</sup>

“The light that dispels darkness” refers of course to the Johannine concept of the light of the Word coming into the world to dispense the truth and help us see the truth. John Paul's Poland has lived the history and spirituality of this Johannine theology. Poland still stands sovereign and faithful to Rome after countless wars and occupations, proving the truth of the Good News. His country witnesses to the gospel. He does not bother to argue this point, but simply claims that “Everyone knew that the source of this light of hope was the presence of Our Lady in her miraculous image.”<sup>463</sup> This “evidence,” the testimony of faith to “the way,” needs only a few forceful words.

John Paul claims that his theology issues from the theology of Poland. He integrates this into the thinking of a long line of pontiffs—into the teaching of the magisterium, in other words--and he emphasizes in this book Polish theology:

At that time the shrine, significantly, became a fortress that the attackers could not conquer. The nation interpreted this sign as a promise of victory. Faith in Our Lady's protection gave the Poles the strength to conquer the invader. From that moment the Shrine of the Bright Mountain became in some sense a bastion of faith, spirit, and culture and all that constitutes national identity.<sup>464</sup>

Piety offers the greatest defense of the faith. In this view, John Paul could hardly have become anything but a devout Catholic son of Poland, given such a convincing spiritual heritage. This militaristic imagining parallels the theology of some war Psalms of ancient Israel. Militaristic words also convey a sense of great dynamism. The energy of the gospels, of the truth, tends towards witnessing rather than intellectually demonstrating in the pope's reflections.

John Paul's view of salvation history aims to convince and inspire the reader through poetry and heroic vision, but not only in his views on Poland. The New Testament regulates human life to a much smaller extent than any law, and instead the Paraclete leads us energetically and unpredictably. Living in the Holy Spirit, the pontiff writes in *Fides et ratio* (68), leads believers to a freedom that transcends the law. The pope does battle with Nietzsche *et al* indirectly, by buttressing and advancing the tenets of Christianity that so many try to shoot down, rather than by engaging an endless number of people in a battle of words.

### 3) *Contra Nietzsche's philosophical legacy*

John Paul also counters Nietzsche by outlining the problems with Nietzschean-influenced thought systems. Consistent with his vision, the pope criticizes nihilism's attacks on human dignity and its rejection of the truth: "Quite apart from the fact that it conflicts with the demands and the content of the word of God, *nihilism* is a denial of the humanity and of the very identity of the human being." (FR 90) Human identity inevitably demands a tradition and seeks the truth: "It should never be forgotten that the neglect of being inevitably leads to losing touch with objective truth and therefore with the very ground of human dignity." (FR 90) Here again John Paul moves with ease between the concrete and the abstract and, in fact, does not separate the two. *Centesimus annus* offers concrete examples of Marxism's errors and the dehumanizing tendencies of ideologies.

The pope identifies abstract, Platonic ideas, such as "being," as central to twentieth-century history and its tragedies: "This (our losing touch with objective truth) in turn makes it possible to erase from the countenance of man and woman the marks of their likeness to God, and thus to lead them little by little either to a destructive will to power or to a solitude without hope. Once the truth is denied to human beings, it is pure illusion to try to set them free." (FR 90) As so often, John Paul warns of the dangers of a philosophy that does not refer to God and Biblical teachings.

In a bold, cat-and-mouse thinking game, the pontiff claims that any opposition to theological and Christian-friendly philosophical traditions, even if done ostensibly because of those traditions' attacks on human dignity, themselves undermine human dignity. The fundamental, simple notions of theology on the nature of human beings always remain true and absolute: "Jesus Christ is the stable principle and fixed centre of the mission that God himself has entrusted to man." (RH 11) The idea that "truth and freedom go together hand in hand or together they perish in misery" (FR 90) undergirds the great opposition in *Centesimus annus* to the destructive ideologies and secular philosophies of the twentieth century. *Fides et ratio* develops important theoretical arguments, but the pontiff's greatest gift as theologian and pope is in applying his principles to concrete historical and contemporary situations. Many of the teachings of *Fides et ratio* had already found their practice in this earlier encyclical.<sup>465</sup>

This constructive employment of consistent principles contrasts with Nietzsche, who fails even in his "novel" *Also Sprach Zarathustra* to develop an operative function for his ideals. Whereas

this lack of applicability inheres to Nietzsche's way of thinking, John Paul aims for a consistent, passionate, usable faith. These real-world applications have deep roots in the wisdom and strength of a long history. John Paul appeals in many of his writings to the revivification of Catholic and Western world views and values, as he sees the Holy Spirit and the human spirit working together, with humans behaving as anything but herd animals (*Herdenthier*): "The appeal to tradition is not a mere remembrance of the past; it involves rather the recognition of a cultural heritage which belongs to all of humanity. Indeed it may be said that it is we who belong to the tradition and that it is not ours to dispose of at will." (FR 85) Freedom and responsibility grow together, and strengthen both individuals and the tradition from which they come: "Precisely by being rooted in the tradition will we be able today to develop for the future an original, new and constructive mode of thinking." (FR 85)

Contrary to Nietzsche's assertion, tradition does not imprison us, but liberates our own creativity so that we can freely and responsibly make a world of our choosing. Tradition offers us the spiritual and intellectual freedom for which Nietzsche calls in his rejection of Christianity and much of Western philosophy. Whereas nihilism denies human liberty and dignity, and diminishes creativity, Christian-centered tradition, in cherishing these goods, promotes creativity: "Beginning with Abraham, the faith of each of his sons represents a constant leaving behind of what is cherished, familiar, and personal, in order to open up to the unknown, trusting in the truth we share and the common future we all have in God."<sup>466</sup>

## 11.2 John Paul pro Christianity

Yves Congar's following words encapsulate the best approach to the late pontiff's thinking about the truth and modern, deconstructing philosophy: "The tradition that each one receives is not a quintessence of primitive Christianity, but the totality of that which is revealed from Christ throughout the ages... We cannot grasp this totality by the sole path of intelligence, not by that of historic research, neither by that of a dogmatic definition. It is not possible except in the living communion of which the richness can only express itself partially in an explicit manner."<sup>467</sup>

John Paul counters Nietzsche best of all not through criticism of modern philosophy but through his own creative, affirming vision—by repeatedly accentuating the positive, especially love. Even apparently painful realities such as martyrdom are holy, worthwhile, and meaningful:

*And King Boleslaus wrote this name with his sword  
in the ancient chronicles,  
wrote this name with his sword on the cathedral's  
marble floor  
as the streams of blood were flowing  
over the marble floor.*<sup>468</sup>

The pontiff offers a poetic view of Christian history and tradition (and perhaps of Christian "lore"), though not always literally through his own poetry. This poetic view incorporates a strong faith in a hierarchical value system and spirituality. In this above poem, precious blood is sacrificed for

something even more precious—the truth. Congar offers a poetic view of Christian tradition: “Every Christian is guardian of the deposit of tradition. The members of the hierarchy have their particular pastoral duties and those given them by the priestly and episcopal sacraments. Priests live the tradition, not only by the studies that give them a better understanding, but by the celebration of the mysteries. Every Christian transmits the depot by teaching and by the confession or profession of the faith.”<sup>469</sup>

### ***1) Spiritual renewal***

Hans Urs Von Balthasar's sense of history parallels that of John Paul's: “The Christian sense of history cannot be revealed except eschatologically”<sup>470</sup> ; “It is impossible to use here the category of progress. This would presuppose the clear knowledge of the true essence of the Christian and of the Church. A quantitative extension of the Church is not necessarily progress, as neither is persecution or the reduction of membership to a small number the return to primitive Christianity.”<sup>471</sup> John Paul parallels von Balthasar in identifying a still, unchanging point to history—the point of truth, working through the Holy Spirit. The truth is at once still and dynamic—and thus amendable simultaneously to the personalist and Thomistic viewpoints—because the truth is still while the Paraclete is dynamic.

Consistency in his teaching results from the pontiff's belief in the truth's changeless nature—in its anthropological, metaphysical, and ethical dimensions—and the resulting sense that the same issues appear repeatedly. Human nature at the individual and social levels does not change in its deepest nature, even as things all around us do endlessly transform. The consistency with which John Paul discusses the truth works on many levels in refuting Nietzsche's attacks on Christianity. In one work after another the pontiff presents the same issues: Human dignity and its divine source; liberty and the ability to freely respond to revelation; and the evils of a morality not grounded in the transcendent. The pope believes that the new evangelization must transform humans and societies, or it is not an authentic, permanent evangelization stemming from the truth: “And when Peter, with the other Apostles, proclaimed the Resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth from the dead, he held out a new life to be lived, a ‘way’ to be followed, for those who would be disciples of the Risen One (cf. *Acts* 2:37-41; 3:17-20).” (VS 107) These words address all of history and eternity.

Personal religious confession, which leaves people vulnerable and humble, supersedes intellectual egotism and polemics, especially as the pope calls us to a public declaration, and not only in front of God. John Paul invites us to old-fashioned confession of our faith in front of God and humans. Public avowal, not logical defense or polemics, supports the evangelization for which he calls in, among other writings, Veritatis splendor (89): “Through the moral life, faith becomes ‘confession’, not only before God but also before men: it becomes *witness*.” Jesus, the Bible, and theology must inspire philosophy as they once did. They must do this primarily through people, not books: “In particular, *the life of holiness* which is resplendent in so many members of the People of God, humble and often unseen, constitutes the simplest and most attractive way to perceive at once the beauty of

truth, the liberating force of God's love, and the value of unconditional fidelity to all the demands of the Lord's law, even in the most difficult situations.” (VS 107) John Paul does not necessarily call for a Christian philosophy, but for world views receptive of metaphysics, tradition, hierarchy, and biblical values.

Jesus is the center of this evangelization and renewed morality: “The Spirit of Jesus, received by the humble and docile heart of the believer, brings about the flourishing of Christian moral life and the witness of holiness amid the great variety of vocations, gifts, responsibilities, conditions and life situations.” (VS 108) The old revolution—a Christ-centered, personal, spiritual revolution—is the ever-new, ever-same yet always fresh revolution. This revolution plays out over and over again.

In reflecting on the pontiff's idea of the truth, one must return to his anthropology, since he asserts the concrete reality and applicability of the truth to humans. Michael Novak connects truth-with-action in the Holy Father's preaching: “From his earliest work on,...the Pope has been struck by the human being's most arresting characteristic: his or her capacity to originate action; that is, to imagine and to conceive of new things and then to do them. He found in creative acts the clue to human identity. Humans, he held, cannot take refuge from this responsibility by hiding behind 'society'--there, too, they are responsible for their acts. Being in society does not absolve them of the burdens of subjectivity.”<sup>472</sup> Humans cannot escape the truth and its awesome responsibilities. Morality issues from the truth because our very identity issues from the truth. Evangelium vitae and Veritatis splendor both contain these themes:

The lives of the saints, as a reflection of the goodness of God — the One who 'alone is good' — constitute not only a genuine profession of faith and an incentive for sharing it with others, but also a glorification of God and his infinite holiness. The life of holiness thus brings to full expression and effectiveness the threefold and unitary *munus propheticum, sacerdotale et regale* which every Christian receives as a gift by being born again ‘of water and the Spirit’ (Jn 3:5) in Baptism. His moral life has the value of a ‘spiritual worship’ (Rom 12:1; cf. Phil 3:3), flowing from and nourished by that inexhaustible source of holiness and glorification of God which is found in the Sacraments, especially in the Eucharist: by sharing in the sacrifice of the Cross, the Christian partakes of Christ's self-giving love and is equipped and committed to live this same charity in all his thoughts and deeds. (VS 107)

## 2) *Social dimensions of the New Evangelization*

Individual spiritual revolution leads to social change. Neuhaus correctly notes, as we see in the quote below from Centesimus annus 54, that in John Paul's writings there is an “insistence that our thinking about economics must attend to real, concrete human beings and how they behave. Not just how we think they *should* behave, but how they actually *do* behave.”<sup>473</sup> John Paul applies his belief on the importance of transcendental or metaphysical values to the social area. He counters a fragmented view with both metaphysically-oriented aspects of the faith and materialistic, practical interpretations of the gospel:

The Church's *social teaching* is itself a valid *instrument of evangelization*. As such, it proclaims God and his mystery of salvation in Christ to every human being, and for that very reason reveals man to himself. In this light, and only in this light, does it concern itself with everything else: the human rights of the individual, and in particular of the ‘working class’,

the family and education, the duties of the State, the ordering of national and international society, economic life, culture, war and peace, and respect for life from the moment of conception until death. (CA, 54)

The pontiff's opposition to Marxist-oriented liberation theologies testifies to his concern that the transcendental values of the Church and redemption must play a role in every part of the Church's life, even where desperate material needs exist. In its social teaching and work, the Church proclaims, as we see in the above citation from Centesimus annus, its metaphysical way of thinking. Its transcendental values offer the full meaning of suffering, and offer the only true freedom from material misery. The paradox he teaches is that a healthy metaphysics keeps our feet on the ground, whereas, as exemplified with Marxism, an unhealthy metaphysics prevents governmental and non-governmental organizations from solving difficult issues and respecting people.

Here again we see the holistic theme played out in social justice teachings. As with all issues, the pope emphasizes the enormously complicated, multi-layered nature of economic issues, as they contain various human and therefore spiritual dimensions: "In brief, modern underdevelopment is not only economic but also cultural, political and simply human" (SRS 15) True development centers on humans, not economics, especially on the "freedom from every form of slavery." (SRS 28) Michael Novak notes correctly that "He has rooted his social proposals in his anthropology of 'the acting person' and 'creative subjectivity.' This enables him to criticize every existing ideology, including democratic capitalism."<sup>474</sup> Concerned foremost with the spiritual, the pontiff warns not only against underdevelopment but also against over-development, referring to Pope Paul VI's Populorum progressio: "To 'have' objects and goods does not in itself perfect the human subject, unless it contributes to the maturing and enrichment of that subject's 'being,' that is to say unless it contributes to the realization of the human vocation as such." (SRS 28)

Multidimensional thinking on this issue (as on many others) stems from a trust in a hierarchical view, whereby humans must respect certain goods more than other, and, most clearly of all, the spiritual before the material. The pontiff recognizes the complications of materialism and social justice, warning us against creating a false antinomy between "having" and "being": "The evil does not consist in 'having' as such, but in possessing without regard for the quality and the ordered hierarchy of the goods one has. Quality and hierarchy arise from the subordination of goods and their availability to man's 'being' and his true vocation." (SRS 28) Thus he ties development to Christianity by returning to basic anthropological and theological teachings that center on the relationship of God with each human: "However, in trying to achieve true development we must never lose sight of that dimension which is in the specific nature of man, who has been created by God in his image and likeness (cf. Gen 1:26). It is a bodily and a spiritual nature." (SRS 29) Hierarchical values are defined by their "proximity" to God and to the dignity of humans, which he centers on the Spirit's indwelling in humans. For Michael Novak, "in Sollicitudo rei socialis (1987), the Pope moved from the 'acting person' and 'creative subjectivity' to 'the fundamental human right of personal economic initiative.'<sup>475</sup>

### 3) *Bioethics and the New Evangelization*

A hierarchical metaphysics protects the most vulnerable and therefore society as a whole. Whereas *Centesimus annus* presents Christian social teaching, *Evangelium vitae* addresses bioethics issues. Both encyclicals portray Christianity as defending human life and dignity. This protection proceeds from the faith's unique truths, specifically concerning human nature, which receives divine grace: "Man is called to a fullness of life which far exceeds the dimensions of his earthly existence, because it consists in sharing the very life of God." (EV 2) Christianity offers humans worthwhile ideals in proclaiming the real meaning and purpose of earthly existence:

After all, life on earth is not an 'ultimate' but a 'penultimate' reality; even so, it remains a sacred reality entrusted to us, to be preserved with a sense of responsibility and brought to perfection in love and in the gift of ourselves to God and to our brothers and sisters. (EV 2)

As already mentioned, John Paul bases his proof for the truth of Christianity's message on an examination of the fruits of belief and non-belief. Believers possess "a profound and persuasive echo in the heart" (EV 2) that directs their life direction and inspires them. The Nietzschean Superman or nihilism receives no such guidance.

The nature of the truth provides that any moral drift or immorality leads to a degrading of the human condition because we must make a choice for the good; a non-choice is really a negation of this good. *Übermensch*-like moral confusion leads such individuals and their society down a path of the lowest common moral denominator, leading to what the pontiff sees as the most grievous crimes but also to a spiritual transformation towards evil:

Not only is the fact of the destruction of so many human lives still to be born or in their final stage extremely grave and disturbing, but no less grave and disturbing is the fact that conscience itself, darkened as it were by such widespread conditioning, is finding it increasingly difficult to distinguish between good and evil in what concerns the basic value of human life. (EV 4)

Human nature left without Christian moral direction tends towards destruction. The truth must nourish the conscience so that the latter can provide the right guidance. Left to itself, the conscience possesses a sinful power, since it cannot independently identify good and evil with consistency and integrity. A proper hierarchy must guide humans.

The pope often portrays the truth as forceful, especially in its eternal and immutable nature, but here he warns of its delicate nature susceptible to the power of immorality. Sin and evil can mask the voice of the truth. The proper expression and implementation of the virtue demands strong hierarchical leadership and action. In *Evangelium vitae* John Paul invites a radical response to contemporary society's confusion:

Even in the midst of difficulties and uncertainties, every person sincerely open to truth and goodness can, by the light of reason and the hidden action of grace, come to recognize in the natural law written in the heart (cf. Rom 2:14-15) the sacred value of human life from its very beginning until its end, and can affirm the right of every human being to have this primary good respected to the highest degree. Upon the recognition of this right, every human community and the political community itself are founded. (EV 2)



The pope's new evangelization contains social and personal moral renewal. His preaching focuses on humans because just as he cannot write about God without writing about people, so he cannot write about divine goodness and the Good News without reflecting on the changes that this message brings to the heart. Contrary to Nietzsche, John Paul does not view Christianity as simply doctrine or conformity. When we follow Christ we live in freedom.

Liberty possesses a moral aspect. We cannot do whatever we wish, but what God calls us to do. We are free to be what God created us to be. The nihilistic freedoms, grandchildren of Nietzsche's thought and the Enlightenment, do not offer real liberty, but the imprisonment of the self in the self, solipsism. Real human rights, therefore, grow from the work of the truth in the human heart. Christianity cherishes and proclaims the sacredness of human life. We cannot give this meaning to ourselves. Revelation alone can allow us the wisdom and moral strength to follow this path of real emancipation: "The development of technology and the development of contemporary civilization, which is marked by the ascendancy of technology, demand a proportional development of morals and ethics. For the present, this last development seems unfortunately to be always left behind." (RH 15) Technology itself is ultimately governed by metaphysical laws of the truth; if we fail to choose to use technology for good, we will use it for other purposes and find ourselves in moral difficulty.

Through the eyes of the gospel, humans can ask the tough, fundamental questions about technological and bioethical "progress": "Do all the conquests attained until now and those projected for the future for technology accord with man's moral and spiritual progress? In this context is man, as man, developing and progressing or is he regressing and being degraded in his humanity?" (RH 15)

Does a Richard Rorty have the moral and spiritual authority or strength to ask such central, important questions without becoming cynical and relativist? Perhaps the sign of the times is that so many well-known public thinkers do not have the *gravitas* to ask such heavy questions. John Paul speaks from the roots of the Western tradition, and therefore has the authority to ask questions that affect our core.

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<sup>1</sup> Jean Daniélou, The Lord of History: Reflections on the Inner Meaning of History, Nigel Abercrombie, translator, London: Longman's, 1958, pp. 100-1.

<sup>2</sup> Daniélou, pp. 88-9.

<sup>3</sup> Daniélou, p. 98.

<sup>4</sup> “[L]’athéisme contemporain se veut positif, organique, constructif. Unissant à un immanentisme de nature mystique une conscience lucide du devenir humain.” Henri de Lubac, Le Drame de L’Humanisme athée, Paris: Éditions Spes, 1950, pp. 7-8.

<sup>5</sup> Auguste Comte, Cours de Philosophie Positive, pp. 51-172, in Oeuvres choisies, Paris: Aubier, 1962, “Each of our principle conceptions, each branch of our knowledge, passes by three successive theoretical states: the theological or fictive state; the metaphysical or abstract state; the scientific or positive state...In other terms, the human spirit by its nature uses successively in each of its researches three methods of philosophizing, of which the character is essentially and even radically opposed.” “[C]haque de nos conceptions principales, chaque branche de nos connaissances, passe successivement par trois états théoriques différents: l’état théologique, ou fictif; l’état métaphysique, ou abstrait; l’état scientifique, ou positif ... En d’autres termes, l’esprit humain, par sa nature, emploie successivement dans chacune de ses recherches trois méthodes de philosopher, dont le caractère est essentiellement différent et même radicalement opposé.” p. 59.

<sup>6</sup> Daniélou, p. 101.

<sup>7</sup> Comte, Cours de Philosophie Positive, p. 60: “In the positive state, the human spirit recognizes the impossibility of obtaining absolute notions, and renounces the search for the origin of everything and the destination of the universe.” “[D]ans l’état positif, l’esprit humain reconnaissant l’impossibilité d’obtenir des notions absolues, renonce à chercher l’origine et la destination de l’univers.”

<sup>8</sup> Comte, Cours de Philosophie Positive, p. 60: “...to understand the inner ways of phenomena, to want only to discover, by the good use of reason and observation, their working laws, that is, their unchanging relations of succession and similarity.” “... à connaître les courses intimes des phénomènes, pour s’attacher uniquement à découvrir, par l’usage bien combiné du raisonnement et de l’observation, leurs lois effectives, c’est-à-dire leurs relations invariables de succession et de similitude.”

<sup>9</sup> Comte, Cours de Philosophie Positive, p. 60-1: “The explanation of facts, reduced to their real nature, is not anything more than the established link between various specific phenomena and some general facts, of which scientific progress tends increasingly to reduce the number.” “L’explication des faits, réduite alors à ses termes réels, n’est plus désormais que la liaison établie entre les divers phénomènes particuliers et quelques faits généraux, dont les progrès de la science tendent de plus en plus à diminuer le nombre.”

<sup>10</sup> Comte, Cours de Philosophie Positive, p. 72.

<sup>11</sup> Copleston, A history of Philosophy, Volume IX, New York: Image Books, Doubleday, 1994, p.

80.

<sup>12</sup> Auguste Comte, La Synthèse subjective Tome Premier: Système de logique positive, Second Edition, Paris: 1900, p. 1: “To subordinate progress to order, analysis to synthesis, and egoism to altruism; such are the three ideas, practical, theoretical, and moral, of the human problem, for which the solution must constitute a unity and stability.” “Subordonner le progrès à l’ordre, l’analyse à la synthèse, et l’égoïsme à l’altruisme; tels sont les trois énoncés, pratique, théorique, et moral, du problème humain, dont la solution doit constituer une unité et stable.”

<sup>13</sup> Comte, Cours de Philosophie Positiviste, p. 78: “How we need a new class of knowledgeable experts, prepared by the appropriate education.” “Qu’une classe nouvelle de savants, préparés par une éducation convenable.”

<sup>14</sup> Comte, Catéchisme Positiviste, p. 1: “In the name of the past and the future, the theoretical and practical servants of HUMANITY have come to take with dignity the general direction of worldly affairs, in order to finally construct the real moral, intellectual and material providence; this process must irrevocably exclude the various slaves of God—Catholics, Protestants, or deists—from political superiority, since they are simultaneously backwards and mischief-makers.” “Au nom du passé et de l’avenir, les serviteurs théoriques et les serviteurs pratiques de l’HUMANITÉ viennent prendre dignement

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la direction générale des affaires terrestres, pour construire enfin la vraie providence, morale, intellectuelle, et matérielle; en excluant irrévocablement de la suprématie politique tous les divers esclaves de Dieu, catholiques, protestants, ou déistes, comme étant à la fois arriérés et perturbateurs.”

<sup>15</sup> Comte, Catéchisme Positiviste, p. 58.

<sup>16</sup> This paragraph is based on material from Arthur Schopenhauer, Du néant de la vie, Auguste Dietrich, translator, Mille et une nuits, 2004, pp. 12-16.

<sup>17</sup> Arthur Schopenhauer, “Nachträge zur Lehre vom Leiden der Welt,” pp. 315-332, Parerga und Paralipomena, Zweiter Theil, Leipzig: Insel, 1930, p. 320: “The character of the things of this world, specifically of the world of humans, is not as it is often said, imperfection so much as distortion in the moral, intellectual, physical, in all.” “Der Charakter der Dinge Dieser Welt, namentlich der Menschenwelt, ist nicht sowohl, wie oft gesagt worden, *Unvollkommenheit*, als vielmehr *Verzerrung*, im Moralischen, im Intellektuellen, Physischen, in Allem.”

<sup>18</sup> “Die Welt ist meine Vorstellung!:-dies ist eine Wahrheit, welche in Beziehung auf jedes lebende und erkennende Wesen gilt; wiewohl der Mensch allein sie in das reflektirte abstrakte Bewußtseyn bringen kann: und thut er dies wirklich; so ist die philosophische Besonnenheit bei ihm eingetreten. Es wird ihm dann deutlich und gewiß, daß er keine Sonne kennt und keine Erde; sondern immer nur ein Auge, das eine Sonne sieht, eine Hand, die eine Erde fühlt; daß die Welt, welche ihn umgiebt, nur als Vorstellung da ist, d.h. Durchweg nur in Beziehung auf ein Anderes, das Vorstellende, welches er selbst ist.” Arthur Schopenhauer, Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung Teil 1, Leipzig: Insel, 1930, p. 33.

<sup>19</sup> Schopenhauer, Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung Teil 1, p. 33: “No truth is more certain, therefore, of all the other independent things and evidence more needed, than this, that all that is for knowledge is, therefore this entire world, is only an object in relationship to the subject, view of the viewing, which in one word is idea.” “Keine Wahrheit ist also gewisser, von allen andern unabhängiger und eines Beweises weniger bedürftig, als diese, daß Alles, was für die Erkenntnis ist, also diese ganze Welt, nur Objekt in Beziehung auf das Subjekt ist, Anschauung des Anschauenden, mit Einem Wort, Vorstellung.”

<sup>20</sup> “Das, wovon hierbei abstrahirt wird, ist ... immer nur der *Wille*, als welcher allein die andere Seite des Welt ausmacht: denn diese ist, wie einerseits durch und durch *Vorstellung*, so andererseits durch und durch *Wille*.” Schopenhauer, Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung Teil 1, p. 35.

<sup>21</sup> “...the primary and always primitive thing.” “...la chose primaire et toujours la chose primitive.” Schopenhauer, Du néant de la vie, p. 18.

<sup>22</sup> “l’organisme lui-même n’est en réalité que la volonté se déployant clairement et objectivement dans le cerveau, et par conséquent dans ses formes d’espace et de temps.” Schopenhauer, Du néant de la vie, p. 18.

<sup>23</sup> “a pure mekane (tool) of nature, a way to understand animal needs and to satisfy them.” “...une pure mekane (Greek characters) de la nature, un moyen de connaître les besoins animaux et de leur venir en aide.” Schopenhauer, Du néant de la vie, p. 19.

<sup>24</sup> Arthur Schopenhauer, “Nachträge zur Lehre von der Bejahung und Verneinung des Willens zum Leben,” pp. 338-50, Parerga und Paralipomena, Zweiter Theil, p. 340: “Then again [in the New Testament] the Kingdom of Mercy is preached, to which humans reach through belief, love of neighbor, and denial of the self: This is the way of redemption from evil and from the world. Everything is, in defiance to all the Protestant-rationalist twisting, the ascetic Spirit that is the soul of the New Testament. This is actually the negation of the will to live. Each passage from the Old Testament to the New Testament, from the lordship of the law to the lordship of belief, from the justification through works through redemption through the mediator, from the lordship of sin and death through eternal life in Christ, means, *sensu proprio*, the transition from the bare moral virtues to the negation of the will to life.” “Dagegen [in the New Testament] predigt er das Reich der Gnade, zu welchem man gelange durch Glauben, Nächstenliebe und gänzlich Verleugnung seiner selbst: Dies sei der Weg zur Erlösung vom Übel und von der Welt. Denn allerdings ist, allen protestantisch-rationalistischen Verdrehungen zum Trotz, der asketische Geist ganz eigentlich die Seele des N.T. Dieser aber ist eben die Verneinung des Willens zum Leben, und jeder Übergang vom A.T. Zum N.T., von der Herrschaft des Gesetzes zur Herrschaft des Glaubens, von der Rechtfertigung durch Werker zur Erlösung durch den Mittler, von der Herrschaft der

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Sünde und des Todes zum ewigen Leben in Christo, bedeutet, sensu proprio, den Übergang von den bloß moralischen Tugenden zur Verneinung des Willens zum Leben.”

<sup>25</sup> “Life is a thought about execution: a beautiful expression is dead with this sense.” “Das Leben ist ein Pensum zum Abarbeiten: in diesem Sinne ist defunctus ein schöner Ausdruck.” Arthur Schopenhauer, “Nachträge zur Lehre vom Leiden der Welt,” p. 326.

<sup>26</sup> Schopenhauer, “Nachträge zur Lehre vom Leiden der Welt,” p. 326: “The world is hell, and humans are on the one hand distressed souls and on the other the devils within.” “Die Welt ist eben die *Hölle*, und die Menschen sind einerseits die gequälten Seelen und andererseits die Teufel darin.”

<sup>27</sup> Arthur Schopenhauer, “Nachträge zur Lehre von der Bejahung und Verneinung des Willens zum Leben,” pp. 338-50, Parerga und Paralipomena, Zweiter Theil, p. 349: “A lucky life is impossible: the highest that humans can reach is a heroic life course.” “Ein *glückliches Leben* ist unmöglich: das höchste, was der Mensch erlangen kann, ist ein *heroischer Lebenslauf*.”

<sup>28</sup> “Ein edler Charakter wird nicht leicht über sein eigenes Schicksal klagen; vielmehr wird von ihm gelten, was Hamlet dem Horatio nachrühmt,” Schopenhauer, “Nachträge zur Lehre von der Bejahung und Verneinung des Willens zum Leben,” pp. 341-342.

<sup>29</sup> “In fact, the conviction exists that the world, and therefore also humans, are something that should actually not be, and this practically us with forbearance against each other to fulfill: then what can one from one's nature under such predicaments expect?--Yes, from this historical point humans create their thoughts that are actually passing greetings between one person and another; instead of Monsieur, Sir, etc., one could call it fellow sufferers, a society of the wicked or the *compagnon des misères*, my fellow sufferer.” “In der That ist die Überzeugung, daß die Welt, also auch der Mensch, etwas ist, das eigentlich nicht sein sollte, geeignet, uns mit Nachsicht gegen einander zu erfüllen: denn was kann man von Wesen unter solchem Prädikament erwarten?--Ja, vom diesem Gesichtspunkt aus könnte man auf den Gedanken kommen, daß die eigentlich passende Anrede zwischen Mensch und Mensch, statt Monsieur, Sir, o.s.w., sein möchte 'Leidensgefährte, *Socii malorum*, *compagnon des misères*, my fellow sufferer.” Schopenhauer, “Nachträge zur Lehre vom Leiden der Welt,” p. 330.

<sup>30</sup> Joseph Ratzinger, “The End of Time,” pp. 4-25, in The End of Time?: The Provocation of Talking about God, Tiemo Rainer Peters and Claus Urban, editors, J. Matthew Ashley, translator, New York: Paulist Press, 2004, p. 14.

<sup>31</sup> Rocco Buttiglione, Karol Wojtyła: The Thought of the Man Who Became Pope John Paul II, Paolo Guietti and Francesca Murphy, translators, Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1997, p. 19.

<sup>32</sup> Daniélou, p. 79.

<sup>33</sup> Copleston, Frederick A history of Philosophy, Volume VII, New York: Image Books, Doubleday, 1994, pp. 307-8.

<sup>34</sup> Thomas Merton, Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander, New York: Image, Doubleday, 1976, p. 22.

<sup>35</sup> Merton, Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander, p. 22.

<sup>36</sup> Daniélou, p. 104.

<sup>37</sup> John Dewey, “Faith and its Object,” pp. 21-39, in The Later Works, 1925-1953: Volume 9: 1933-1934, Jo Ann Boydston, editor, Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1986, p. 23: “[N]ew methods of inquiry and reflection have become for the educated man today the final arbiter of all questions of fact, existence, and intellectual assent. Nothing less than the 'seat of intellectual authority' has taken place. This revolution, rather than any particular aspect of its impact upon this and that religious belief, is the central thing. ... The mind of man is being habituated to a new method and ideal: There is but one sure road of access to truth—the road of patient, cooperative inquiry operating by means of observation, experiment, record and controlled reflection.”

<sup>38</sup> Dewey, “Faith and its Object,” p. 23.

<sup>39</sup> John Dewey, “Religion versus the Religious,” pp. 3-20, The Later Works, 1925-1953: Volume 9: 1933-1934, p. 10: “[W]hen a particular outpost is surrendered it is usually met by the remark from a liberal theologian that the particular doctrine or supposed historic or literary tenet surrendered was never, after all, an intrinsic part of religious belief, and that without it the true nature of religion stands out more clearly than before. ... What is not realized—although perhaps it is more definitely seen by fundamentalists than by liberals—is that the issue does not concern this and that piecemeal *item* of belief,

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but centres on the question of the method by which any and every item of intellectual belief is to be arrived at and justified.”

<sup>40</sup> Richard Field, “John Dewey: The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy,” <http://www.iep.utm.edu/d/dewey.htm>, June, 2005.

<sup>41</sup> Dewey, “Religion versus the Religious,” p. 11.

<sup>42</sup> Dewey, “Religion versus the Religious,” pp. 19-20: “If I have said anything about religions and religion that seems harsh, I have said those things because of a firm belief that the claim on the part of religions to possess a monopoly of ideals and of the supernatural means by which alone, it is alleged, they can be furthered, stands in the way of the realization of distinctively religious values inherent in natural experience.”

<sup>43</sup> Dewey, “Religion versus the Religious,” p. 13: “It is the claim of religions that they effect this generic and enduring change in attitude. ... It is not *a* religion that brings it about, but when it occurs, from whatever cause and by whatever means, there is a religious outlook and function. As I have said before, the doctrinal or intellectual apparatus and the institutional accretions that grow up are, in a strict sense, adventitious to the intrinsic quality of such experiences. For they are affairs of the traditions of the culture with which individuals are inoculated.”

Field.

<sup>44</sup> Dewey, “Faith and its Object,” in The Later Works, 1925-1953: Volume 9: 1933-1934, pp. 21-39, Jo Ann Boydston, editor, Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1986, p. 23. “The positive lesson is that religious qualities and values if they are real at all are not bound up with any single item of intellectual assent, not even that of the existence of the God of theism; and that, under existing conditions, the religious function in experience can be emancipated only through surrender of the whole notion of special truths that are religious by their own nature, together with peculiar avenues of access to such truths.”

<sup>45</sup> Dewey, “Faith and its Object,” p. 32 “This romantic optimism is one cause for the excessive attention to individual salvation characteristic of traditional Christianity. Belief in a sudden and complete transmutation through conversion and in the objective efficacy of prayer, is too easy a way out of difficulties. It leaves matters in general just about where they were before; that is, sufficiently bad so that there is additional support for the idea that only supernatural aid can better them.”

<sup>46</sup> Dewey, Faith and Object,” pp. 23-24.

<sup>47</sup> “Robert Spaeman hat davon gesprochen, dass nach dem Fall der Utopie heute ein banaler Nihilismus sich auszubreiten beginnt, der in seinen Ergebnissen nicht weniger gefährlich werden kann. Er nennt als Beispiel den amerikanischen Philosophen Richard Rorty, der die neue Utopie des Banalen formuliert hat. Rortys Ideal ist eine liberale Gesellschaft, in der absolute Werte und Maßstäbe nicht mehr existieren werden; das Wohlbefinden wird die einzige Sache sein, die anzustreben sich lohnt,” Joseph Kardinal Ratzinger, Werte in Zeiten des Umbruchs: Die Herausforderungen der Zukunft bestehen, Freiburg: Herder, 2005, p. 43.

“[D]econstruction operates at a price that transforms philosophy into a careless, gratuitous exercise and the philosopher into a concept-cleaner who isn't even required to punch in (on the time-clock of responsibility for his own moral decisions).” Marcello Pera, “Relativism, Christianity, and the West,” pp. 1-49, in Without Roots: The West, Relativism, Christianity, Islam, New York: Basic Books, 2006, p. 18.

<sup>48</sup> Michael Novak, The Catholic Ethic and the Spirit of Catholicism, New York: Maxwell Macmillan International, 1993, p. 197.

<sup>49</sup> Richard Rorty, “Postmodernist bourgeois liberalism,” pp. 197-202, in Objectivity, Relativism, and Truth: Philosophical papers, Volume 1, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991, pp. 200-201.

<sup>50</sup> Rorty, “Postmodernist bourgeois liberalism,” p. 201: “Intra-societal tensions, of the sort which Dworkin rightly says mark our pluralistic society, are rarely resolved by appeals to general principles of the sort Dworkin thinks necessary. More frequently they are resolved by appeals to what he calls 'convention and anecdote.' The political discourse of the democracies, at its best, is the exchange of what Wittgenstein called 'reminders for a particular purpose'--anecdotes about the past effects of various practices and predictions of what will happen if, or unless, some of these are altered.”

<sup>51</sup> Richard Rorty, Philosophy and Social Hope, London: Penguin Books, 1999, p. 73.

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52 Rorty, "Introduction: Pragmatism and post-Nietzschean philosophy," pp. 1-6, in Essays on Heidegger and others: Philosophical papers, Volume 2, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991, pp. 4-5.

53 Rorty, "Introduction: Pragmatism and post-Nietzschean philosophy," p. 5.

54 Richard Rorty, "Introduction: Pragmatism and post-Nietzschean philosophy," p. 5.

55 Rorty, Philosophy and Social Hope, p. 72.

56 Edmund Husserl, Die Idee der Phänomenologie, Haag: Martinus Nijhoff, 1958, p. 6: "A look cannot ever be sufficiently demonstrated; the blind, who want to see, do not want to see though scientific demonstrations; physical and physiological theories of color fail to offer a clear sense of the sense of color that a seeing person has." "Ein Schauen läßt sich nicht demonstrieren; der Blinde, der sehend werden will, der wird es nicht durch wissenschaftliche Demonstrationen; physikalische und physiologische Farbtheorien ergeben keine schauende Klarheit des Sinnes von Farbe, wie ihn der Sehende hat."

57 How can knowledge become certain of its encounter with the self-seeing thing?" "Wie kann Erkenntnis ihrer Übereinstimmung mit den an sich seienden Sachen gewiß werden, sie „treffen“?" Husserl, Die Idee der Phänomenologie, p. 3.

58 Husserl, Die Idee der Phänomenologie, p. 9: "The universal is given in its absolute sense and not in an immanent sense. Knowledge of the universal is something specific, it is each moment in the stream of consciousness; the universal itself, set against evidence, is not a specific thing but a universal which is to say a transcendent thing." "[D]as Allgemeine ist absolut gegeben und nicht reell immanent. Die Erkenntnis des Allgemeinen ist etwas Singuläres, ist jeweils ein Moment im Strome des Bewußtseins; das Allgemeine selbst, das darin gegen ist in Evidenz, ist aber kein Singuläres sondern eben ein Allgemeines, somit im reellen Sinne transzendent."

59 Edmund Husserl, Die Idee der Phänomenologie, pp. 9-10: "The basis of all is the realization of the sense of absolute givenness, the absolute clarity of the givenness, that each doubt of the senses excludes, that with one word we can call the absolute view or self-embracing evidence." "Das Fundament von allem aber ist das Erfassen des Sinnes der absoluten Gegebenheit, der absoluten Klarheit des Gegebenseins, das jeden sinnvollen Zweifel ausschließt, mit einem Wort der Absolut schauenden, selbst erfassenden Evidenz."

60 "We move in an field of pure phenomena. But why do I say 'field,? It is much more like an eternal Heraclitian flow of phenomena. What kind of declaration can I make here? Now, while observing I can say, 'This, here! It's without doubt.'" "Wir bewegen uns in dem Feld der reinen Phänomene. Doch warum sage ich Feld; es ist vielmehr ein ewigen Heraklitischer Fluß von Phänomenen. Welch Aussagen kann ich hier machen? Nun, schauend kann ich sagen: dies da! Es ist, zweifellos." Husserl, Die Idee der Phänomenologie, p. 47.

61 Husserl, Die Idee der Phänomenologie, p. 23: "By phenomenology what is meant is a science, a connection of scientific disciplines; phenomenology means before and above all a method and attitude of thinking: a specific philosophical attitude and specific philosophical method." "Phänomenologie: das bezeichnet eine Wissenschaft, einen Zusammenhang von wissenschaftlichen Disziplinen; Phänomenologie bezeichnet aber zugleich und vor allem eine Methode und Denkhaltung: die spezifisch philosophische Denkhaltung, die spezifisch philosophische Methode."

62 "[C]e passage de la conscience naturelle à la conscience de soi est la démarche nécessaire pour commencer à philosopher: c'est sans doute ce que Husserl nomme «la réduction phénoménologique», cette mise entre parenthèses des certitudes mondaines, qui permet non de les supprimer, mais de les faire apparaître, comme elles se montrent, et telles se montrent; de là le nouveau sens authentique du phénomène." Jean Hyppolite, Figures de la pensée philosophique I, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1971, p. 501.

63 Max Scheler, "Phänomenologie und Erkenntnistheorie," Schriften aus dem Nachlass, Band 1: Zur Ethik und Erkenntnislehre, Bern: Francke, 1957, pp. 377-430, p. 380: "The first character that a phenomenologically-based philosophy must possess is the most lively, most intensive, and *clear turn to experience with the world itself*—that is, with the things as how they are." "Das erste, was daher eine auf Phänomenologie gegründete Philosophie als Grundcharakter besitzen muß, ist der lebendigste, intensivste und *unmittelbarste Erlebnisverkehr mit der Welt selbst*—d.h. Mit den Sachen, um die es sich gerade handelt."

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<sup>64</sup> Arthur R. Luther, "The Articulated Unity of Being in Scheler's Phenomenology. Basic Drive and Spirit," pp. 1-42 in *Max Scheler (1874-1928) Centennial Essays*, Manfred S. Frings, editor, The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1974, p. 1.

<sup>65</sup> Max Scheler, "Die Stellung des Menschen im Kosmos," pp. 7-72, in *Späte Schriften*, Bonn: Bouvier Verlag, 1995, p. 13: "Alongside the *objective* natural phenomenal characteristics of things that we call 'living,' such as self-movement, self-learning, self-differentiation, self-demarcating, in reference to time and space..., exists the reality, that living beings are not only a matter for outer observers, but also possess an impetus and inner being, within which lies its inner state like a natural characteristic—a characteristic that can be shown that with objective phenomena of life exists structure and form of procedure of the innermost being-ness. It is the psychic side of selfness and self-movement etc of the natural creature overall, the psychic protophenomena of life." "Neben den *objektiven* wesensphänomenalen Eigenschaften der Dinge, die wir «lebendig» nennen, wir Selbstbewegung, Selbstformung, Selbstdifferenzierung, Selbstbegrenzung in zeitlicher und räumlicher Hinsicht ..., ist die Tatsache, daß Lebewesen nicht nur Gegenstände für außer Beobachter sind, sondern auch ein *Fürsich und Innesein* besitzen, in dem sie sich selber inne werden, ein für sie wesentliches Merkmal—ein Merkmal, von dem man zeigen kann, daß es mit den objektiven Phänomenen des Lebens an Struktur und Ablaufsform die innigste Seinsgemeinschaft besitzt. Es ist die psychische Seite der Selbstständigkeit, Selbstbewegung etc. des Lebenswesens überhaupt—das *psychische Urphänomen* des Lebens."

<sup>66</sup> "Es ist die psychische Seite der Selbstständigkeit, Selbstbewegung etc. des Lebenswesens überhaupt—das *psychische Urphänomen* des Lebens." Max Scheler, "Die Stellung des Menschen im Kosmos," p. 13.

<sup>67</sup> Scheler, "Die Stellung des Menschen im Kosmos," p. 32: "The accent, however, in that which the Spirit appears endlessly in its sphere of being, is that which we call *Person*, in sharp difference to all the functions of the center of life, from that inner place that we also name soulful." "Das Aktzentrum aber, in dem Geist innerhalb endlicher Seinssphären erscheint, bezeichnen wir als «*Person*», in Scharfem Unterschied zu allen funktionellen Lebenszentren, die nach innen betrachtet auch «seelische» Zentren heißen."

<sup>68</sup> Scheler, "Die Stellung des Menschen im Kosmos," p. 32: "Selten ist mit einem Wort so viel Unfug getrieben worden—einem Worte, bei dem sich nur wenige etwas Bestimmtes denken."

<sup>69</sup> Scheler, "Die Stellung des Menschen im Kosmos," p. 32: "A 'spiritual' being is therefore no longer impulse- and environment-bound, but 'environment-free' and, as we call it, 'world-open.'" "Ein «geistiges» Wesen ist also nicht mehr trieb- und umweltgebunden, sondern «umweltfrei» und, wie wir es nennen wollen, «*weltoffen*»: Ein solches Wesen hat «*Welt*»."

<sup>70</sup> "Das Verhalten wird vom *puren Sosein* eines zum *Gegenstand* erhobenen Anschauungs- oder Vorstellungskomplexes «motiviert», und dies prinzipiell unabhängig von der physiologischen und psychischen Zuständlichkeit des menschlichen Organismus, unabhängig von seinen Triebimpulsen." Scheler, "Die Stellung des Menschen im Kosmos," p. 33.

<sup>71</sup> Scheler, "Die Stellung des Menschen im Kosmos," p. 33: "The third act is also a self-valued and final experienced change of the contrasting aspect of a thing." "Der dritte Akt ist eine als selbstwertig und endgültig erlebte Veränderung der Gegenständlichkeit einer Sache."

<sup>72</sup> Scheler, "Die Stellung des Menschen im Kosmos," p. 34.

<sup>73</sup> "Kraft seines Geistes vermag ... *seine eigene physiologische und psychische Beschaffenheit* und jedes einzelne psychische Erlebnis, jede einzelne seiner vitalen Funktionen selbst wieder *gegenständlich* zu machen." Scheler, "Die Stellung des Menschen im Kosmos," p. 34.

<sup>74</sup> Scheler, "Die Stellung des Menschen im Kosmos," p. 36: "The 'person' in humans must in this way also become the center of the thought that exists above the contrast between organism and environment." "Die «*Person*» im Menschen muß dabei also das Zentrum gedacht werden, das über dem Gegensatz von Organismus und Umwelt erhaben ist."

<sup>75</sup> Scheler, "Die Stellung des Menschen im Kosmos," p. 36.

<sup>76</sup> Luther, p. 4.

<sup>77</sup> Karol Woytyła, "The Problem of the Will in the Analysis of the Ethical Act," 1955-57, translator Theresa Sandok, [http://personalism.net/jp2/problem\\_of\\_will.htm](http://personalism.net/jp2/problem_of_will.htm): "I must firmly insist that the source of ethical values is the efficacy of the person. The person experiences himself or herself as the efficient cause of his or her actions, and ethical value is connected with this experience."

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<sup>78</sup> Karol Woytyla, Love and Responsibility, translator H.T. Willetts, San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1993, p. 15.

<sup>79</sup> Woytyla, Love and Responsibility, p. 21: "As an object a man is 'somebody'--and this sets him apart from every other entity in the visible world, which as an object is always only 'something'."

<sup>80</sup> Woytyla, Love and Responsibility, p. 16: "Such a good is the person, and the moral truth most closely bound up with the world of persons is the 'commandment to love'--for love is a good peculiar to the world of persons."

<sup>81</sup> Woytyla, Love and Responsibility, p. 16.

<sup>82</sup> Woytyla, Love and Responsibility, p. 16.

<sup>83</sup> Woytyla, "The Problem of the Will in the Analysis of the Ethical Act": "Motivation is what inwardly links the whole act of will, and so if we do not connect it organically with the act of will a proper and adequate interpretation of ethical experience becomes impossible. ... This simple experience, however, develops into a specific process thanks to the appearance of motives. The appearance of motives should lead to a decision. Frequently, however, in the course of the process of the will, a weighing or even a conflict of motives must take place."

<sup>84</sup> Woytyla, "The Problem of the Will in the Analysis of the Ethical Act."

<sup>85</sup> Woytyla, "The Problem of the Will in the Analysis of the Ethical Act": "Ethical value originates in the lived experience of efficacy, that is, in the act of will apprehended phenomenologically--and this is what gives us the experiential basis for connecting ethical value with the person as its proper subject."

<sup>86</sup> Woytyla, "The Problem of the Will in the Analysis of the Ethical Act": "Ach himself concentrated mainly on the simple act of will--the actual moment. Worthy of note here is the distinct connection of this moment, which is a simple and irreducible element of psychic life, both with the subjective self in the lived experience 'I do in fact will' and with the object or end at which this self aims in a corresponding action. The lived experience of willing includes an anticipation of the action that leads to the realization of the content of that simple act of will. Both in simple willing and in the will's subsequent activity aimed at realizing the content of that willing, the self exerts a determinate influence."

<sup>87</sup> Woytyla, "The Problem of the Will in the Analysis of the Ethical Act": "Consequently, both Kantian and Schelerian apriorism in ethics lead to an essential analysis of static forms, which for Kant are imperatives or maxims and for Scheler values, but neither of these apriorisms allows us to objectify the dynamic factor of action, which is fundamental for ethics. Action, after all, is the locus of authentic ethical experience. And so apriorism becomes the enemy of experience. Ethics must be free of apriorism if it is to remain properly related to experience."

<sup>88</sup> Woytyla, Love and Responsibility, p. 23: "*A person is an objective entity, which as a definite subject has the closest contacts with the whole (external) world and is most intimately involved with it precisely because of its inwardness, its interior life ... it communicates thus not only with the visible, but also with the invisible world, and most importantly, with God. This is a further indication of the person's uniqueness in the visible world.*"

<sup>89</sup> Woytyla, Love and Responsibility, p. 23: "The person's contact with the objective world, with reality, is not merely 'natural', physical, as is the case with all other creatures of nature, nor is it merely sensual as in the case of animals. A human person, as a distinctly defined subject, establishes contact with all other entities precisely through the inner self ... [A] human person's contact with the world begins on the 'natural' and sensual plane, but it is given the form proper to man only in the sphere of his interior life."

<sup>90</sup> Woytyla, "The Problem of the Will in the Analysis of the Ethical Act": "What is at stake here is an accurate apprehension of the whole practical order. In the practical order, an act of will (which is often most clearly revealed in self-control) is always an essential factor, and the practical function of reason arises under the influence of impulses of the will."

<sup>91</sup> Woytyla, "The Problem of the Will in the Analysis of the Ethical Act."

<sup>92</sup> Avery Dulles, S.J., The Craft of Theology: From Symbol to System, New York: Crossroad, 1992, p. 15.

<sup>93</sup> Michael Novak, The Catholic Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, New York: Maxwell Macmillan International, 1993, p. 203.



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<sup>94</sup> “[U]n courant profond, ancien déjà, ou plutôt une sorte d’immense *dérivé*: par l’action d’une partie considérable de son élite pensante, l’humanité occidentale renie ses origines chrétiennes et se détourne de Dieu. Ne parlons pas d’un athéisme vulgaire, qui est plus ou moins de tous les temps et n’offre rien de significatif.” De Lubac, Le Drame de L’Humanisme athée, p. 7.

<sup>95</sup> “Es ist der Krieg, aber der Krieg ohne Pulver und Dampf, ohne kriegerische Attitüden, ohne Pathos und verrenkte Gliedmaßen—dies Alles selbst wäre noch „Idealismus“.” Friedrich Nietzsche, Ecce homo, in Der Fall Wagner u.a., München: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag GmbH & Co. KG, 2004, p. 323.

<sup>96</sup> Buttiglione, pp. 6-7.

George Weigel in The Cube and the Cathedral: Europe, America, and Politics without God, New York: Perseus Books, 2005, pp. 29-30 repeats this claim, which he calls the “Slavic view of history”: “Vladimir Soloviev, with his religious and moral challenge to the fashionable nihilism and materialism of the late nineteenth-century. You can find it in the Polish novelist Henryk Sienkiewicz, and in the poets and playwrights of Polish Romanticism...who broke with decisively with the Jacobin conviction, born in France in 1789, that revolution meant a complete rupture with the past; by contrast, the Poles insisted that genuine revolution meant the recovery of lost spiritual and moral values....The common thread running through these disparate thinkers is the conviction that the deepest currents of history are spiritual and cultural, rather than political and economic.... history is driven, over the long haul, by culture—by what men and women honor, cherish, and worship; by what societies deem to be true and good and noble.”

<sup>97</sup> “[D]e même qu’ils ont un fondement commun dans leur rejet de Dieu, ils trouvent aussi des aboutissements analogues, dont le principal est l’écrasement de la personne humaine.” de Lubac, Le Drame de L’Humanisme athée, p. 8.

<sup>98</sup> “La conviction de Feuerbach et de Marx, aussi bien que celle de Comte et de Nietzsche, était que la foi en Dieu disparaissait pour toujours... Leur athéisme se croyait et se voulait définitif, ayant, pensait-il, cet avantage sur les athéismes anciens, d’écarter jusqu’au problème qui avait fait naître Dieu dans la conscience.” de Lubac, Le Drame de L’Humanisme athée, p. 10.

<sup>99</sup> Buttiglione, p. 15.

<sup>100</sup> “Ich nenne ein Thier, eine Gattung, ein Individuum verdorben, wenn es seine Instinkte verlierte, wenn es wählt, wenn es vorzieht, was ihm nachtheiligt ist. Eine Geschichte der „höheren Gefühle“, der „Ideale der Menschheit“... wäre beinahe auch die Erklärung dafür, weshalb der Mensch so verdorben ist.” Friedrich Nietzsche, Der Antichrist, in Der Fall Wagner u.a., p. 172.

<sup>101</sup> “Man nennt das Christenthum die Religion des Mitleidens.—Das Mitleiden steht im Gegensatz zu den tonischen Affekten, welche die Energie des Lebensgefühls erhöhen: es wirkt depressiv. Man verliert Kraft, wenn man mitleidet.” Nietzsche, Der Antichrist, p. 172

<sup>102</sup> “[D]urch das Mit<leid> wird das Leben verneint, verneinungswü<rdiger>.” Nietzsche, Der Antichrist, p. 173.

<sup>103</sup> “Der reine Geist ist die reine Lüge ... So lange der Priester noch als eine höhere Art Mensch gilt, dieser Verneiner, Verleumder, Vergifter des Lebens von Beruf, giebt es keine Antwort auf die Frage: was ist Wahrheit?” Nietzsche, Der Antichrist, p. 175.

<sup>104</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, Jenseits von Gut und Böse, Reclam, 1988, p. 4.

<sup>105</sup> “L’homme élimine Dieu pour rentrer lui-même en possession de la grandeur humaine qui lui semble indûment détenue par un autre. En Dieu, il renverse un obstacle pour conquérir sa liberté...L’humanisme moderne ...[est] un *antithéisme*.” de Lubac, Le Drame de L’Humanisme athée, p. 21.

<sup>106</sup> “bedeutet den Wegfall des «Jenseits» und aller «interwelten» überhaupt, das Ende der Vorstellung einer jenseitigen «wahren Welt» welche die wirkliche zur bloß diesseitigen, scheinbaren abgewertet hatte.” Hasso Hoffman, "Nietzsche," pp. 320-343, Klassiker Des Politischen Denkens II: Von Locke bis Weber, zweiter band, 1968, Hans Maier, Heniz Rausch, Horst Denzer, editors, Verlag C.H. Beck, München, p. 328.

<sup>107</sup> “Für die Wenigen wenigstens, deren Augen, deren Argwohn in den Augen stark und fein genug für dies Schauspiel ist, scheint eben irgend eine Sonne untergegangen, irgend ein altes tiefes Vertrauen in Zweifel ungedreht: ihren muss unsre alte Welt täglich abendlicher, misstrauischer, fremder, »alter« scheinen.” Friedrich Nietzsche, Die fröhliche Wissenschaft, Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam, 2000, p. 233.

<sup>108</sup> “[U]nd was Alles, nachdem dieser Glaube untergraben ist, nunmehr einfallen muss, weil es auf ihm gebaut, an ihn gelehnt, in ihm hineingewachsen was: zum Beispiel unsre ganze europäische Moral.” Nietzsche, Die Fröhliche Wissenschaft, p. 233.

<sup>109</sup> Hasso Hoffman, “Nietzsche,” pp. 320-343, Klassiker des Politischen Denkens II: von Locke bis Weber, Hans Meier, Heinz Rausch, Horst Denzer, editors, Zweiter Band, München: C.H. Beck Verlag, 1968, p. 95.

<sup>110</sup> “Wäre er [Jesus] doch in der Wüste geblieben und ferne von den Guten und Gerechten! Vielleicht hätte er leben gelernt und die Erde lieben gelernt--und das Lachen dazu!” Friedrich Nietzsche, Also Sprach Zarathustra, München: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag GmbH & Co. KG, 1966, p. 95.

<sup>111</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, Will to Power, Walter Kaufmann and R.J. Hollingdale, translators, New York: Vintage Books, 1967, p. 495.

<sup>112</sup> “Nietzsche suppose acquis que Dieu ne peut «vivre» ailleurs que dans la conscience des humains. Mais il y est un hôte indésirable: il est «une pensée qui courbe tout ce qui est droit». Pour s'en débarrasser, il s'agira moins de réfuter les preuves de son existence, que de montrer comment une telle idée a pu se former, comment elle a réussi à s'installer dans la conscience et à y «prendre du poids.»” de Lubac, Le Drame de L'Humanisme athée, p. 43.

<sup>113</sup> “[D]er Priester will gerade die Entartung des Ganzen, der Menschheit: darum conservirt er das Entartende—um diesen Preis beherrscht er sie... Welchen Sinn haben jene Lügenbegriffe, die Hilfsbegriffe der Moral, „Seele“, „Geist“, „freier Wille“, „Gott“, wenn nicht den, die Menschheit physiologisch zu ruinieren?” Nietzsche, Ecce homo, p. 331.

<sup>114</sup> “Der christliche Glaube ist von Anbeginn Opferung: Opferung aller Freiheit, alles Stolzes, aller Selbst-gewissheit des Geistes; zugleich Verknechtung und Selbst-Verhöhnung, Selbst-Verstummebung,” Nietzsche, Jenseits von Gut und Böse, p. 54.

<sup>115</sup> “Wahrlich nicht an Hinterwelten und erlösende Blutstropfen: sondern an den Leib glauben auch sie am besten, und ihr eigener Leib ist ihnen ihr Ding an sich.” Nietzsche, Also Sprach Zarathustra, p. 44. Nietzsche uses the word *Welt-Verneinen*, Jenseits von Gut und Böse, 90.

<sup>116</sup> “Es gibt keiner Teufel und keine Holle. Deine Seele wird noch schneller tot sein als dein Leib: fürchte nun nichts mehr.” Nietzsche, Also Sprach Zarathustra, p. 29.

“Nicht ihre Menschenliebe, sondern die Ohnmacht ihrer Menschliebe hindert die Christen von heute, uns zu verbrennen,” Nietzsche, Jenseits von Gut und Böse, p. 77.

<sup>117</sup> “Was ist das Herkommen? Eine höhere Autorität, welcher man gehorcht, nicht weil sie das uns Nützliche befiehlt, sondern weil sie befiehlt.” Friedrich Nietzsche, Morgenröthe, Berlin: Deutscher Taschenbuch, 1988, p. 22.

<sup>118</sup> “Man darf ... bei Luther erinnern, bei jenem andern grossen Pessimisten, ... wenn man durch Vernunft es fassen könnte, wie der Gott gnädig und gerecht sein könne, der so viel Zorn und Bosheit zeigt, wozu brauchte man den Glauben? Nichts nämlich hat von jeher einen tieferen Eindruck auf die deutsche Seele gemacht. Nichts hat sie mehr ‘versucht’, als diese gefährlichste aller Schlussfolgerungen, welche jedem rechten Roman eine Sünde wider den Geist ist: credo quia absurdum est,” Nietzsche, Morgenröthe, 15.

<sup>119</sup> “Quant à Nietzsche, n'a-t-il pas lui aussi, par sa manière de «philosopher à coups de marteau», brisé toute spéculation pour assurer le triomphe de la vie? N'a-t'il pas lui aussi méprisé toute «philosophie de professeurs?»” De Lubac, Le Drame de L'Humanisme athée, p. 59.

<sup>120</sup> “«Refus agressif d'une loi de l'être, d'un ordre extra-humain, d'un univers cohérent», d'une «harmonie ontologique antérieure au *je veux*».” De Lubac, Le Drame de L'Humanisme athée, p. 60.

<sup>121</sup> Nietzsche, The Will to Power, p. 54.

<sup>122</sup> Nietzsche, The will to Power, p. 57.

<sup>123</sup> Nietzsche, Jenseits von Gut und Böse, pp. 31, 55-56, 17. As an instance of Nietzsche's strong, attacking language: “Man war entzuckt, unter edlen Müssigängern, Tugendhaften, Mystikern, Künstlern, Dreiviertels-Christen und politischen Dunkelmännern aller Nationen,” Nietzsche, Jenseits von Gut und Böse, pp. 17-18.

<sup>124</sup> “Kranksein ist eine Art Ressentiment selbst.—Hiergegen hat der Kranke nur Ein grosses Heilmittel—ich nenne es des russischen Fatalismus, jenen Fatalismus ohne Revolte”; and, again in the

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same book: “Das Ressentiment, aus der Schwäche geboren, Niemanden schädlicher als dem Schwachen selbst.” Nietzsche, Ecce homo, p. 272 for the first citation and p. 273 for the second.

<sup>125</sup> “...ist vielleicht die grösste Verwegenheit und »Sünde wider den Geist«, welche das litterarische Europa auf dem Gewissen hat.” Nietzsche, Jenseits von Gut und Böse, p. 60.

<sup>126</sup> “Theologisch geredet—man höre zu, denn ich rede selten als Theologe—was es Gott selber, der sich als Schlange am Ende seines Tagewerks unter den Baum der Erkenntnis legte: er erholte sich davon, Gott zu sein ... Er hatte Alles zu schön gemacht ... Der Teufel ist bloss der Müssiggang Gottes an jedem siebenten Tage.” Nietzsche, Ecce homo, p. 351.

<sup>127</sup> “Die Keuschheit der Nonne: mit welchen strafenden Augen sieht sie in das Gesicht anderslebender Frauen!”; and again: “Man war entzückt, unter edlen Müssigangern, Jugendhaften, Mystikern, Künstlern, Dreiviertels-Christen und politischen Dunkelmännern aller Nationen.” The first citation is from Jenseits von Gut und Böse, pp. 17-18 and the second from Nietzsche, Morgenröte, p. 40.

<sup>128</sup> “Am Ende wurden alle deine Leidenschaften zu Tugenden und alle deine Teufel zu Engeln.” Nietzsche, Also Sprach Zarathustra, p. 48.

<sup>129</sup> “Ich bin bei weitem der furchtbarste Mensch den es bisher gegeben hat; dies schliesst nicht aus, dass ich der wohlthätigste sein werde. Ich kenne die Lust am Vernichten in einem Grade, die meiner Kraft zum Vernichten gemäss ist,—in Beidem gehorche ich meiner dionysischen Natur, welche das Neinthun nicht von Jasagen zu trennen weiss. Ich bin der erste Immoralist: damit bin ich der Vernichter par excellence.” Nietzsche, Ecce homo, p. 366.

<sup>130</sup> “Dieser Gott, den ich schuf, war Menschen-Werk und –Wahnsinn, gleich allen Göttern,” Nietzsche, Also Sprach Zarathustra, p. 41.

<sup>131</sup> “Es ist die Furcht vor einem höherem Intellekt, der da befiehlt, vor einer unbegreiflichen unbestimmten Macht, vor etwas mehr als Persönlichem—es ist Aberglaube in dieser Furcht.” Nietzsche, Morgenröte, p. 22.

<sup>132</sup> “Die Wahrheit der ersten Abhandlung ist die Psychologie des Christenthums: die Geburt des Christenthums aus dem Geiste des Ressentiment, nicht, wie wohl geglaubt wird, aus dem „Geiste“,—eine Gegenbewegung ihrem Wesen nach, der grosse Aufstand gegen die Herrschaft vornehmer Werthe.” Nietzsche, Ecce homo, p. 352.

<sup>133</sup> “Invention, création: tels sont donc les deux mots qui définissent désormais la tâche du véritable philosophe...le philosophe est «un explosif effroyable, qui met tout en danger»; il est «l'homme violent, créateur césarien de la culture»...«sa volonté de vérité est volonté de puissance».” De Lubac, Le Drame de L'Humanisme athée, pp. 60-1.

<sup>134</sup> Weder der Moral noch die Religion berührt sich im Christenthum mit irgend einem Punkte der Wirklichkeit. Lauter imaginäre Ursachen („Gott“, „Ich“, „Geist“, „der freie Wille“—oder auch „der Unfreie“); lauter imaginäre Wirkungen („Sünde“, „Erlösung“, „Gnade“, „Strafe“, „Vergebung der Sünde“). Ein Verkehr zwischen imaginären Wesen („Gott“, „Geister“, „Seelen“); eine imaginäre Naturwissenschaft (anthropocentrisch; völliger Mangel des Begriffs der natürlichen Ursachen); eine imaginäre Psychologie ...; eine imaginäre Teleologie („das Reich Gottes“, „das jüngste Gericht“, „das ewige Leben“). Nietzsche, Der Antichrist, p. 181.

<sup>135</sup> “...aller philosophische Idealismus was bisher Etwas wie Krankheit”; and again in Ecce homo: “Sokrates als Werkzeug der griechischen Auflösung, als typischer *décadent* zum ersten Male erkannt. „Vernünftigkeit“ gegen Instinkt. Die „Vernünftigkeit“ um jeden Preis als gefährlich, als leben- untergrabende Gewalt!” Nietzsche, Die fröhliche Wissenschaft, p. 284, and Nietzsche, Ecce homo, p. 310.

<sup>136</sup> “Wir haben eben gar kein Organ für das Erkennen, für die »Wahrheit«: wir »wissen« (oder glauben oder bilden uns ein) gerade so viel als es im Interesse der Menschen-Heerde, der Gattung, nützlich sein mag: und selbst, was hier »Nützlichkeit« genannt wird, ist zuletzt auch nur ein Glaube, eine Einbildung und vielleicht gerade jene verhängnissvollste Dummheit, an dir wir einst zu Grunde gehn.” Nietzsche, Die fröhliche Wissenschaft, p. 253.

<sup>137</sup> “Philosophie ist für Nietzsche nicht Wahrheitssuche; es gibt kein Wahrheiten, nur Deutungen, und jedes System ist nichts also der Versuch seines Urhebers, die Wirklichkeit zu seinen Gunsten zu deuten, die Welt auf seine Seite zu bringen. Die eigentliche Frage ist, ob man auf seine Seite treten soll.” Illustrierte Geschichte der Westlichen Philosophie, Frankfurt and New York: Campus Verlag, 1995, p. 233.

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<sup>138</sup> Nietzsche, Will to Power, p. 326: "We have *created* the world that possesses values!"; p. 327: "What is relatively most enduring is--our opinions"; and p. 327: "Man finds in things nothing but what he himself has imported into them"; p. 326: "Our unlimited capacity for interpretation empowers us, and therefore "every interpretation [is] a symptom of growth or of decline" and p. 330: a "plurality of interpretations [is] a sign of strength"; "every elevation of man brings with it the overcoming of narrower interpretations; ... every strengthening and increase of power opens up new perspectives and means believing in new horizons."

<sup>139</sup> Nietzsche, Will to Power, p. 330.

<sup>140</sup> Both citations: Nietzsche, Will to Power, p. 355.

<sup>141</sup> "Der moralische Mensch steht der intelligiblen Welt nicht näher also der physische—denn es giebt keine intelligible Welt." Nietzsche, Ecce homo, p. 328.

<sup>142</sup> "Ich bin zum Beispiel durchaus kein Popanze, kein Moral-Ungeheuer—ich bin sogar eine Gegensatz-Natur zu der Art Mensch, die man bisher als tugendhaft verehrt hat." Nietzsche, Ecce homo, p. 257.

<sup>143</sup> "Von mir werden keine neuen Götzen aufgerichtet." Nietzsche, Ecce homo, p. 258.

<sup>144</sup> Nietzsche, Jenseits von Gut und Böse, p. 42.

<sup>145</sup> "Ein Wort noch gegen Kant als Moralist ... eine Tugend bloss aus einem Respekts-Gefühle vor dem Begriff „Tugend“, wie Kant es wollte, ist schädlich. Die „Tugend“, die „Pflicht“, das „Gute an sich“, das Gute mit dem Charakter der Unpersönlichkeit und Allgemeingültigkeit—Hirngespinnste, in denen sich der Niedergang, die letzte Entkräftung des Lebens, das Königsberger Chinesenthum ausdrückt." Nietzsche, Der Antichrist, p. 177.

<sup>146</sup> "Ein Mann, wie er [Sokrates], der heiter und vor Aller Augen wie ein Soldat gelebt hat,--war Pessimist!... Ach Freunde! Wir müssen auch die Griechen überwinden!" Nietzsche, Der fröhliche Wissenschaft, p. 230.

<sup>147</sup> "[L]a lutte de Dionysos et de Socrate n'est pas terminée. La pensée tragique, qui paraissait morte, va soudre à nouveau." De Lubac, Le Drame de L'Humanisme athée. De Lubac's general discussion of this is pp. 73-9, and the citation is from p. 80.

<sup>148</sup> Nietzsche, Will to Power, p. 266.

<sup>149</sup> Nietzsche, Will to Power, pp. 266-7.

<sup>150</sup> For instance: "Es ist viel zu viel Zauber und Zucker in jenem Gefühlen des »für Andere«, des »nicht für mich« also dass man nicht nöthig hätte," Nietzsche, Jenseits von Gut und Böse, p. 41. For a discussion on his distrust for systematic thinking, see Hoffman, p. 325, and Nietzsche, Also Sprach Zarathustra, p. 53.

<sup>151</sup> "La tentation nouvelle est plus subtile, et sans doute aussi plus pernicieuse. Car ce qu'elle promet n'est pas seulement l'ordre, mais l'ivresse, et dans ce qu'elle insinue il n'est même plus question de mensonge: l'idée même de vérité disparaît, remplacée qu'elle est par cette idée de mythe." De Lubac, Le Drame de L'Humanisme athée, p. 88.

<sup>152</sup> "Je mehr er hinauf in die Höhe und Helle will, um so stärken streben seine Wurzeln erdwärts, abwärts, ins Dunkle, Tiefe—ins Böse." Nietzsche, Also Sprach Zarathustra, p. 54.

<sup>153</sup> "Auf die Schiffe!—Erwägt man, wie auf jeden Einzelnen eine philosophische Gesamt-Rechtfertigung seiner Art, zu leben und zu denken, wirkt"; and again: "[O]h, dass doch viele solche neue Sonnen noch geschaffen würden! Auch der Böse, auch der Unglückliche, auch der Ausnahme-Mensch soll seine Philosophie, sein gutes Recht, seinen Sonnenschein haben!" Nietzsche, Die fröhliche Wissenschaft, pp. 189-90.

<sup>154</sup> "Meine Humanität ist eine beständige Selbstüberwindung." Nietzsche, Ecce homo, p. 276.

<sup>155</sup> «Dieu fit l'homme à son image et à sa ressemblance.» "La tradition chrétienne n'a cessé, depuis l'origine, de commenter ce verset. Elle y a reconnu notre premier titre de noblesse, le fondement de notre grandeur." De Lubac, Le Drame de L'Humanisme athée, p. 15.

<sup>156</sup> Pope Leo XIII, Rerum novarum, 1891, [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/leo\\_xiii/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_l-xiii\\_enc\\_15051891\\_rerum-novarum\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/leo_xiii/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_15051891_rerum-novarum_en.html), paragraph 7: "For man, fathoming by his faculty of reason matters without number, linking the future with the present, and being master of his own acts, guides his ways under the eternal law and the power of God, whose providence governs all things. Wherefore, it is in his power to exercise

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his choice not only as to matters that regard his present welfare, but also about those which he deems may be for his advantage in time yet to come. Hence, man not only should possess the fruits of the earth, but also the very soil, inasmuch as from the produce of the earth he has to lay by provision for the future. Man's needs do not die out, but forever recur; although satisfied today, they demand fresh supplies for tomorrow. Nature accordingly must have given to man a source that is stable and remaining always with him, from which he might look to draw continual supplies. And this stable condition of things he finds solely in the earth and its fruits. There is no need to bring in the State. Man precedes the State, and possesses, prior to the formation of any State, the right of providing for the substance of his body.”

<sup>157</sup> Pope Paul VI in Humanae vitae, 1968, [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/paul\\_vi/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_p-vi\\_enc\\_25071968\\_humanae-vitae\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/paul_vi/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-vi_enc_25071968_humanae-vitae_en.html), differentiates between the Gospel and natural law, as evidenced in the Church's teaching: “This kind of question requires from the teaching authority of the Church a new and deeper reflection on the principles of the moral teaching on marriage—a teaching which is based on the natural law as illuminated and enriched by divine Revelation.

No member of the faithful could possibly deny that the Church is competent in her magisterium to interpret the natural moral law. It is in fact indisputable, as Our predecessors have many times declared, that Jesus Christ, when He communicated His divine power to Peter and the other Apostles and sent them to teach all nations His commandments, constituted them as the authentic guardians and interpreters of the whole moral law, not only, that is, of the law of the Gospel but also of the natural law. For the natural law, too, declares the will of God, and its faithful observance is necessary for men's eternal salvation.

In carrying out this mandate, the Church has always issued appropriate documents on the nature of marriage, the correct use of conjugal rights, and the duties of spouses. These documents have been more copious in recent times.” (4)

Again from Humanae vitae: “The question of human procreation, like every other question which touches human life, involves more than the limited aspects specific to such disciplines as biology, psychology, demography or sociology. It is the whole man and the whole mission to which he is called that must be considered: both its natural, earthly aspects and its supernatural, eternal aspects.” (7) Pope Paul VI makes clear the centrality of natural law—of a eternal, unchanging view that exists irrespective of historical circumstances.

<sup>158</sup> H. Richard Niebuhr's Christ and Culture captures the problem that the pontiff, consciously or not, avoids when he constructs such a multi-faceted theology: “A synthesist who makes the evanescent in any sense fundamental to his theory of the Christian life will be required to turn to the defense of that temporal foundation for the sake of the superstructure it carries when changes in culture threaten it.” H. Richard Niebuhr, Christ and Culture, New York, HarperCollins, 2001, p. 146. The pontiff does, though, often adopt Polish culture as coming very close to the ideal Christian culture. Thus Niebuhr's following observation applies to John Paul: “Whether medieval or modern, feudal or democratic, agrarian or urban civilization has been united with the gospel, whether the synthesist is Roman or Anglican or Protestant, he tends to devote himself to the restoration or conservation of a culture and thus becomes a cultural Christian...On the other hand, it appears that the effort to synthesize leads to the institutionalization of Christ and the gospel.”

<sup>159</sup> “Il [Nietzsche] ne combat pas la croyance en Dieu...Mais ce qu'il combat, et ce que, dit-il, «il ne faudra jamais cesser de combattre dans le christianisme», c'est «son idéal de l'homme»” De Lubac, Le Drame de L'Humanisme athée, p. 119.

<sup>160</sup> “Ce qu'il combat, c'est «la confiance, la candeur, la simplicité, la patience, l'amour du prochain, la résignation, la soumission à Dieu».” De Lubac, Le Drame de L'Humanisme athée, p. 120.

<sup>161</sup> “[D]iese kleinen Dinge—Ernährung, Ort, Klima, Erholung, die ganze Casuistik der Selbstsucht—sind über alle Begriffe hinaus wichtiger als Alles, was man bisher wichtig nahm. Hier gerade muss man anfangen, umzulernen.” Nietzsche, Ecce homo, p. 295.

<sup>162</sup> Nietzsche, Mogenröthe, p. 22.

<sup>163</sup> Hoffman, p. 328.

<sup>164</sup> “...das Prinzip des ewig neu sich schaffenden Lebens,” Hoffman, p. 332.

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<sup>165</sup> “Das grosse Ergebniss der bisherigen Menschheit ist, dass wir nicht mehr beständige Furcht vor wilden Thieren, vor Barbaren, vor Göttern und vor unseren Träumen zu haben brauchen.” Nietzsche, Morgenröthe, p. 20.

He also writes: “Der freie Mensch ist unsittlich, weil er in Allem von sich und nicht von einem Herkommen abhängen will,” Nietzsche, Morgenröte, p. 20.

<sup>166</sup> “„Das Jasagen zum Leben selbst noch in seinen fremdesten und härtesten Problemen; der Wille zum Leben im Opfer seiner höchsten Typen der eignen Unerschöpflichkeit frohwerdend—das nannte ich dionysisch, das verstand ich als Brücke zur Psychologie des tragischen Dichters“,” and again “„[S]ondern, die ewige Lust des Werdens selbst zu sein, jene Lust, die auch noch die Lust am Vernichten in sich schliesst“.” Nietzsche, Ecce homo, p. 312.

<sup>167</sup> Nietzsche, The Will to Power, p. 481.

<sup>168</sup> Nietzsche, The Will to Power, p. 487.

<sup>169</sup> Nietzsche, The Will to Power, p. 481.

<sup>170</sup> John Paul II's 1991 encyclical Centesimus annus seems at time like a long meditation on human nature, as it analyses, for instance, the faults and offenses of Marxist-Leninism against the dignity of humans. For example, “Socialism considers the individual person simply as an element, a molecule within the social organism, so that the good of the individual is completely subordinated to the functioning of the socio-economic mechanism.” Centesimus annus, 13. Also see Fides et ratio, Chapters 4-5, as for instance the following: “It is not too much to claim that the development of a good part of modern philosophy has seen it move further and further away from Christian Revelation, to the point of setting itself quite explicitly in opposition. This process reached its apogee in the last century. Some representatives of idealism sought in various ways to transform faith and its contents, even the mystery of the Death and Resurrection of Jesus, into dialectical structures which could be grasped by reason. Opposed to this kind of thinking were various forms of atheistic humanism, expressed in philosophical terms, which regarded faith as alienating and damaging to the development of a full rationality. They did not hesitate to present themselves as new religions serving as a basis for projects which, on the political and social plane, gave rise to totalitarian systems which have been disastrous for humanity.

In the field of scientific research, a positivistic mentality took hold which not only abandoned the Christian vision of the world, but more especially rejected every appeal to a metaphysical or moral vision.” He also criticizes nihilism in this section of Fides et ratio: “As a philosophy of nothingness, it [nihilism] has a certain attraction for people of our time. Its adherents claim that the search is an end in itself, without any hope or possibility of ever attaining the goal of truth. In the nihilist interpretation, life is no more than an occasion for sensations and experiences in which the ephemeral has pride of place. Nihilism is at the root of the widespread mentality which claims that a definitive commitment should no longer be made, because everything is fleeting and provisional. ”

<sup>171</sup> John Paul II, Veritatis splendor (10): “*What man is and what he must do becomes clear as soon as God reveals himself.* The Decalogue is based on these words: 'I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage' (*Ex 20:2-3*). In the 'ten words' of the Covenant with Israel, and in the whole Law, God makes himself known and acknowledged as the One who 'alone is good'; the One who despite man's sin remains the 'model' for moral action, in accordance with his command, 'You shall be holy; for I the Lord your God am holy' (*Lev 19:2*); as the One who, faithful to his love for man, gives him his Law (cf. *Ex 19:9-24* and *20:18-21*) in order to restore man's original and peaceful harmony with the Creator and with all creation, and, what is more, to draw him into his divine love.”

<sup>172</sup> Fides et ratio 23 parallels this human reliance on God: “In the New Testament, especially in the Letters of Saint Paul, one thing emerges with great clarity: the opposition between 'the wisdom of this world' and the wisdom of God revealed in Jesus Christ. The depth of revealed wisdom disrupts the cycle of our habitual patterns of thought, which are in no way able to express that wisdom in its fullness.”

<sup>173</sup> Richard Rorty, Truth and Progress. Philosophical Papers, Volume 3, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998, p.3.

<sup>174</sup> Novak, The Catholic Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, p. 117.

<sup>175</sup> Novak, The Catholic Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, p. 117.

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<sup>176</sup> “Jesus shows that the commandments must not be understood as a minimum limit not to be gone beyond, but rather as a path involving a moral and spiritual journey towards perfection, at the heart of which is love (cf. *Col 3:14*).” (VS, 15).

“Jesus' conversation with the young man helps us to grasp *the conditions for the moral growth of man, who has been called to perfection*: the young man, having observed all the commandments, shows that he is incapable of taking the next step by himself alone.” (VS, 17)

“These and other questions, such as: what is freedom and what is its relationship to the truth contained in God's law? what is the role of conscience in man's moral development? how do we determine, in accordance with the truth about the good, the specific rights and duties of the human person? — can all be summed up in the fundamental question which the young man in the Gospel put to Jesus: “Teacher, what good must I do to have eternal life?” (VS, 30)

<sup>177</sup> John Paul II, *Rise, Let Us Be On Our Way*, Walter Ziemba, translator, New York: Warner Books, 2004, p. 213.

<sup>178</sup> “Das, was die Menschheit bisher ernsthaft erwogen hat, sind nicht einmal Realitäten, blosse Einbildungen, strenger geredet, Lügen aus den schlechten Instinkten kranker, im tiefsten Sinne schädlicher Naturen heraus—alle die Begriffe „Gott“, „Seele“, „Tugend“, „Sünde“, „Jenseits“, „Wahrheit“, „ewiges Leben“ ... Aber man hat die Grösse der menschlichen Natur, ihre „Gottlichkeit“ in ihnen gesucht ... Alle Fragen der Politik, der Gesellschafts-Ordnung, der Erziehung sind dadurch bis ins Grund und Boden gefälscht, dass man die schädlichsten Menschen für grosse Menschen nahm.” Nietzsche, *Ecce homo*, pp. 295-6.

<sup>179</sup> Walter Kaufman, *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist*, Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1950, p. 64.

<sup>180</sup> “Das Wort „Übermensch“ zur Bezeichnung eines Typus höchsten Wohlgerathenheit, im Gegensatz zu „modernen“ Menschen, zu „guten“ Menschen, zu Christen und andren Nihilisten—ein Wort, das im Munde eines Zarathustra, des Vernichters der Moral, ein sehr nachdenkliches Wort wird, ... will sagen als „idealistischer“ Typus einer höherem Art Mensch, halb „Heiliger“, halb „Genie“.” Nietzsche, *Ecce homo*, p. 297.

<sup>181</sup> Nietzsche, *Will to Power*, p. 68.

<sup>182</sup> “Von meinem höchsten Berge stehe ich und vor meiner längsten Wanderung: darum muss ich erst tiefer hinab als ich jemals stieg.” Nietzsche, *Also Sprach Zarathustra*, p. 195.

<sup>183</sup> “Aber es giebt Etwas in mir, das ich Muth heisse: das schlug bisher mir jeden Übermuth todt. Dieser Muth hiess mich endliche stille stehn und sprechen: ‘Zwerg! Du!. Oder ich!’” Nietzsche, *Also Sprach Zarathustra*, p. 198, and again And again, “Muth nämlich ist der beste Todtschläger,—Muth, welcher angreift: denn in jedem Angriffe ist klingendes Spiel,” Nietzsche, *Also Sprach Zarathustra*, p. 199.

<sup>184</sup> “Könntet ihr einen Gott schaffen?—So schweig mir doch von allen Göttern! Wohl aber könntet ihr dem Übermenschen schaffen,” Nietzsche, *Also Sprach Zarathustra*, p. 109; “Schaffen--das ist die grosse Erlösung vom Leiden, und das Lebens Leichtwerden,” Nietzsche, *Also Sprach Zarathustra*, pp. 109-110.

<sup>185</sup> “Ja, viel bitteres Sterben muss in eurem Leben sein, ihr Schaffenden! ... Dass der Schaffende selber das Kind sei, das neu geboren werde, dazu muss er auch die Gebärerin sein wollen und der Schmerz der Gebärerin.” Nietzsche, *Also Sprach Zarathustra*, p. 111.

<sup>186</sup> Nietzsche, *Also Sprach Zarathustra*, p. 114.

<sup>187</sup> John Paul II, *Fides et ratio*, 50: “In the light of faith, therefore, the Church's Magisterium can and must authoritatively exercise a critical discernment of opinions and philosophies which contradict Christian doctrine. It is the task of the Magisterium in the first place to indicate which philosophical presuppositions and conclusions are incompatible with revealed truth, thus articulating the demands which faith's point of view makes of philosophy. Moreover, as philosophical learning has developed, different schools of thought have emerged. This pluralism also imposes upon the Magisterium the responsibility of expressing a judgement as to whether or not the basic tenets of these different schools are compatible with the demands of the word of God and theological enquiry.”

<sup>188</sup> “The different commandments of the Decalogue are really only so many reflections of the one commandment about the good of the person, at the level of the many different goods which characterize

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his identity as a spiritual and bodily being in relationship with God, with his neighbour and with the material world,” Veritatis splendor, 13.

<sup>189</sup> Pope John Paul II, “San Giovanni M. Vianney sorprende soprattutto perché in lui si rivela la potenza della grazia che agisce nella povertà dei mezzi umani. Mi toccava nel profondo, in particolare, il suo *eroico servizio nel confessionale*. Quell'umile sacerdote che confessava più di dieci ore al giorno, nutrendosi poco e dedicando al riposo appena alcune ore, era riuscito, in un difficile periodo storico, a suscitare una sorta di rivoluzione spirituale in Francia ... Sullo sfondo della laicizzazione e dell'anticlericalismo del XIX secolo, la sua testimonianza costituisce un evento davvero rivoluzionario.” John Paul II, Dono e Mistero, V, [http://www.vatican.va/archive/books/gift\\_mystery/documents/archive\\_gift-mystery\\_book\\_1996\\_it.html](http://www.vatican.va/archive/books/gift_mystery/documents/archive_gift-mystery_book_1996_it.html), 1996.

<sup>190</sup> Pope John Paul II, “[S]e siamo immersi con il nostro umano, sacerdotale «oggi» nell'«oggi» di Gesù Cristo, non esiste il pericolo che si diventi di «ieri», arretrati.” John Paul II, Dono e Mistero, IX.

<sup>191</sup> Pope John Paul II, “Nel suo divino-umano, sacerdotale «oggi», si risolve alla radice tutta l'antinomia — una volta così discussa — tra il «tradizionalismo» e il «progressismo.”” John Paul II, Dono e Mistero, IX.

<sup>192</sup> Pope John Paul II, “E un misterioso, formidabile potere quello che il sacerdote ha nei confronti del Corpo eucaristico di Cristo.” John Paul II, Dono e Mistero, IX.

<sup>193</sup> Pope John Paul II, “In base ad esso egli diventa l'amministratore del bene più grande della Redenzione, perché dona agli uomini il Redentore in persona.” John Paul II, Dono e Mistero, IX.

<sup>194</sup> “Those who live 'by the flesh' experience God's law as a burden, and indeed as a denial or at least a restriction of their own freedom,” Veritatis splendor, 18.

<sup>195</sup> Christians “find in God's Law the fundamental and necessary way in which to practise love as something freely chosen and freely lived out,” Veritatis splendor, 18.

<sup>196</sup> “Each day the Church looks to Christ with unfailing love, fully aware that the true and final answer to the problem of morality lies in him alone ,” Veritatis splendor, 85.

<sup>197</sup> “The moral prescriptions which God imparted in the Old Covenant, and which attained their perfection in the New and Eternal Covenant in the very person of the Son of God made man, must be *faithfully kept and continually put into practice* in the various different cultures throughout the course of history,” Veritatis splendor, 25.

<sup>198</sup> “In defending her own freedom, the Church is also defending the human person, who must obey God rather than men (cf. Acts 5:29), as well as defending the family, the various social organizations and nations--all of which enjoy their own spheres of autonomy and sovereignty,” Centesimus annus 45.

<sup>199</sup> John Paul II, Rise, Let Us Be On Our Way, p. 204.

<sup>200</sup> John Paul II, Rise, Let Us Be On Our Way, p. 204.

<sup>201</sup> John Richard Neuhaus, Catholic Matters: Confusion, Controversy, and the Splendor of Truth, New York: Basic Books, 2007, p. 4.

<sup>202</sup> Dulles, The Craft of Theology: From Symbol to System, p. 3.

<sup>203</sup> Dulles, The Craft of Theology: From Symbol to System, p. 19.

<sup>204</sup> Daniélou, pp. 93-4.

<sup>205</sup> “Le Dieu dont Nietzsche annonce et veut la mort n'est pas seulement le Dieu de la métaphysique; c'est, très précisément, le Dieu chrétien...Mais jamais il ne prend la peine d'esquisser une réfutation quelconque. Pour lui, aussi bien que pour un Comte ou pour un Feuerbach, c'est chose faite. L'histoire chrétienne ne peut être qu'une légende, et sa dogmatique, une mythologie. Inutile donc de s'y attarder.” De Lubac, Le Drame de L'Humanisme athée, p. 118.

<sup>206</sup> Michel Foucault, The Archaeology of Knowledge, A.M. Sheridan, translator, Pantheon Books, New York, 1972, p. 5.

<sup>207</sup> John Richard Neuhaus, Doing Well and Doing Good: The Challenge to the Christian Capitalist, New York: Doubleday, 1992, p. 179.

<sup>208</sup> Foucault, The Archaeology of Knowledge, p. 5.

<sup>209</sup> “[O]n ne peut donc pas dire, au point de vue de la théologie de l'histoire, que chaque temps et chaque vie considérés en soi contiennent en eux un sens (suprême). Des temps et des destins antérieurs reçoivent leur sens de temps et de destins ultérieurs, les temps antérieurs sont si peu enfermés dans le



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moment de la durée qu'ils ont occupé et si peu irrévocablement passés, qu'ils restent au contraire directement accessibles en tout temps. Et cet accès est de telle nature qu'il détermine leur essence—passée seulement en apparence—et qu'il les transforme continuellement avec le progrès du temps.” Hs Urs Von Balthasar, La théologie de l'histoire, traduit par R. Givord, Paris: Plon, 1955, p. 76.

210 Foucault, The Archaeology of Knowledge, p. 8.

211 Foucault, The Archaeology of Knowledge, p. 9.

212 Foucault, The Archaeology of Knowledge, p. 14.

213 Foucault, The Archaeology of Knowledge, p. 14.

214 Daniélou, p. 8.

215 Foucault, The Archaeology of Knowledge, p. 10.

216 Foucault, The Archaeology of Knowledge, p. 6.

217 Foucault, The Archaeology of Knowledge, p. 7.

218 Foucault, The Archaeology of Knowledge, p. 8.

219 Foucault, The Archaeology of Knowledge, p. 10.

220 Johann Baptist Metz, “God Against the Myth of the Eternity of Time,” pp. 26-46, in The End of Time?: The Provocation of Talking about God, Johann Baptist Metz, Jurgen Moltmann, and Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, Paulist Press, 2005, pp. 29-30.

221 Foucault, The Archaeology of Knowledge, p. 12.

222 Foucault, The Archaeology of Knowledge, p. 12.

223 Foucault, The Archaeology of Knowledge, p. 13.

224 Foucault, The Archaeology of Knowledge, p. 14.

225 “[U]n jour, l'homme n'en fut plus touché [by Christianity]. Il se mit à croire au contraire qu'il ne s'estimerait désormais lui-même et qu'il ne pourrait s'épanouir en liberté que s'il rompit, d'abord avec l'Église, puis avec l'Être transcendant lui-même dont la tradition chrétienne le faisait dépendre.” De Lubac, Le Drame de L'Humanisme athée, p. 21.

226 Foucault, The Archaeology of Knowledge, p. 15.

227 Metz, p. 37.

228 Daniélou, p. 203.

229 “S'il est vrai que la réalité de l'histoire sainte cache partout des mystères, cela ne signifie pas seulement qu'il y a sous chaque fait biblique un sens à découvrir, comme une vertu secrète réside en chaque plante. L'«océan de mystères» qu'Origène nous apprend à voir dans l'Écriture est plus profond. Il enferme des merveilles plus variées. Constatons d'abord qu'un même épisode, une même phrase, un même mot peuvent souvent avoir plusieurs significations.” Henri de Lubac, Histoire et esprit: L'intelligence de l'Écriture d'après Origène, Paris: Aubier, 1950, p. 139.

230 Foucault, The Archaeology of Knowledge, p. 166.

231 Foucault, The Archaeology of Knowledge, p. 79.

232 Richard Rorty, Essays on Heidegger and Others, Volume 2, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991, p. 195.

233 Foucault, The Archaeology of Knowledge, p. 82.

234 “Dans la perception culturelle qu'on a eu du fou jusqu'à la fin du XVIIIe siècle, il n'est le Différent que dans la mesure où il ne connaît pas la Différence; il ne voit partout que ressemblances et signs de la ressemblance; tous les signes pour lui se ressemblent, et toutes les ressemblances valent comme des signes.” Michel Foucault, Les Mots et les Choses, Saint-Amand: Gallimard, 2002, p. 63.

235 Foucault, The Archaeology of Knowledge, p. 82.

236 Foucault, The Archaeology of Knowledge, p. 99.

237 Foucault, The Archaeology of Knowledge, p. 99.

238 Foucault, The Archaeology of Knowledge, p. 99.

239 Foucault, The Archaeology of Knowledge, p. 168.

240 Foucault, The Archaeology of Knowledge, p. 101.

241 Foucault, The Archaeology of Knowledge, p. 168.

242 Foucault, The Archaeology of Knowledge, p. 169.

- 243 Metz, p. 45.
- 244 Joseph Ratzinger, "God, Sin, and Suffering: Conversation," pp. 47-53, in Peters and Urban, p. 49.
- 245 Foucault, The Archaeology of Knowledge, pp. 15-16.
- 246 "Et cette appartenance de la langue au savoir libère tout un champ historique qui n'avait pas existé aux époques précédentes. Quelque chose comme une histoire de la connaissance devient possible." Michel Foucault, Les Mots et les Choses, Saint-Amand: Gallimard, 2002, p. 101.
- 247 "En eux [les images] ce qu'on imagine devient ce qu'on sait, et en revanche, ce qu'on sait devient ce qu'on représente tous les jours." Foucault, Les Mots et les Choses, p. 102.
- 248 "Le vieux rapport au *texte* par quoi la Renaissance définissait l'érudition s'est maintenant transformée, il est devenu à l'âge classique le rapport au pur élément de la *langue*." Foucault, Les Mots et les Choses, p. 102.
- 249 "Le savoir de la Renaissance se disposait selon un espace clos." Foucault, Les Mots et les Choses, p. 103.
- 250 "En sa racine, le progrès, tel qu'il est défini au XVIIIe siècle, n'est pas un mouvement intérieur à l'histoire, il est le résultat d'un rapport fondamental de l'espace et du langage." Foucault, Les Mots et les Choses, p. 129.
- 251 "La Tradition chrétienne (ou le christianisme comme Tradition) a son origine dans cette livraison de «tout» que le Père a faite à Jésus-Christ; elle est elle-même, en son fond le plus intime, la livraison de *Jésus-Christ*." Yves M.-J. Congar, La Tradition et les traditions, Paris : Arthème Fayard, 1963, p. 113.
- 252 "Jésus-Christ lui-même n'a rien laissé par écrit, il nous a laissé le christianisme: pas des énoncés doctrinaux seulement, mais la réalité du salut et de la communion, la réalité de la Nouvelle Alliance." Congar, p. 113.
- 253 Foucault, The Archaeology of Knowledge, p. 171.
- 254 Foucault, The Archaeology of Knowledge, p. 171.
- 255 Foucault, The Archaeology of Knowledge, p. 172.
- 256 Foucault, The Archaeology of Knowledge, p. 173.
- 257 Dulles, The Craft of Theology: From Symbol to System, pp. 3-4.
- 258 Gregory Baum, Essays in Critical Theology, Kansas City: Sheed & Ward, 1994, p. 85.
- 259 Neuhaus, Catholic Matters: Confusion, Controversy, and the Splendor of Truth, p. 103.
- 260 "Gewiss gibt es auch in der Urkirche Autorität und Macht, aber im Geist jenes Jesus-Wortes darf sie nicht zur Herrschaft ... eingesetzt worden, sondern nur zum Dienst und zum Wohl des Ganzen." Hans Küng, Kleine Geschichte der katholischen Kirche, Berlin: Broschert, 2002, p. 33.
- 261 "Soll also die Kirche weiterhin als Bollwerk und nicht im Geist ihres Gründers als seine Gemeinschaft von Freien, grundsätzlichen Gleichen, von Brüdern und Schwestern wirken?" Küng, Kleine Geschichte der katholischen Kirche, p. 205.
- 262 Küng, Kleine Geschichte der katholischen Kirche, p. 192.
- 263 "Der Jesuitenorden, der sich weit vom den Idealen seines Gründers entfernt und in Politik und Geschäfte dieser Welt verstrickt hat, ist als Agent des Papsttums und Exponent der Anti-Moderne weithin verhasst und wird schließlich auf Druck der absolutistischen Regime Portugals, Spaniens und Frankreichs vom Papst selber aufgehoben." Küng, Kleine Geschichte der katholischen Kirche, p. 199.
- 264 "Doch die Päpste sind ... zur Bedeutungslosigkeit herabgesunken und reagieren auf die Herausforderung der Zeit nur mit Stereotypen, sterilen Protesten und undifferenzierten Verurteilungen. Die katholischen Fürsten, aus Eigeninteresse am Status quo, sind oft die einzigen Stützen des Papsttums." Küng, Kleine Geschichte der katholischen Kirche, p. 199.
- 265 Küng, Kleine Geschichte der katholischen Kirche, p. 199.
- 266 "Und Rom? Pius VI., selber ein Aristokrat." Küng, Kleine Geschichte der katholischen Kirche, p. 202.
- 267 "...die neue militante republikanisch-laizistische Kultur des herrschenden liberalen Bürgertums und die eingewurzelt katholisch-konservative, klerikale und royalistische, später papalistische Gegen- oder Subkultur der Kirche. Der Marsch der offizieller katholischen Kirche in ein kulturelles Getto hat begonnen." Küng, Kleine Geschichte der katholischen Kirche, p. 205.

- 268 “Der Kirchenstaat wird so im 19. Jahrhundert der politisch wie sozial rückständigste Staat Europas, in welchem der Papst sich sogar gegen Eisenbahnen, Gasbeleuchtung, Hängebrücken und anderes ausspricht.” Küng, Kleine Geschichte der katholischen Kirche, p. 207.
- 269 “Es gibt im 19. Jahrhundert zweifellos ein neues Erwachen der religiösen Kräfte in Klerus und Laienschaft, in der Ordensgemeinschaften, in der Missionsbewegung, in Caritas, Erziehung und besonders auch Volksfrömmigkeit” Küng, Kleine Geschichte der katholischen Kirche, p. 210.
- 270 “[J]ene weder im Mittelalter noch in der Gegen-reformation bekannte emotional-sentimentale Verehrung des Heiligen Vaters.” Küng, Kleine Geschichte der katholischen Kirche, p. 211.
- 271 “Festigung nach innen und Isolierung nach außen! ... Draußen in der modernen Welt mag die Kälte religiöser Gleichgültigkeit, Kirchenfeindlichkeit und Glaubenslosigkeit herrschen. Drinner verbreiten Papalismus und Marianismus heimatliche Wärme: emotionale Geborgenheit durch Volksfrömmigkeit aller Art.” Küng, Kleine Geschichte der katholischen Kirche, pp. 211-2.
- 272 “La tradition n'est pas un capital sterile mécaniquement conservé: elle connaît un développement, un déploiement, par lesquels elle s'enrichit du dedans, sans ajoute extérieure.” Congar, p. 72.
- 273 “Möhler voit dans la Tradition ce qui réalise l'unité de l'Église comme l'Église issue à la fois de l'enseignement du Christ et de la Pentecôte: par l'Esprit, la vérité enseignée par Jésus-Christ s'intériorise et devient, par l'amour, inspiration de communion. L'Esprit crée à la fois, du dedans, l'unité de la communauté et les organes ou les expressions de son génie, c'est-à-dire de sa tradition.” Congar, p. 103.
- 274 Dulles, The Craft of Theology: From Symbol to System, p. 8.
- 275 “«Tradition» prend ainsi un second sens. C'était d'abord la transmission telle quelle d'un dépôt sacré. C'est aussi l'explication qui se fait de ce dépôt par le fait qu'il est vécu et défendu, génération après génération, par le peuple de Dieu. La tradition garde, mais, gardant de façon vivante et dans une histoire qui n'est pas vide, elle thésaurise.” Congar, p. 41.
- 276 Foucault, The Discourse on Language, p. 233, in In The Archaeology of Knowledge, A.M. Sheridan, translator, New York: Pantheon Books, 1972.
- 277 “A notre tour, nous interrogeons le protestantisme. Nous lui demandons de tirer les conséquences du fait, attesté dans toute l'économie salutaire, que la Révélation n'a pas un statut individualiste et privé, mais social et public; et aussi de prendre au sérieux la promesse de la présence et de l'assistance du Saint-Esprit, en tant qu'elle a été faite à l'Église.” Congar, p. 101.
- 278 Dulles, The Craft of Theology: From Symbol to System, p. 5.
- 279 Dulles, The Craft of Theology: From Symbol to System, p. 6.
- 280 Dulles, The Craft of Theology: From Symbol to System, p. 7.
- 281 “Il y a une ontologie propre de l'Histoire sainte, qui est apparentée à l'ontologie sacramentelle.” Congar, pp. 33-4.
- 282 John Paul II, Crossing the Threshold of Hope, Toronto, 1994, Alfred A. Knopf, Jenny McPhee and Martha McPhee, translators, p. 157.
- 283 Foucault, The Archeology of Knowledge, pp. 27-28.
- 284 Foucault, The Archeology of Knowledge, p. 28.
- 285 Foucault, The Archeology of Knowledge, p. 216.
- 286 “Les continus empiriques s'animent, se redressent peu à peu, se mettent debout et sont subsumés aussitôt dans un discours qui porte au loin leur présomption transcendente. Et voilà qu'en ce Pli la philosophie s'est endormie d'un sommeil nouveau; non plus celui du Dogmatisme, main celui de l'Anthropologie.” Foucault, Les Mots et les Choses, p. 352.
- 287 “Nietzsche a retrouvé le point où l'homme et Dieu s'appartiennent l'un l'autre, où la mort du second est synonyme de la disparition du premier, et où la promesse du surhomme signifie d'abord et avant tout l'imminence de la mort de l'homme.” Foucault, Les Mots et les Choses, p. 352.
- 288 “En quoi Nietzsche, nous proposant ce futur à la fois comme échéance et comme tâche, marque le seuil à partir duquel la philosophie contemporaine peut recommencer à penser ... Si la découverte du Retour est bien la fin de la philosophie, la fin de l'homme, elle est le retour du commencement de la philosophie.” Foucault, Les Mots et les Choses, p. 352.

- 289 "[N]ulle philosophie, nulle option politique ou morale ... n'a jamais au XVII<sup>e</sup> et au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle, rencontré quelque chose comme l'homme; car l'homme n'existait pas (non pas que la vie, le langage et le travail)." Foucault, Les Mots et les Choses, p. 355.
- 290 John Paul II, Crossing the Threshold of Hope, p. 4.
- 291 Bertrand Russell, The History of Western Philosophy, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1972, p. 828.
- 292 Dulles, The Craft of Theology: From Symbol to System, pp. 7-8.
- 293 "[D]epuis the XVIII<sup>e</sup> ... c'est la multiplication des discours sur le sexe, dans le champ d'exercice du pouvoir lui-même: incitation institutionnelle à en parler, et à en parler de plus en plus; destination des instances du pouvoir à en entendre parler et à le faire parler lui-même sur le mode de l'articulation explicite et du détail indéfiniment cumulé." Michel Foucault, Histoire de la sexualité: La volonté de savoir, Gallimard, 2005, pp. 26-27.
- 294 Foucault, The Archeology of Knowledge, p. 220.
- 295 Michel Foucault, Madness and Civilization, London and New York, Richard Howard, translator, Routledge Classics, 1989, p. xi.
- 296 Foucault, Madness and Civilization, p. 12.
- 297 We can assume this for Foucault based on his above question that asks why we would return to the old unities after all our work of deconstructing them.
- 298 Foucault, The Archeology of Knowledge, p. 28.
- 299 "[L]a Tradition dont parle le théologien est autre chose qu'un fait humain d'héritage moral ou de cohésion sociale. Elle relève du statut propre d'une religion qui n'est pas seulement un culte, mais une foi, et qui procède tout entière d'une révélation faite à un moment donné." Congar, p. 8.
- 300 Daniélou, p. 80.
- 301 "Même limitée à son sens dogmatique, «tradition» désigne une réalité trop vaste, une notion trop riche, pour pouvoir être comprise en une définition simple. Quand Bossuet écrivait «la Tradition, c'est-à-dire la suite toujours manifeste de la doctrine laissée et continuée dans l'Église», il disait déjà beaucoup, et pourtant il n'exprimait qu'un aspect de réalité." Congar, p. 8.
- 302 Daniélou, pp. 82-3.
- 303 John Paul II, Crossing the Threshold of Hope, p. 52.
- 304 «La prédication de l'Église est la même partout et demeure égale à elle-même, appuyée sur le témoignage des prophètes, des Apôtres et de tous les disciples, à travers le commencement, le milieu et la fin, bref à travers toute l'économie divine, à travers l'opération habituelle (de Dieu) qui effectue le salut de l'homme et réside à l'intérieur de notre Foi,--(foi) reçue de l'Église et que nous gardons, (foi) qui toujours, sous l'action de l'Esprit de Dieu, comme une liqueur de prix conservée dans une vase de bonne qualité, rajeunit et fait même rajeunir le vase qui la contient.» Congar, pp. 38-9.
- 305 John Paul II, Crossing the Threshold of Hope, p. 53.
- 306 John Paul II, Crossing the Threshold of Hope, p. 59.
- 307 John Paul II, Crossing the Threshold of Hope, p. 6.
- 308 "[T]oute vocation chrétienne remplie crée le fondement de nouvelles vocations. Elle constitue la base indispensable pour une construction future." Von Balthasar, La théologie de l'histoire, p. 76.
- 309 "Au niveau profond du savoir occidental, le marxisme n'a introduit aucune coupure réelle; il s'est loge sans difficulté comme une figure pleine, tranquille, confortable ... satisfaisante pour un temps ... à l'intérieur d'une disposition épistémologique qui l'a accueilli avec faveur ... et qu'il n'avait en retour ni le propos de troubler, ni surtout le pouvoir d'altérer." Foucault, Les Mots et les Choses, p. 274.
- 310 Foucault, The Discourse on Language, p. 218.
- 311 "Le marxisme est dans la pensée du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle comme poisson dans l'eau: c'est-à-dire que partout ailleurs il cesse de respirer." Foucault, Les Mots et les Choses, p. 274.
- 312 Foucault, The Discourse on Language, p. 218.
- 313 Foucault, The Discourse on Language, p. 218.
- 314 "L'essentiel, c'est qu'au début du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle se soit constitué une disposition du savoir où figurent à la fois historicité de l'économie ..., la finitude de l'existence humaine ...et l'échéance d'une fin de l'Histoire." Foucault, Les Mots et les Choses, p. 274.

315 “La grande songerie d'un terme de l'Histoire [de la pensée du dix-neuvième siècle], c'est l'utopie des pensées causales, comme le rêve des origines (la pensée du dix-huitième siècle), c'était l'utopie des pensées classificatrices.” Foucault, Les Mots et les Choses, p. 275.

316 Foucault, The Discourse on Language, p. 219.

317 Foucault, The Discourse on Language, p. 219.

318 “La mort de Dieu, l'imminence du surhomme, la promesse et l'épouvante de la grande année ont beau reprendre comme terme à terme les éléments qui se disposent dans la pensée du XIXe siècle et en forment le réseau archéologique.” Foucault, Les Mots et les Choses, p. 275.

319 “Ainsi disparaît le projet d'une *taxinomia* générale.” Foucault, Les Mots et les Choses, p.

320 Foucault, The Discourse on Language, p. 219.

321 John Paul II, Crossing the Threshold of Hope, p. 5.

322 John Paul II, Crossing the Threshold of Hope, p. 5.

323 John Paul II, Crossing the Threshold of Hope, p. 5.

324 John Paul II, Crossing the Threshold of Hope, p. 6.

325 John Paul II, Crossing the Threshold of Hope, p. 6.

326 John Paul II, Crossing the Threshold of Hope, p. 9.

327 “Certain currents of modern thought have gone so far as to *exalt freedom to such an extent that it becomes an absolute, which would then be the source of values*. This is the direction taken by doctrines which have lost the sense of the transcendent or which are explicitly atheist,” Veritatis splendor, 32. Also: “Some people, however, disregarding the dependence of human reason on Divine Wisdom and the need, given the present state of fallen nature, for Divine Revelation as an effective means for knowing moral truths, even those of the natural order, have actually posited a *complete sovereignty of reason* in the domain of moral norms regarding the right ordering of life in this world. Such norms would constitute the boundaries for a merely 'human' morality; they would be the expression of a law which man in an autonomous manner lays down for himself and which has its source exclusively in human reason. In no way could God be considered the Author of this law, except in the sense that human reason exercises its autonomy in setting down laws by virtue of a primordial and total mandate given to man by God. These trends of thought have led to a denial, in opposition to Sacred Scripture (cf. *Mt* 15:3-6) and the Church's constant teaching, of the fact that the natural moral law has God as its author, and that man, by the use of reason, participates in the eternal law, which it is not for him to establish,” Veritatis splendor, 36, and see Veritatis splendor, 31, 32.

328 “Similarly, fundamental theology should demonstrate the profound compatibility that exists between faith and its need to find expression by way of human reason fully free to give its assent. Faith will thus be able 'to show fully the path to reason in a sincere search for the truth. Although faith, a gift of God, is not based on reason, it can certainly not dispense with it. At the same time, it becomes apparent that reason needs to be reinforced by faith, in order to discover horizons it cannot reach on its own’” Fides et ratio, 67.

329 Richard Rorty, Essays on Heidegger and Others, Volume 2, p. 197.

330 Foucault, The Discourse on Language, p. 221.

331 John Paul II, Crossing the Threshold of Hope, p. 7.

332 Foucault, The Discourse on Language, p. 233.

333 Foucault, The Discourse on Language, p. 221.

334 John Paul II, Crossing the Threshold of Hope, p. 8.

335 “A la suite de S. Thomas d'Aquin, nous situons d'abord le fait «tradition» dans l'ensemble de la communication du mystère divin aux hommes.” Congar, p. 15.

336 “[L]e plan de Dieu est de faire parvenir à beaucoup sa *doctrina salutaris* à partir de quelques témoins pour lesquels elle est une révélation immédiate. Et ceci de telle manière que tous les hommes ainsi bénéficiaires de cet enseignement et qui l'auront accueilli dans la foi, forment spirituellement un seul peuple, un seul corps, bref une Église. Et ceci encore, non pas simultanément, ou en un court espace de temps, mais à travers un long déroulement de générations et de siècles.” Congar, p. 18.

337 John Richard Neuhaus, Doing Well and Doing Good: The Challenge to the Christian Capitalist, New York: Doubleday, 1992, p. 170.

338 Dulles, S.J., The Craft of Theology: From Symbol to System, p. 138.

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<sup>339</sup> Derek S. Jeffreys, Defending Human Dignity: John Paul II and Political Realism, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Brazos Press, 2004, pp. 28-9.

<sup>340</sup> Jeffreys, p. 34.

<sup>341</sup> Jeffreys, p. 194.

<sup>342</sup> “Le rôle qui est ainsi dévolu au Saint-Esprit est d'actualiser et d'intérioriser ce qui a été dit et fait par le Christ.” Congar, p. 104.

<sup>343</sup> Also see Pope John Paul II, Fides et ratio 30: “It may help, then, to turn briefly to the different modes of truth. Most of them depend upon immediate evidence or are confirmed by experimentation. This is the mode of truth proper to everyday life and to scientific research. At another level we find philosophical truth, attained by means of the speculative powers of the human intellect. Finally, there are religious truths which are to some degree grounded in philosophy, and which we find in the answers which the different religious traditions offer to the ultimate questions.”

<sup>344</sup> Joan Frawley Desmond, “John Paul the Evangelist,” pp. 46-50, in The Human Life Review, New York: The Human Life Foundation, Inc., Vol. XXXI, No. 2, Spring 2005, p. 46.

<sup>345</sup> “La tradition comme vie de l'Église dans la communion de la foi et de culte, la Tradition comme milieu chaleureux où se forme, s'exprime et se conserve le sens catholique, la Tradition conçue comme étant, en son fond, «le regard intérieur qui remonte la race» dont parle Péguy.” Congar, pp. 9-10.

<sup>346</sup> Pope John Paul II, Rise, Let Us Be On Our Way, p. 30.

<sup>347</sup> “San Giovanni M. Vianney sorprende soprattutto perché in lui si rivela la potenza della grazia che agisce nella povertà dei mezzi umani. Mi toccava nel profondo, in particolare, il suo *eroico servizio nel confessionale*.” Pope John Paul II, Dono e Mistero.

<sup>348</sup> Copleston, A history of Philosophy, Volume VII.

<sup>349</sup> Another example of the “whole people of God” notion was expressed at Vatican II: “But the laity, by their very vocation, seek the kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and by ordering them according to the plan of God. They live in the world, that is, in each and in all of the secular professions and occupations. They live in the ordinary circumstances of family and social life, from which the very web of their existence is woven. They are called there by God that by exercising their proper function and led by the spirit of the Gospel they may work for the sanctification of the world from within as a leaven. In this way they may make Christ known to others, especially by the testimony of a life resplendent in faith, hope and charity. Therefore, since they are tightly bound up in all types of temporal affairs it is their special task to order and to throw light upon these affairs in such a way that they may come into being and then continually increase according to Christ to the praise of the Creator and the Redeemer.” Vatican II and Pope Paul VI, Lumen gentium 31, 1964, [http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii\\_const\\_19641121\\_lumen-gentium\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html).

Also: “The lay apostolate, however, is a participation in the salvific mission of the Church itself. Through their baptism and confirmation all are commissioned to that apostolate by the Lord Himself. Moreover, by the sacraments, especially holy Eucharist, that charity toward God and man which is the soul of the apostolate is communicated and nourished. Now the laity are called in a special way to make the Church present and operative in those places and circumstances where only through them can it become the salt of the earth. Thus every layman, in virtue of the very gifts bestowed upon him, is at the same time a witness and a living instrument of the mission of the Church itself ‘according to the measure of Christ's bestowal’,” Lumen gentium 33.

<sup>350</sup> For the anthropological ramifications of this symbol: “It is a real but limited freedom: it does not have its point of departure absolute in itself, but in the existence behind which we find this liberty. At the same time it is a limit and a possibility. As the liberty of a creature, it is a given freedom that humans should accept as a seed and way to grow in maturity.” Veritatis splendor, 86.

<sup>351</sup> Pope John Paul II, Veritatis splendor, “In the 'ten words' of the Covenant with Israel, and in the whole Law, God makes himself known and acknowledged as the One who 'alone is good'; the One who despite man's sin remains the 'model' for moral action, in accordance with his command, 'You shall be holy; for I the Lord your God am holy' (*Lev* 19:2); as the One who, faithful to his love for man, gives him his Law (cf. *Ex* 19:9-24 and 20:18-21) in order to restore man's original and peaceful harmony with the Creator and with all creation, and, what is more, to draw him into his divine love: 'I will walk among you, and will be your God, and you shall be my people' (*Lev* 26:12).”

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<sup>352</sup> Neuhaus, Doing Well and Doing Good: The Challenge to the Christian Capitalist, New York: Doubleday, 1992, p. 239.

<sup>353</sup> John Seward, Christ is the Answer: The Christ-Centered Teaching of Pope John Paul II, New York: Alba House, 1995, p. 55.

<sup>354</sup> For instance the following words, in describing Veritatis splendor, describe a traditional theological approach: [T]he underlying dynamic of the encyclical is one of a free, spontaneous, affective cleaving to the person of Jesus Christ (n. 15, 19, 29, 88). Observance of the commandments is not a condition for relationship with Jesus, but an outgrowth of the profoundly intimate encounter which occurs between Jesus and the potential disciple.” Maura Anne Ryan, “‘Then Who Can Be Saved?’ : Ethics and Ecclesiology in Veritatis Splendor, pp. 1-15, in Veritatis Splendor: American Responses, Michael E. Allsopp and John J. O’Keefe, editors, Kansas City: Sheed & Ward, 1995, p. 3.

<sup>355</sup> Bernard J.F. Lonergan, Method in Theology, New York: Herder & Herder, 1992, p. xi.

<sup>356</sup> Karol Wojtyla, (Pope John Paul II), Sources of Renewal: The Implementation of the Second Vatican Council, P.S. Falla, translator, San Francisco: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1979, p. 9.

<sup>357</sup> Wojtyla, (Pope John Paul II), Sources of Renewal: The implementation of the Second Vatican Council, p. 15.

<sup>358</sup> “The gift of the Decalogue was a promise and sign of the *New Covenant*, in which the law would be written in a new and definitive way upon the human heart (cf. *Jer* 31:31-34), replacing the law of sin which had disfigured that heart (cf. *Jer* 17:1). In those days, “a new heart” would be given, for in it would dwell “a new spirit”, the Spirit of God (cf. *Ez* 36:24-28).” (VS, 12)

<sup>359</sup> Fides et ratio 87 offers a more direct analysis of Foucault's archeology: “Eclecticism is an error of method, but lying hidden within it can also be the claims of *historicism*. To understand a doctrine from the past correctly, it is necessary to set it within its proper historical and cultural context. The fundamental claim of historicism, however, is that the truth of a philosophy is determined on the basis of its appropriateness to a certain period and a certain historical purpose. At least implicitly, therefore, the enduring validity of truth is denied. What was true in one period, historicists claim, may not be true in another. Thus for them the history of thought becomes little more than an archeological resource useful for illustrating positions once held, but for the most part outmoded and meaningless now. On the contrary, it should not be forgotten that, even if a formulation is bound in some way by time and culture, the truth or the error which it expresses can invariably be identified and evaluated as such despite the distance of space and time.”

<sup>360</sup> John Paul II, Dono e Mistero, III: “Mi aiutò a cogliere da un’angolazione nuova *il valore e l’importanza della vocazione*. Di fronte al dilagare del male ed alle atrocità della Guerra mi diventava sempre più chiaro il senso del sacerdozio e dello sua missione nel mondo.”

<sup>361</sup> These words of personalism echo, if we follow Rocco Buttiglione's discussion, Karol Wojtla's teaching in his book The Acting Person. Buttiglione notes that “In an authentic human community, according to Wojtyla, the one who participates is open to sacrificing his own particular good to the common good, not because he considers the common good superior to the particular one but because the self-realization of the value of one's own person, which is achieved through sacrifice, is greater and more worthy than what would be gained by achieving one's own particular interest against the common good.” Buttiglione, p. 172. Buttiglione adds that “solidarity implies an advertent responsibility for the common end and also for the good or the evil which this end brings about in the world through its realization.” Buttiglione, p. 173.

<sup>362</sup> “La venerazione alla Madre di Dio nella sua forma tradizionale mi viene dalla famiglia e dalla parrocchia di Wadowice.” John Paul II, Dono e Mistero, III

<sup>363</sup> John Paul II, Rise, Let us be on Our Way, p. 3.

<sup>364</sup> Rise, Let us be on Our Way, p. 7.

<sup>365</sup> Rise, Let us be on Our Way, pp. 66-67.

<sup>366</sup> “Nous avons connu un retour de plus en plus décidé vers l’âge d’or de la pensée médiévale, celle d’un saint Thomas et d’un saint Bonaventure, et ce mouvement de retour, en s’accroissant encore, nous restitue peu à peu le climat de «mystère» qui fut éminemment celui de la pensée patristique... Dans tous ces domaines, nous éprouvons le besoin de nous replonger aux sources profondes, de les scruter par d’autres instruments que les seules idées claires, de retrouver le contact vital et fécond avec le sol nourricier.” De Lubac, Le Drame de L’Humanisme athée, p. 85.

- 367 Neuhaus, Doing Well and Doing Good: The Challenge to the Christian, pp. 77-8.
- 368 Henri Nouwen, Here and Now, New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1994, p. 11.
- 369 Nouwen, Here and Now, p. 12.
- 370 Nouwen, Here and Now, p. 124.
- 371 “Tandis que l’Ancien Testament détaillait minutieusement le rite des célébrations, pascales et sacrificielles, le Nouveau Testament ne détermine rien: on suivrait le modèle vivant, transmis avec la réalité même de ce qu’on célébrait. On a ainsi pratiqué l’eucharistie une bonne trentaine d’années sans qu’on en parlât. Elle était par excellence un objet de «tradition». Le rite et l’action avaient précédé l’écrit, sinon la doctrine.” Congar, pp. 113-4.
- 372 Wojtyla (Pope John Paul II), Sources of Renewal: The Implementation of the Second Vatican Council, p. 24.
- 373 Thomas Merton, The Ascent to Truth, San Diego: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1979, p. 3.
- 374 “The evil that is in the modern world ought to be sufficient indication that we do not know as much as we think we do,” Merton, The Ascent to Truth, p. 6. The text cited in the body of this work is from page 7 of The Ascent to Truth.
- 375 Merton, The Ascent to Truth, p. 8.
- 376 Merton, The Ascent to Truth, p. 8.
- 377 Merton, The Ascent to Truth, p. 8.
- 378 Merton, The Ascent to Truth, p. 9.
- 379 “Nous savons que de simples principes abstraits ne tiennent pas lieu d’une mystique, que la critique la plus pénétrante ne produit pas un atome d’être, qu’une exploration sans fin de l’histoire et des diversités humaines ne suffit point à cette «promotion de l’homme» qui est la fin de toute culture. Nous ne voulons plus d’un divorce entre le savoir et la vie.” De Lubac, Le Drame de L’Humanisme athée, p. 85.
- 380 Merton, The Ascent to Truth, p. 21.
- 381 Merton, The Ascent to Truth, p. 24.
- 382 Thomas Merton, The Silent Life, New York: The Noonday Press, 1990, p. 26.
- 383 Merton, The Silent Life, pp. 26-7.
- 384 “Toute philosophie chrétienne est une «métaphysique de la lumière».” De Lubac, Le Drame de L’Humanisme athée, p. 86.
- 385 John Paul II, Dono e Mistero, I: “La storia della mia vocazione sacerdotale? La conosco soprattutto Dio.”
- 386 John Paul II, Dono e Mistero, I. “*le parole umane non sono in grado di reggere il peso del mistero che il sacerdozio porta in sé.*”
- 387 John Paul II, “*imperscrutabile mistero di Dio stesso.*” Dono e Mistero, II.
- 388 John Paul II, “Oggi abbraccio con un pensiero pieno di gratitudine tutti i miei Superiori, Padri spirituali e Professori, che nel periodo del seminario contribuirono alla mia formazione.” Dono e Mistero, III.
- 389 John Paul II, “Il Signore ricompensi i loro sforzi e il loro sacrificio!” Dono e Mistero III.
- 390 John Paul II, “Lavorando manualmente, sapevo bene che cosa significasse la fatica fisica. Mi incontravo ogni giorno con gente che lavorava pesantemente. Conobbi l’ambiente di queste persone, le loro famiglie, i loro interessi, il loro valore umano e la loro dignità.” Dono e Mistero III.
- 391 John Paul II, “Ebbi anche occasione di notare quanti sentimenti religiosi si nascondessero in loro e quanta saggezza di vita.” Dono e Mistero, III.
- 392 “Era un uomo di una spiritualità particolarmente profonda.” Dono e Mistero III.
- 393 John Paul II, “In quei tempi difficili diventò ancora più chiaro che cosa significassero per lui la cattedrale, le tombe reali, l’altare di San Stanislao Vescovo e Martire.” Dono e Mistero, III.
- 394 John Paul II, “Maria ci avvicina a Cristo, ci conduce a Lui, a condizione che si viva il suo mistero in Cristo... Il suo pensiero mariologico è radicato nel Mistero trinitario e nella verità dell’Incarnazione del Verbo di Dio.” Dono e Mistero, III.
- 395 John Paul II, Dono e Mistero, “grazie al sacrificio di vescovi, di sacerdoti e di schiere di laici; grazie alla famiglia polacca «forte in Dio».” Dono e Mistero, VII.



- <sup>396</sup> John Paul II, “[L]a tragedia della Guerra diede al processo di maturazione della mia scelta di vita una colorazione particolare,” Dono e Mistero, III.
- <sup>397</sup> John Paul II, Dono e Mistero, III. “Di fronte al dilagare del male ed alle atrocità della guerra mi diventava sempre più chiaro il senso del sacerdozio e della sua missione nel mondo.”
- <sup>398</sup> John Paul II, “E una *Chiesa che ha difeso l'uomo*, la sua dignità e i suoi diritti fondamentali, una *Chiesa che ha combattuto coraggiosamente* per il diritto dei fedeli alla professione della loro fede.” Dono e Mistero, VII.
- <sup>399</sup> John Paul II, “Gli esempi della loro santità e del loro zelo pastorale mi sono stati di grande edificazione.” Dono e Mistero, VII.
- <sup>400</sup> John Paul II, “La comunità dei sacerdoti, radicata in una vera *fraternità sacramentale*, costituisce un ambiente di primaria importanza per la formazione spirituale e pastorale.” Dono e Mistero, VII.
- <sup>401</sup> John Paul II, “Come non esprimere, in occasione del giubileo d'oro, ai sacerdoti dell'Arcidiocesi di Cracovia la mia gratitudine per il loro contributo al mio sacerdozio?” Dono e Mistero, VII.
- <sup>402</sup> John Paul II, Dono e Mistero, IX. “Proprio nel confessionale ogni sacerdote diventa testimone dei grandi miracoli che la misericordia divina opera nell'anima che accetta la grazia della conversione.”
- <sup>403</sup> John Paul II, “E necessario però che ogni sacerdote al servizio dei fratelli nel confessionale sappia fare egli stesso esperienza di questa misericordia di Dio, attraverso la propria regolare confessione e la direzione spirituale.” Dono e Mistero, IX.
- <sup>404</sup> John Paul II, “Amministratore dei misteri divini, il sacerdote è uno speciale *testimone dell'Invisibile* nel mondo. E infatti amministratore di beni invisibili e incommensurabili, che appartengono all'ordine spirituale e soprannaturale.” Dono e Mistero, IX.
- <sup>405</sup> John Paul II, “Quale amministratore di simili beni, il sacerdote, è in permanente, particolare *contatto con la santità di Dio*” Dono e Mistero, IX.
- <sup>406</sup> John Paul II, Dono e Mistero, IX. “La maestà di Dio è la maestà della santità.”
- <sup>407</sup> John Paul II, Dono e Mistero, IX. “[I]l sacerdote vive ogni giorno, in continuazione, la discesa di questa santità di Dio verso l'uomo.”
- <sup>408</sup> John Paul II, “La preghiera crea il sacerdote e il sacerdote si crea attraverso la preghiera.” Dono e Mistero, IX.
- <sup>409</sup> Neuhaus, Doing Well and Doing Good: The Challenge to the Christian Capitalist, pp. 89-90.
- <sup>410</sup> Dulles, The Craft of Theology: From Symbol to System, p. 13.
- <sup>411</sup> Rorty, Truth and Progress: Philosophical Papers, Volume 3, p. 6.
- <sup>412</sup> Wojtyla, Sources of Renewal: The Implementation of the Second Vatican Council, p. 16.
- <sup>413</sup> Joanna Manning, Is the Pope Catholic: A Woman Confronts Her Church, Toronto: Malcolm Lester Books, 1999, p. 7.
- <sup>414</sup> Michael Novak, “The 'Open Church' 40 Years Later: A Reckoning,” pp. 13-31, in Unfinished Journey: The Church 40 Years After Vatican II, Austin Ivereigh, editor, New York: Continuum, 2003, p. 26.
- <sup>415</sup> Dulles, The Craft of Theology: From Symbol to System, p. 14.
- <sup>416</sup> For his discussion on modern currents of thought that challenge liberty's connection to the truth, see Veritatis splendor 27, 54. For his discussion on the immutable, unchangeable but personal truth: “Jesus brings the question about morally good action back to its religious foundations, to the acknowledgment of God, who alone is goodness, fullness of life, the final end of human activity, and perfect happiness,” Veritatis splendor, 9.
- <sup>417</sup> Buttiglione, p. 181 and the entire chapter, “Wojtyla and the Council,” discusses the Archbishop's notions of freedom and the individual conscience: “it is precisely in order to direct himself toward truth in the way which is proper to him that the person needs to be free, unbound by any external pressure.”
- <sup>418</sup> Congar, p. 118: “La Tradition est gardée et communiquée par l'autel comme par la chaire. La chaire—parole écrite et même parole parlée—communique une connaissance par la voie de signes spéculatifs, de formules; l'autel communique le corps même de la réalité sous des signes qui la contiennent ou en produisent le fruit.”
- <sup>419</sup> P. Nautin cited by Congar, p.118: «La Tradition des Apôtres n'est pas une donnée seulement conceptuelle, mais un dépôt sacramental, la πίστις du baptême, avec son achèvement l'εὐχαριστία, l'Eucharistie.»

- 420 John Paul II, Rise, Let Us Be On Our Way, pp. 90-91.
- 421 Neuhaus, Doing Well and Doing Good: The Challenge to the Christian Capitalist, pp. 181-2.
- 422 Neuhaus, Doing Well and Doing Good: The Challenge to the Christian Capitalist, pp. 21-2.
- 423 “[L]a liturgie est par nature conservatrice. Elle a le génie de la transmission intacte d'une chose confiée à des fidèles et retirée à la profanation. Par sa nature aussi, elle est à la fois communautaire et hiérarchique, acte de tout un peuple et acte d'hommes ordonnés. Elle répond ainsi remarquablement au statut que nous avons découvert être celui du *sujet* de la Tradition.” Congar, p. 121.
- 424 “Le style de l'enseignement que la liturgie fait dans sa confession de la foi, ou celui de la profession de la foi qu'elle fait dans sa louange (profonde théologie des textes doxologiques!) n'est pas un style de professeur ni même de théologien: la liturgie procède simplement, avec l'assurance de la vie, à l'affirmation de ce qu'elle fait et du contenu de ce qu'elle livre en le célébrant. C'est 'e style propre de la Tradition, qui communique les conditions de la vie en communiquant la vie elle-même.” Congar, p. 118.
- 425 “Even so, the Council warns against a false concept of the autonomy of earthly realities, one which would maintain that 'created things are not dependent on God and that man can use them without reference to their Creator',” Veritatis splendor, 39.
- 426 “[L]e sens des choses est l'apport le plus précieux de la Tradition. Celle-ci est supérieurement communiant, catholisante.” Congar, p. 120.
- 427 “La Tradition ... pose ses propres conditions d'existence comme un statut de vie sainte pour une Église dont l'idéal soit un peu le monachisme, et non pour une Église livrée à des règles d'existence tout extérieures, séculières, où les décisions s'élaboreraient simplement dans des bureaux et ne seraient jaugées qu'à la mesure d'un idéal géométrique et juridique.” Congar, p. 121.
- 428 “Le message du Christ à l'humanité n'est pas tout entier renfermé dans un document divin écrit; mais il est encore et surtout une doctrine vécue, impliquée dans la vie: les réalités sacramentelles dont nous vivons; une discipline qui organise socialement la vie des membres du Christ selon les coutumes apostoliques ... La tradition dans l'Église ...[sera] surtout sa vie pratique, sa façon d'agir, ses cadres, sa discipline, ses sacrements, sa prière, sa foi vécue à travers les siècles.” Congar, p. 122.
- 429 “[L]a tradition véhicule plus que des idées susceptibles de forme logique: elle incarne une vie qui comprend à la fois sentiments, pensées, croyances, aspirations et actions ... [E]lle implique communion spirituelle d'âmes qui sentent, pensent et veulent, sous l'unité d'un même idéal patriotique ou religieux; et elle est, par là même aussi, condition de progrès dans la mesure où elle permet de faire passer de l'implicite vécu à l'explicite connu quelques parcelles du lingot de vérité qui ne saurait jamais être complètement monnayé: car, principe d'unité, de continuité, de fécondité, la tradition, à la fois initiale, anticipatrice et finale précède toute synthèse reconstructrice et survit à toute analyse réfléchie.” Congar, pp. 122-3.
- 430 “[T]out concept théologique doit être «catholique», c'est-à-dire universel, c'est-à-dire enfermant, attirant en soi toute vérité, ou encore s'ouvrant lui-même à toute vérité, brisant lui-même ses limites, ressuscitant après avoir passé par une mort, dans la vérité céleste.” Von Balthasar, p. 153.
- 431 Alasdair MacIntyre, After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory, Second Edition, Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2003, p.204.
- 432 “Tous les théologiens ne sont pas tenus d'écrire un traité complet de théologie. Mais tous doivent avoir constamment devant les yeux la totalité, la catholicité de la vérité, et l'impliquer en chaque trait de leur pensée.” Von Balthasar, pp. 155-6.
- 433 Dulles, The Craft of Theology: From Symbol to System, p. 8.
- 434 Dulles, The Craft of Theology: From Symbol to System, p. 9.
- 435 Dulles, The Craft of Theology: From Symbol to System, p. 10.
- 436 John Paul II, Rise, Let Us Be On Our Way, pp. 207-8.
- 437 John Paul II, Rise, Let Us Be On Our Way, p. 212.
- 438 Dulles, The Craft of Theology: From Symbol to System, p. 9.
- 439 Wojtyla, Sources of Renewal: The Implementation of the Second Vatican Council, p. 19.
- 440 Dulles, The Craft of Theology: From Symbol to System, pp. 10-11.
- 441 John Paul II, Rise, Let Us Be On Our Way, p. 30
- 442 John Paul II, Rise, Let Us Be On Our Way, pp. 42-3.

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443 In the Ten Commandments of the Covenant with Israel, and in all of the law, God's self revelation and recognition for others is as Who is 'the only good; as Who remains, notwithstanding the sins of humans, the 'model' of moral action, according to God's own claims.'" "Nelle «dieci parole» dell'Alleanza con Israele, e in tutta la Legge, Dio si fa conoscere e riconoscere come Colui che «solo è buono»; come Colui che, nonostante il peccato dell'uomo, continua a rimanere il «modello» dell'agire morale, secondo la sua stessa chiamata," Veritatis splendor, 10.

444 "Riconoscere il Signore come Dio è il nucleo fondamentale, il cuore della Legge," Veritatis splendor 11.

445 John Paul II, Rise, Let Us Be On Our Way, p. 211.

446 John Paul II, Rise, Let Us Be On Our Way, p. 212.

447 John Paul II, Rise, Let Us Be On Our Way, pp. 213-14.

448 In addition to the example in the present paragraph from Veritatis splendor and Evangelium vitae, we can also refer to the 1980 encyclical Dives in misericordia (1): "The words that I have quoted are clear testimony to the fact that man cannot be manifested in the full dignity of his nature without reference - not only on the level of concepts but also in an integrally existential way - to God. Man and man's lofty calling are revealed in Christ through the revelation of the mystery of the Father and His love.... The more the Church's mission is centered upon man-the more it is, so to speak, anthropocentric-the more it must be confirmed and actualized theocentrically, that is to say, be directed in Jesus Christ to the Father." Also see Redemptor hominis (11).

449 John Paul II, Rise, Let Us Be On Our Way, p. 214.

450 John Paul II, Rise, Let Us Be On Our Way, p. 216.

451 Dulles, The Craft of Theology: From Symbol to System, p. 10.

452 Dulles, The Reshaping of Catholicism: Current Challenges in the Theology of Church, p. 86.

453 "Action et rite, liturgie est supérieurement synthétique...Elle allie, réconcilie et résout dans la simplicité d'une très haute synthèse, des aspects non seulement divers, mais antinomiques." Congar, p. 190.

454 "Par le génie de la liturgie, une foule de questions sont résolues sagement, catholiquement, dans l'allégresse d'une lumière paisible, sans même avoir été posées, en tout cas sans l'avoir été dans la tension de la difficulté...La liturgie donne à l'Église la plénitude de son climat familial; elle rejoint en ce rôle la Tradition," Congar, p. 191.

455 Dulles, The Reshaping of Catholicism: Current Challenges in the Theology of Church, p. 87.

456 John Paul II, in Mémoire et identité, Francois Donzy, traduction, Paris: Flammarion, 2005, discusses not progress and one of the many modern utopias, writing instead of the choice between good and evil, an eternal issue for humans: "If, after the fall of totalitarian systems, societies are free, almost simultaneously a fundamental problem is born: that of the usage of freedom...If I am free, that means to say the I am able to make a good or bad usage of my liberty." "Si, après la chute des systèmes totalitaires, les sociétés se sont libres, presque simultanément est né un problème de fond: celui de l'usage de la liberté...Si je suis libre, cela veut dire que je peux faire un usage bon ou mauvais de ma liberté," p.47.

457 "The *fundamental question*...is the question of the *relationship between liberty and the truth*.'...The good of the person is to be in the Truth and to *do* the Truth," Veritatis splendor, 84.

458 John Paul II, Rise, Let Us Be On Our Way, p. 26.

459 John Paul II, Rise, Let Us Be On Our Way, p. 26.

460 John Paul II, Rise, Let Us Be On Our Way, p. 26.

461 John Paul II, Rise, Let Us Be On Our Way, p. 26.

462 John Paul II, Rise, Let Us Be On Our Way, p. 51.

463 John Paul II, Rise, Let Us Be On Our Way, pp. 51-52.

464 John Paul II, Rise, Let Us Be On Our Way, p. 52.

465 In Redemptor hominis (21) John Paul applies his principles to the Latin American situation that led to the growth of liberation theology.

466 John Paul II, Rise, Let Us Be On Our Way, p. 213.

467 "La tradition que chacun reçoit n'est pas une quintessence du christianisme primitif, mais la totalité de ce qui s'est dévoilé du Christ au cours des âges...on ne peut saisir cette totalité par la seule voie de l'intelligence, ni par celle de la recherche historique ni même par celle d'une définition dogmatique. Ce

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n'est pas possible que dans la communion vivante dont la richesse ne s'exprime que partiellement au plan de la connaissance explicite." Congar, pp. 41-2.

<sup>468</sup> John Paul II, Rise, Let Us Be On Our Way, pp. 202-3.

<sup>469</sup> "Tous les chrétiens gardent le dépôt. Les ministres hiérarchiques ont pour cela les charismes afférents à leur charge pastorale et qui leur sont données, d'abord, par le sacrement sacerdotal, épiscopal. Les prêtres vivent de la Tradition, non seulement par des études qui leur en donnent une meilleure connaissance, mais par la célébration des mystères. Tous les chrétiens transmettent le dépôt par l'enseignement et par la confession ou la profession de la foi." Congar, p. 94.

<sup>470</sup> "Le sens chrétien de l'histoire ne peut être dévoilé qu'eschatologiquement." Von Balthasar, p. 121.

<sup>471</sup> "[I]l est impossible d'employer ici la catégorie de progrès. Elle supposerait la connaissance claire de la véritable essence du chrétien et de l'Eglise. Une extension quantitative de l'Eglise n'est pas nécessairement un progrès, pas plus que la persécution, la réduction à un petit nombre, le retour à la chrétienté primitive." Von Balthasar, pp. 121-2.

<sup>472</sup> Michael Novak, The Catholic Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, p. 117.

<sup>473</sup> Neuhaus, Doing Well and Doing Good: The Challenge to the Christian Capitalist, p. 24.

<sup>474</sup> Michael Novak, The Catholic Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, p. 115.

<sup>475</sup> Michael Novak, The Catholic Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, p. 118.

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### ESL Teaching Experience

January 2007-Present

*Inlingua Language School, Vancouver, BC: ESL Teacher*

- Teach to classrooms of 2-15 students, mostly intermediate adult speakers from Korea, Taiwan, Japan, Columbia, and Mexico
- Developed writing course elective, which incorporates speaking, grammar, and writing in order to improve accuracy, brainstorming, writing, and self-editing

May 2006-August 2006

*Yang-G ELS, Daejon, South Korea*

- Used *Exploring English* and *All Aboard* in conversation classes for 7-15 year olds; Taught TOEFL iBT classes (speaking, reading, and writing) and general writing classes for various levels of students

May 2005-April 2006

*JongRo / Eastern English, Chang-won, South Korea*

- Used *New Parade* and *Let's Go* in conversation classes for 9-12 year old children; Prepared students for their monthly exams

March 2003-February 2004

*Kid's Club, Suji, South Korea*

- Guided kindergarten and elementary conversation through songs, plays, Orda games, phonics worksheets, book-making projects, and reading;
- Instructed elementary students in beginners' phonics using Orda games, spelling contests, writing exercises, and singing

August 2002-February 2003

*Park-Jeung Academy, Pundang, South Korea*

- Tutored middle-school children studying for their monthly exams in listening and conversational English
- Directed, with no supporting resources, TOEFL essay-writing for middle and high school students at beginner-to-intermediate language levels.

February 2001-July 2002

*Kid's College, Pundang, South Korea*

- Worked with colleagues in training new teachers
- Taught conversational English to kindergarten children through plays, music, arts and crafts, phonics worksheets, and thematic reading
- Advanced elementary children's conversational English and phonics through spelling bees, creative writing, music, and grammar lessons

### **Writing Experience**

December 2006-Present

*BC Catholic Weekly Newspaper* and various other North American publications, Vancouver, BC: Book Review Columnist and Freelance Contributor

- Write 500-1500 word articles; meet weekly and other deadlines; 2-4 such articles a month, sometimes accompanied with relevant photographs; Weekly book review column

### **Education**

2005-Present

**Doctor of Theology**, (*Systematic Theology*), External student, University of South Africa, Pretoria, South Africa

1999-2001

**Master of Theology**, St. Stephen's College, Edmonton, Canada

1995-97

**Bachelor of Theology**, *Great Distinction, Dean's Honour's List*, McGill University, Montreal, Canada

1988-1993

**Honours Bachelor of Arts (History)**, *University of Saskatchewan*, Saskatoon, Canada

January 2005

**Cambridge CELTA (Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults):**  
*International House*, Budapest, Hungary