

Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church

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THE HUMAN PERSON AND HUMAN RIGHTS

(Chapter III)

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I. SOCIAL DOCTRINE AND THE PERSONALIST PRINCIPLE

105. *The Church sees in men and women, in every person, the living image of God himself. This image finds, and must always find anew, an ever deeper and fuller unfolding of itself in the mystery of Christ, the Perfect Image of God, the One who reveals God to man and man to himself.* It is to these men and women, who have received an incomparable and inalienable dignity from God himself, that the Church speaks, rendering to them the highest and most singular service, constantly reminding them of their lofty vocation so that they may always be mindful of it and worthy of it. Christ, the Son of God, “by his incarnation has united himself in some fashion with every person”[197]; for this reason the Church recognizes as her fundamental duty the task of seeing that this union is continuously brought about and renewed. In Christ the Lord, the Church indicates and strives to be the first to embark upon the path of the human person[198], and she invites all people to recognize in everyone — near and far, known and unknown, and above all in the poor and the suffering — a brother or sister “for whom Christ died” (1 Cor 8:11; Rom 14:15)[199].

106. *All of social life is an expression of its unmistakable protagonist: the human person.* The Church has many times and in many ways been the authoritative advocate of this understanding, recognizing and affirming the centrality of the human person in every sector and expression of society: “Human society is therefore the object of the social teaching of the Church since she is neither outside nor over and above socially united men, but exists exclusively in

them and, therefore, for them”[200]. This important awareness is expressed in the affirmation that “far from being the object or passive element of social life” the human person “is rather, and must always remain, its subject, foundation and goal”[201]. The origin of social life is therefore found in the human person, and society cannot refuse to recognize its active and responsible subject; every expression of society must be directed towards the human person.

107. *Men and women, in the concrete circumstances of history, represent the heart and soul of Catholic social thought*[202]. *The whole of the Church's social doctrine, in fact, develops from the principle that affirms the inviolable dignity of the human person*[203]. In her manifold expressions of this knowledge, the Church has striven above all to defend human dignity in the face of every attempt to redimension or distort its image; moreover she has often denounced the many violations of human dignity. History attests that it is from the fabric of social relationships that there arise some of the best possibilities for ennobling the human person, but it is also there that lie in wait the most loathsome rejections of human dignity.

II. THE HUMAN PERSON AS THE “IMAGO DEI”

A. Creatures in the image of God

108. *The fundamental message of Sacred Scripture proclaims that the human person is a creature of God (cf. Ps 139:14-18), and sees in his being in the image of God the element that characterizes and distinguishes him.* “God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them” (*Gen 1:27*). God places the human creature at the centre and summit of the created order. Man (in Hebrew, “*adam*”) is formed from the earth (“*adamah*”) and God blows into his nostrils the breath of life (cf. *Gen 2:7*). Therefore, “being in the image of God the human individual possesses the dignity of a person, who is not just something, but someone. He is capable of self-knowledge, of self-possession and of freely giving himself and entering into communion with other persons. Further, he is called by grace to a covenant with his Creator, to offer him a response of faith and love that no other creature can give in his stead”[204].

109. *The likeness with God shows that the essence and existence of man are constitutively related to God in the most profound manner.*[205] This is a relationship that exists in itself, it is therefore not something that comes afterwards and is not added from the outside. The whole of man's life is a quest and a search for God. This relationship with God can be ignored or even forgotten or dismissed, but it can never be eliminated. Indeed, among all the world's visible creatures, only man has a “capacity for God” (“*homo est Dei capax*”).[206] The human being is a personal being created by God to be in relationship with him; man finds life and self-expression only in relationship, and tends naturally to God.[207]

110. *The relationship between God and man is reflected in the relational and social dimension of human nature.* Man, in fact, is not a solitary being, but “a social being, and unless he relates himself to others he can neither live nor develop his potential”[208]. In this regard the fact that God created *human beings as man and woman* (cf. *Gen 1:27*) is significant[209]: “How very significant is the dissatisfaction which marks man's life in Eden as long as his sole point of reference is the world of plants and animals (cf. *Gen 2:20*). Only the appearance of the woman, a being who is flesh of his flesh and bone of his bones (cf. *Gen 2:23*), and in whom the spirit of God the Creator is also alive, can satisfy the need for interpersonal dialogue, so vital for human existence. In one's neighbour, whether man or woman, there is a reflection of God himself, the definitive goal and fulfilment of every person”[210].

111. *Man and woman have the same dignity and are of equal value*[211], *not only because they are both, in their differences, created in the image of God, but even more profoundly because the dynamic of reciprocity that gives life to the “we” in the human couple, is an image of God*[212]. In a relationship of mutual communion, man and woman fulfil themselves in a profound way, rediscovering themselves as persons through the sincere gift of themselves[213]. Their covenant of union is presented in Sacred Scripture as an image of the Covenant of God with man (cf. *Hos 1-3; Is 54; Eph 5:21-33*) and, at the same time, as a service to life[214]. Indeed, the human couple can participate in God's act of creation: “God blessed them, and God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it’ “ (*Gen 1:28*).

112. *Man and woman are in relationship with others above all as those to whom the lives of others have been entrusted*[215]. “For

your lifeblood I will surely require a reckoning, ... I will require it ... of man [and] of every man's brother" (*Gen* 9:5), God tells Noah after the flood. In this perspective, the relationship with God requires that *the life of man be considered sacred and inviolable*[216]. The fifth commandment, "Thou shalt not kill" (*Ex* 20:13; *Deut* 5:17), has validity because God alone is Lord of life and death[217]. The respect owed to the inviolability and integrity of physical life finds its climax in the positive commandment: "You shall love your neighbour as yourself" (*Lev* 19:18), by which Jesus enjoins the obligation to tend to the needs of one's neighbour (cf. *Mt* 22:37-40; *Mk* 12:29-31; *Lk* 10:27-28).

113. *With this specific vocation to life, man and woman find themselves also in the presence of all the other creatures. They can and are obliged to put them at their own service and to enjoy them, but their dominion over the world requires the exercise of responsibility, it is not a freedom of arbitrary and selfish exploitation.* All of creation in fact has value and is "good" (cf. *Gen* 1:4,10,12,18,21,25) in the sight of God, who is its author. Man must discover and respect its value. This is a marvellous challenge to his intellect, which should lift him up as on wings [218] towards the contemplation of the truth of all God's creatures, that is, the contemplation of what God sees as *good* in them. The Book of Genesis teaches that human dominion over the world consists in *naming things* (cf. *Gen* 2:19-20). In giving things their names, man must recognize them for what they are and establish with each of them a relationship of responsibility[219].

114. *Man is also in relationship with himself and is able to reflect on himself.* Sacred Scripture speaks in this regard about the *heart of man*. The heart designates man's inner spirituality, what distinguishes him from every other creature. God "has made everything beautiful in its time; also he has put eternity into man's mind, yet so that he cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end" (*Eccles* 3:11). In the end, the heart indicates the spiritual faculties which most properly belong to man, which are his prerogatives insofar as he is created in the image of his Creator: reason, the discernment of good and evil, free will[220]. When he listens to the deep aspirations of his heart, no person can fail to make his own the words of truth expressed by Saint Augustine: "You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you"[221].

B. The tragedy of sin

115. *This marvellous vision of man's creation by God is inseparable from the tragic appearance of original sin.* With a clear affirmation the Apostle Paul sums up the account of man's fall contained in the first pages of the Bible: "Sin came into the world through one man and death through sin" (*Rom* 5:12). Man, against God's prohibition, allows himself to be seduced by the serpent and stretches out his hand to the tree of life, falling prey to death. By this gesture, man tries to break through his limits as a creature, challenging God, his sole Lord and the source of his life. It is a sin of disobedience (cf. *Rom* 5:19) that separates man from God[222].

From revelation we know that Adam, the first man, transgresses God's commandment and loses the holiness and justice in which he was made, holiness and justice which were received not only for himself but for all of humanity: "By yielding to the tempter, Adam and Eve committed a *personal sin*, but this sin affected *the human nature* that they would then transmit *in a fallen state*. It is a sin which will be transmitted by propagation to all mankind, that is, by the transmission of a human nature deprived of original holiness and justice"[223].

116. *At the root of personal and social divisions, which in differing degrees offend the value and dignity of the human person, there is a wound which is present in man's inmost self.* "In the light of faith we call it sin: beginning with original sin, which all of us bear from birth as an inheritance from our first parents, to the sin which each one of us commits when we abuse our own freedom"[224]. The consequences of sin, insofar as it is an act of separation from God, are alienation, that is, the separation of man not only from God but also from himself, from other men and from the world around him. "Man's rupture with God leads tragically to divisions between brothers. In the description of the 'first sin', the rupture with Yahweh simultaneously breaks the bond of friendship that had united the human family. Thus the subsequent pages of *Genesis* show us the man and the woman as it were pointing an accusing finger at each other (cf. *Gen.* 3:12). Later we have brother hating brother and finally taking his brother's life (cf. *Gen* 4:2-16). According to the Babel story, the result of sin is the shattering of the human family, already begun with the first sin and now reaching its most extreme form on the social level"[225]. Reflecting on the mystery of sin, we cannot fail to take into consideration this tragic connection between cause and effect.

117. The mystery of sin is composed of a twofold wound, which the sinner opens in his own side and in the

relationship with his neighbour. That is why we can speak of personal and social sin. Every sin is personal under a certain aspect; under another, every sin is social, insofar as and because it also has social consequences. In its true sense, sin is always an act of the person, because it is the free act of an individual person and not properly speaking of a group or community. The character of social sin can unquestionably be ascribed to every sin, taking into account the fact that “by virtue of human solidarity which is as mysterious and intangible as it is real and concrete, each individual's sin in some way affects others”[226]. It is not, however, legitimate or acceptable to understand social sin in a way that, more or less consciously, leads to a weakening or the virtual cancellation of the personal component by admitting only social guilt and responsibility. At the bottom of every situation of sin there is always the individual who sins.

118. *Certain sins, moreover, constitute by their very object a direct assault on one's neighbour. Such sins in particular are known as social sins.* Social sin is every sin committed against the justice due in relations between individuals, between the individual and the community, and also between the community and the individual. Social too is every sin against the rights of the human person, starting with the right to life, including that of life in the womb, and every sin against the physical integrity of the individual; every sin against the freedom of others, especially against the supreme freedom to believe in God and worship him; and every sin against the dignity and honour of one's neighbour. Every sin against the common good and its demands, in the whole broad area of rights and duties of citizens, is also social sin. In the end, social sin is that sin that “refers to the relationships between the various human communities. These relationships are not always in accordance with the plan of God, who intends that there be justice in the world and freedom and peace between individuals, groups and peoples”[227].

119. *The consequences of sin perpetuate the structures of sin. These are rooted in personal sin and, therefore, are always connected to concrete acts of the individuals who commit them, consolidate them and make it difficult to remove them.* It is thus that they grow stronger, spread and become sources of other sins, conditioning human conduct[228]. These are obstacles and conditioning that go well beyond the actions and brief life span of the individual and interfere also in the process of the development of peoples, the delay and slow pace of which must be judged in this light[229]. The actions and attitudes opposed to the will of God and the good of neighbour, as well as the structures arising from such behaviour, appear to fall into two categories today: “on the one hand, the all-consuming desire for profit, and on the other, the thirst for power, with the intention of imposing one's will upon others. In order to characterize better each of these attitudes, one can add the expression: ‘at any price’”[230].

C. The universality of sin and the universality of salvation

120. *The doctrine of original sin, which teaches the universality of sin, has an important foundation:* “If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us” (1 Jn 1:8). This doctrine encourages men and women not to remain in guilt and not to take guilt lightly, continuously seeking scapegoats in other people and justification in the environment, in heredity, in institutions, in structures and in relationships. This is a teaching that un.masks such deceptions.

The doctrine of the universality of sin, however, must not be separated from the consciousness of the universality of salvation in Jesus Christ. If it is so separated it engenders a false anxiety of sin and a pessimistic view of the world and life, which leads to contempt of the cultural and civil accomplishments of mankind.

121. *Christian realism sees the abysses of sin, but in the light of the hope, greater than any evil, given by Jesus Christ's act of redemption, in which sin and death are destroyed* (cf. Rom 5:18-21; 1 Cor 15:56-57): “In him God reconciled man to himself”[231]. It is Christ, the image of God (cf. 2 Cor 4:4; Col 1:15), who enlightens fully and brings to completion the image and likeness of God in man. The Word that became man in Jesus Christ has always been mankind's life and light, the light that enlightens every person (cf. Jn 1:4,9). God desires in the one mediator Jesus Christ, his Son, the salvation of all men and women (cf. 1 Tim 2:4-5). Jesus is at the same time the Son of God and the new Adam, that is, the new man (cf. 1 Cor 15:47-49; Rom 5:14): “Christ the new Adam, in the very revelation of the mystery of the Father and of his love, fully reveals man to himself and brings to light his most high calling”[232]. In him we are, by God, “predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the first-born among many brethren” (Rom 8:29).

122. The new reality that Jesus Christ gives us is not grafted onto human nature nor is it added from outside: it is rather that reality of communion with the Trinitarian God to which men and women have always been oriented in the depths of their being, thanks to their creaturely likeness to God. But this is also a reality that people cannot attain by their own forces alone. Through the Spirit of Jesus Christ, the incarnate Son of God, in whom this reality of communion has already been brought about in a singular manner, men and women are received as children of God (cf. Rom 8:14-17; Gal 4:4-7). By means of Christ, we share in the nature of God, who gives us infinitely more “than all that we ask or think” (Eph 3:20). What mankind has already received is nothing more than a token or a “guarantee” (2 Cor 1:22; Eph 1:14) of what it will receive in its fullness only in the presence of God, seen “face to face” (1 Cor 13:12), that is, a guarantee of eternal life: “And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent” (Jn 17:3).

123. *The universality of this hope also includes, besides the men and women of all peoples, heaven and earth:* “Shower, O heavens, from above, and let the skies rain down righteousness; let the earth open, that salvation may sprout forth, and let it cause righteousness to spring up also; I the Lord have created it” (Is 45:8). According to the New Testament, all creation, together indeed with all humanity, awaits the Redeemer: subjected to futility, creation reaches out full of hope, with groans and birth pangs, longing to be freed from decay (cf. Rom 8:18-22).

III. THE MANY ASPECTS OF THE HUMAN PERSON

124. *Prizing highly the marvellous biblical message, the Church's social doctrine stops to dwell above all on the principal and indispensable dimensions of the human person. Thus it is able to grasp the most significant facets of the mystery and dignity of human beings.* In the past there has been no lack of various reductionist conceptions of the human person, many of which are still dramatically present on the stage of modern history. These are ideological in character or are simply the result of widespread forms of custom or thought concerning mankind, human life and human destiny. The common denominator among these is the attempt to make the image of man unclear by emphasizing only one of his characteristics at the expense of all the others[233].

125. The human person may never be thought of only as an absolute individual being, built up by himself and on himself, as if his characteristic traits depended on no one else but himself. Nor can the person be thought of as a mere cell of an organism that is inclined at most to grant it recognition in its functional role within the overall system. Reductionist conceptions of the full truth of men and women have already been the object of the Church's social concern many times, and she has not failed to raise her voice against these, as against other drastically reductive perspectives, taking care to proclaim instead that “individuals do not feel themselves isolated units, like grains of sand, but united by the very force of their nature and by their internal destiny, into an organic, harmonious mutual relationship”[234]. She has affirmed instead that man cannot be understood “simply as an element, a molecule within the social organism”[235], and is therefore attentive that the affirmation of the primacy of the person is not seen as corresponding to an individualistic or mass vision.

126. *Christian faith, while inviting that whatever is good and worthy of man should be sought out wherever it may be found* (cf. 1 Thes 5:21), “is above and is sometimes opposed to the ideologies, in that it recognizes God, who is transcendent and the Creator, and who, through all the levels of creation, calls on man as endowed with responsibility and freedom”[236].

The Church's social doctrine strives to indicate the different dimensions of the mystery of man, who must be approached “in the full truth of his existence, of his personal being and also of his community and social being”[237], with special attention so that the value of the human person may be readily perceived.

A. THE UNITY OF THE PERSON

127. *Man was created by God in unity of body and soul*[238]. “The spiritual and immortal soul is the principle of unity of the human being, whereby it exists as a whole — *corpore et anima unus* — as a person. These definitions not only point out that the body, which has been promised the resurrection, will also share in glory. They also remind us that reason and free will are linked with all the bodily and sense faculties. *The person, including the body, is completely entrusted to himself, and it is in the unity of body and soul that the person is the subject of his own moral acts*”[239].

128. *Through his corporeality man unites in himself elements of the material world;* these “reach their summit through him, and through him raise their voice in free praise of the Creator”[240]. This dimension makes it possible for man to be part of the material world, but not as in a prison or in exile. It is not proper to despise bodily life; rather “man ... is obliged to regard his body as good and honourable since God has created it and will raise it up on the last day”[241]. Because of this bodily dimension, however, following the wound of sin, man experiences the rebellion of his body and the perverse inclinations of his heart; he must always keep careful watch over these lest he become enslaved to them and become a victim of a purely earthly vision of life.

Through his spirituality man moves beyond the realm of mere things and plunges into the innermost structure of reality. When he enters into his own heart, that is, when he reflects on his destiny, he discovers that he is superior to the material world because of his unique dignity as one who converses with God, under whose gaze he makes decisions about his life. In his inner life he recognizes that the person has “a spiritual and immortal soul” and he knows that the person is not merely “a speck of nature or a nameless constituent of the city of man”[242].

129. *Therefore, man has two different characteristics: he is a material being, linked to this world by his body, and he is a spiritual being, open to transcendence* and to the discovery of “more penetrating truths”, thanks to his intellect, by which “he shares in the light of the divine mind”[243]. The Church affirms: “The unity of soul and body is so profound that one has to consider the soul to be the ‘form’ of the body: i.e., it is because of its spiritual soul that the body made of matter becomes a living, human body; spirit and matter, in man, are not two natures united, but rather their union forms a single nature”[244]. Neither the spiritualism that despises the reality of the body nor the materialism that considers the spirit a mere manifestation of the material do justice to the complex nature, to the totality or to the unity of the human being.

B. OPENNESS TO TRANSCENDENCE AND UNIQUENESS OF THE PERSON

a. Open to transcendence

130. *Openness to transcendence belongs to the human person: man is open to the infinite and to all created beings.* He is open above all to the infinite — God — because with his intellect and will he raises himself above all the created order and above himself, he becomes independent from creatures, is free in relation to created things and tends towards total truth and the absolute good. He is open also to others, to the men and women of the world, because only insofar as he understands himself in reference to a “thou” can he say “I”. He comes out of himself, from the self-centred preservation of his own life, to enter into a relationship of dialogue and communion with others.

The human person is open to the fullness of being, to the unlimited horizon of being. He has in himself the ability to transcend the individual particular objects that he knows, thanks effectively to his openness to unlimited being. In a certain sense the human soul is — because of its cognitive dimension — all things: “all immaterial things enjoy a certain infiniteness, insofar as they embrace everything, or because it is a question of the essence of a spiritual reality that functions as a model and likeness of everything, as is the case with God, or because it has a likeness to everything or is ‘in act’ like the Angels or ‘in potential’ like souls”[245].

b. Unique and unrepeatable

131. *Man exists as a unique and unrepeatable being, he exists as an “I” capable of self-understanding, self-possession and self-determination.* The human person is an intelligent and conscious being, capable of reflecting on himself and therefore of being aware of himself and his actions. However, it is not intellect, consciousness and freedom that define the person, rather it is the person who is the basis of the acts of intellect, consciousness and freedom. These acts can even be absent, for even without them man does not cease to be a person.

The human person, must always be understood in his unrepeatable and inviolable uniqueness. In fact, man exists above all as a *subjective entity*, as a centre of *consciousness* and *freedom*, whose unique life experiences, comparable to those of no one else, underlie the inadmissibility of any attempt to reduce his status by forcing him into preconceived categories or power systems, whether ideological or otherwise. This entails above all the requirement not only of simple *respect* on the part of others, especially political and social institutions and their leaders with regard to every man and woman

on the earth, but even more, this means that the primary commitment of each person towards others, and particularly of these same institutions, must be for the promotion and integral development of the person.

c. Respect for human dignity

132. A just society can become a reality only when it is based on the respect of the transcendent dignity of the human person. The person represents the ultimate end of society, by which it is ordered to the person: “Hence, the social order and its development must invariably work to the benefit of the human person, since the order of things is to be subordinate to the order of persons, and not the other way around”[246]. Respect for human dignity can in no way be separated from obedience to this principle. It is necessary to “consider every neighbour without exception as another self, taking into account first of all his life and the means necessary for living it with dignity”[247]. Every political, economic, social, scientific and cultural programme must be inspired by the awareness of the primacy of each human being over society[248].

133. *In no case, therefore, is the human person to be manipulated for ends that are foreign to his own development*, which can find complete fulfilment only in God and his plan of salvation: in fact, man in his interiority transcends the universe and is the only creature willed by God for itself[249]. For this reason neither his life nor the development of his thought, nor his good, nor those who are part of his personal and social activities can be subjected to unjust restrictions in the exercise of their rights and freedom.

The person cannot be a means for carrying out economic, social or political projects imposed by some authority, even in the name of an alleged progress of the civil community as a whole or of other persons, either in the present or the future. It is therefore necessary that public authorities keep careful watch so that restrictions placed on freedom or any onus placed on personal activity will never become harmful to personal dignity, thus guaranteeing the effective practicability of human rights. All this, once more, is based on the vision of man as a *person*, that is to say, as an *active* and *responsible* subject of his own growth process, together with the community to which he belongs.

134. *Authentic social changes are effective and lasting only to the extent that they are based on resolute changes in personal conduct.* An authentic moralization of social life will never be possible unless it starts with people and has people as its point of reference: indeed, “living a moral life bears witness to the dignity of the person”[250]. It is obviously the task of people to develop those moral attitudes that are fundamental for any society that truly wishes to be human (justice, honesty, truthfulness, etc.), and which in no way can simply be expected of others or delegated to institutions. It is the task of everyone, and in a special way of those who hold various forms of political, judicial or professional responsibility with regard to others, to be the watchful conscience of society and the first to bear witness to civil social conditions that are worthy of human beings.

C. THE FREEDOM OF THE HUMAN PERSON

a. The value and limits of freedom

135. *Man can turn to good only in freedom, which God has given to him as one of the highest signs of his image*[251]: “For God has willed that man remain ‘under the control of his own decisions’ (Sir 15:14), so that he can seek his Creator spontaneously, and come freely to utter and blissful perfection through loyalty to Him. Hence man's dignity demands that he act according to a knowing and free choice that is personally motivated and prompted from within, neither under blind internal impulse nor by mere external pressure”[252].

Man rightly appreciates freedom and strives for it passionately: rightly does he desire and must form and guide, by his own free initiative, his personal and social life, accepting personal responsibility for it[253]. In fact, freedom not only allows man suitably to modify the state of things outside of himself, but it also determines the growth of his being as a person through choices consistent with the true good[254]. In this way man generates himself, he is *father* of his own being[255], he constructs the social order[256].

136. *Freedom is not contrary to man's dependence as a creature on God*[257]. *Revelation teaches that the power to decide good and evil does not belong to man but to God alone* (cf. Gen 2:16-17). “Man is certainly free, inasmuch as he can understand and accept God's commands. And he possesses an extremely far-reaching freedom, since he can eat ‘of every tree of the

garden'. But his 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. In fact, human freedom finds its authentic and complete fulfilment precisely in the acceptance of that law"[258].

137. *The proper exercise of personal freedom requires specific conditions of an economic, social, juridic, political and cultural order that "are too often disregarded or violated. Such situations of blindness and injustice injure the moral life and involve the strong as well as the weak in the temptation to sin against charity. By deviating from the moral law man violates his own freedom, becomes imprisoned within himself, disrupts neighbourly fellowship and rebels against divine truth"[259]. Removing injustices promotes human freedom and dignity: nonetheless, "the first thing to be done is to appeal to the spiritual and moral capacities of the individual and to the permanent need for inner conversion, if one is to achieve the economic and social changes that will truly be at the service of man"[260].*

b. The bond uniting freedom with truth and the natural law

138. *In the exercise of their freedom, men and women perform morally good acts that are constructive for the person and for society when they are obedient to truth, that is, when they do not presume to be the creators and absolute masters of truth or of ethical norms[261]. Freedom in fact does not have "its absolute and unconditional origin ... in itself, but in the life within which it is situated and which represents for it, at one and the same time, both a limitation and a possibility. Human freedom belongs to us as creatures; it is a freedom which is given as a gift, one to be received like a seed and to be cultivated responsibly"[262]. When the contrary is the case, freedom dies, destroying man and society[263].*

139. *The truth concerning good and evil is recognized in a practical and concrete manner by the judgment of conscience, which leads to the acceptance of responsibility for the good accomplished and the evil committed. "Consequently in the practical judgment of conscience, which imposes on the person the obligation to perform a given act, the link between freedom and truth is made manifest. Precisely for this reason conscience expresses itself in acts of 'judgment' which reflect the truth about the good, and not in arbitrary 'decisions'. The maturity and responsibility of these judgments — and, when all is said and done, of the individual who is their subject — are not measured by the liberation of the conscience from objective truth, in favour of an alleged autonomy in personal decisions, but, on the contrary, by an insistent search for truth and by allowing oneself to be guided by that truth in one's actions"[264].*

140. *The exercise of freedom implies a reference to a natural moral law, of a universal character, that precedes and unites all rights and duties[265]. The natural law "is nothing other than the light of intellect infused within us by God. Thanks to this, we know what must be done and what must be avoided. This light or this law has been given by God to creation"[266]. It consists in the participation in his eternal law, which is identified with God himself[267]. This law is called "natural" because the reason that promulgates it is proper to human nature. It is universal, it extends to all people insofar as it is established by reason. In its principal precepts, the divine and natural law is presented in the Decalogue and indicates the primary and essential norms regulating moral life[268]. Its central focus is the act of aspiring and submitting to God, the source and judge of everything that is good, and also the act of seeing others as equal to oneself. The natural law expresses the dignity of the person and lays the foundations of the person's fundamental duties[269].*

141. *In the diversity of cultures, the natural law unites peoples, enjoining common principles. Although its application may require adaptations to the many different conditions of life according to place, time and circumstances,[270] it remains immutable "under the flux of ideas and customs and supports their progress ... Even when it is rejected in its very principles, it cannot be destroyed or removed from the heart of man. It always rises again in the life of individuals and societies"[271].*

Its precepts, however, are not clearly and immediately perceived by everyone. Religious and moral truths can be known "by everyone with facility, with firm certainty and without the admixture of error"[272] only with the help of Grace and Revelation. The natural law offers a foundation prepared by God for the revealed law and Grace, in full harmony with the work of the Spirit[273].

142. *The natural law, which is the law of God, cannot be annulled by human sinfulness[274]. It lays the indispensable moral*

foundation for building the human community and for establishing the civil law that draws its consequences of a concrete and contingent nature from the principles of the natural law[275]. If the perception of the universality of the moral law is dimmed, people cannot build a true and lasting communion with others, because when a correspondence between truth and good is lacking, “whether culpably or not, our acts damage the communion of persons, to the detriment of each”[276]. Only freedom rooted in a common nature, in fact, can make all men responsible and enable them to justify public morality. Those who proclaim themselves to be the sole measure of realities and of truth cannot live peacefully in society with their fellow men and cooperate with them[277].

143. *Freedom mysteriously tends to betray the openness to truth and human goodness, and too often it prefers evil and being selfishly closed off, raising itself to the status of a divinity that creates good and evil:* “Although he was made by God in a state of holiness, from the very onset of his history man abused his liberty, at the urging of the Evil One. Man set himself against God and sought to attain his goal apart from God ... Often refusing to acknowledge God as his beginning, man has disrupted also his proper relationship to his own ultimate goal as well as his whole relationship toward himself and others and all created things”[278]. *Human freedom needs therefore to be liberated.* Christ, by the power of his Paschal Mystery, frees man from his disordered love of self[279], which is the source of his contempt for his neighbour and of those relationships marked by domination of others. Christ shows us that freedom attains its fulfilment in the gift of self[280]. By his sacrifice on the cross, Jesus places man once more in communion with God and his neighbour.

D. THE EQUAL DIGNITY OF ALL PEOPLE

144. *“God shows no partiality” (Acts 10:34; cf. Rom 2:11; Gal 2:6; Eph 6:9), since all people have the same dignity as creatures made in his image and likeness*[281]. The Incarnation of the Son of God shows the equality of all people with regard to dignity: “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal 3:28; cf. Rom 10:12; 1 Cor 12:13, Col 3:11). *Since something of the glory of God shines on the face of every person, the dignity of every person before God is the basis of the dignity of man before other men*[282]. Moreover, this is the ultimate foundation of the radical equality and brotherhood among all people, regardless of their race, nation, sex, origin, culture, or class.

145. *Only the recognition of human dignity can make possible the common and personal growth of everyone (cf. Jas 2:1-9).* To stimulate this kind of growth it is necessary in particular to help the least, effectively ensuring conditions of equal opportunity for men and women and guaranteeing an objective equality between the different social classes before the law[283].

Also in relations between peoples and States, conditions of equality and parity are prerequisites for the authentic progress of the international community[284]. Despite the steps taken in this direction, it must not forget that there still exist many inequalities and forms of dependence[285].

Together with equality in the recognition of the dignity of each person and of every people there must also be an awareness that it will be possible to safeguard and promote human dignity only if this is done as a community, by the whole of humanity. Only through the mutual action of individuals and peoples sincerely concerned for the good of all men and women can a genuine universal brotherhood be attained[286]; otherwise, the persistence of conditions of serious disparity and inequality will make us all poorer.

146. *“Male” and “female” differentiate two individuals of equal dignity, which does not however reflect a static equality, because the specificity of the female is different from the specificity of the male, and this difference in equality is enriching and indispensable for the harmony of life in society:* “The condition that will assure the rightful presence of woman in the Church and in society is a more penetrating and accurate consideration of the anthropological foundation for masculinity and femininity with the intent of clarifying woman's personal identity in relation to man, that is, a diversity yet mutual complementarity, not only as it concerns roles to be held and functions to be performed, but also, and more deeply, as it concerns her make-up and meaning as a person”[287].

147. Woman is the complement of man, as man is the complement of woman: man and woman complete each

other mutually, not only from a physical and psychological point of view, but also ontologically. It is only because of the duality of “male” and “female” that the “human” being becomes a full reality. It is the “unity of the two”[288], or in other words a relational “uni-duality”, that allows each person to experience the interpersonal and reciprocal relationship as a gift that at the same time is a mission: “to this ‘unity of the two’ God has entrusted not only the work of procreation and family life, but the creation of history itself”[289]. “The woman is ‘a helper’ for the man, just as the man is ‘a helper’ for the woman!”[290]: in the encounter of man and woman a unitary conception of the human person is brought about, based not on the logic of self-centredness and self-affirmation, but on that of love and solidarity.

148. *Persons with disabilities are fully human subjects, with rights and duties:* “in spite of the limitations and sufferings affecting their bodies and faculties, they point up more clearly the dignity and greatness of man”[291]. Since persons with disabilities are subjects with all their rights, they are to be helped to participate in every dimension of family and social life at every level accessible to them and according to their possibilities.

The rights of persons with disabilities need to be promoted with effective and appropriate measures: “It would be radically unworthy of man, and a denial of our common humanity, to admit to the life of the community, and thus admit to work, only those who are fully functional. To do so would be to practise a serious form of discrimination, that of the strong and healthy against the weak and sick”[292]. Great attention must be paid not only to the physical and psychological work conditions, to a just wage, to the possibility of promotion and the elimination of obstacles, but also to the affective and sexual dimensions of persons with disabilities: “They too need to love and to be loved, they need tenderness, closeness and intimacy”[293], according to their capacities and with respect for the moral order, which is the same for the non-handicapped and the handicapped alike.

E. THE SOCIAL NATURE OF HUMAN BEINGS

149. *The human person is essentially a social being* [294] *because God, who created humanity, willed it so*[295]. Human nature, in fact, reveals itself as a nature of a being who responds to his own needs. This is based on a *relational subjectivity*, that is, in the manner of a free and responsible being who recognizes the necessity of integrating himself in cooperation with his fellow human beings, and who is *capable of communion* with them on the level of knowledge and love. “A *society* is a group of persons bound together organically by a principle of unity that goes beyond each one of them. As an assembly that is at once visible and spiritual, a society endures through time: it gathers up the past and prepares for the future”[296].

It is therefore necessary to stress that community life is a natural characteristic that distinguishes man from the rest of earthly creatures. Social activity carries in itself a particular sign of man and of humanity that of a person at work within a community of persons: this is the sign that determines man's interior traits and in a sense constitutes his very nature[297]. This relational characteristic takes on, in the light of faith, a more profound and enduring meaning. Made in the image and likeness of God (cf. Gen 1:26), and made visible in the universe in order to live in society (cf. Gen 2:20,23) and exercise dominion over the earth (cf. Gen 1:26,28- 30), the human person is for this reason called from the very beginning to life in society: “God did not create man as a ‘solitary being’ but wished him to be a ‘social being’. Social life therefore is not exterior to man: he can only grow and realize his vocation in relation with others”[298].

150. *The social nature of human beings does not automatically lead to communion among persons, to the gift of self.* Because of pride and selfishness, man discovers in himself the seeds of asocial behaviour, impulses leading him to close himself within his own individuality and to dominate his neighbour[299]. Every society worthy of the name can be sure that it stands in the truth when all of its members, thanks to their ability to know what is good, are able to pursue it for themselves and for others. It is out of love for one's own good and for that of others that people come together in stable groups with the purpose of attaining a common good. The different human societies also must establish among themselves relationships of solidarity, communication and cooperation, in the service of man and the common good[300].

151. *The social nature of human beings is not uniform but is expressed in many different ways.* In fact, the common good depends on a healthy *social pluralism*. The different components of society are called to build a unified and

harmonious whole, within which it is possible for each element to preserve and develop its own characteristics and autonomy. Some components — such as the family, the civil community and the religious community — respond more immediately to the intimate nature of man, while others come about more on a voluntary basis. “To promote the participation of the greatest number in the life of a society, the creation of voluntary associations and institutions must be encouraged ‘on both national and international levels, which relate to economic and social goals, to cultural and recreational activities, to sport, to various professions, and to political affairs’. This ‘*socialization*’ also expresses the natural tendency for the sake of attaining objectives that exceed individual capacities. It develops the qualities of the person, especially the sense of initiative and responsibility, and helps guarantee his rights”[301].

IV. HUMAN RIGHTS

A. The value of human rights

152. *The movement towards the identification and proclamation of human rights is one of the most significant attempts to respond effectively to the inescapable demands of human dignity*[302]. The Church sees in these rights the extraordinary opportunity that our modern times offer, through the affirmation of these rights, for more effectively recognizing human dignity and universally promoting it as a characteristic inscribed by God the Creator in his creature[303]. The Church's Magisterium has not failed to note the positive value of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, adopted by the United Nations on 10 December 1948, which Pope John Paul II defined as “a true milestone on the path of humanity's moral progress”[304].

153. *In fact, the roots of human rights are to be found in the dignity that belongs to each human being*[305]. This dignity, inherent in human life and equal in every person, is perceived and understood first of all by reason. The natural foundation of rights appears all the more solid when, in light of the supernatural, it is considered that human dignity, after having been given by God and having been profoundly wounded by sin, was taken on and redeemed by Jesus Christ in his incarnation, death and resurrection[306].

The ultimate source of human rights is not found in the mere will of human beings[307], *in the reality of the State, in public powers, but in man himself and in God his Creator*. These rights are “universal, inviolable, inalienable”[308]. *Universal* because they are present in all human beings, without exception of time, place or subject. *Inviolable* insofar as “they are inherent in the human person and in human dignity”[309] and because “it would be vain to proclaim rights, if at the same time everything were not done to ensure the duty of respecting them by all people, everywhere, and for all people”[310]. *Inalienable* insofar as “no one can legitimately deprive another person, whoever they may be, of these rights, since this would do violence to their nature”[311].

154. Human rights are to be defended not only individually but also as a whole: protecting them only partially would imply a kind of failure to recognize them. They correspond to the demands of human dignity and entail, in the first place, the fulfilment of the essential needs of the person in the material and spiritual spheres. “These rights apply to every stage of life and to every political, social, economic and cultural situation. Together they form a single whole, directed unambiguously towards the promotion of every aspect of the good of both the person and society ... The integral promotion of every category of human rights is the true guarantee of full respect for each individual right”.[312] Universality and indivisibility are distinctive characteristics of human rights: they are “two guiding principles which at the same time demand that human rights be rooted in each culture and that their juridical profile be strengthened so as to ensure that they are fully observed”[313].

B. The specification of rights

155. *The teachings of Pope John XXIII*,[314] *the Second Vatican Council*,[315] and *Pope Paul VI* [316] have given abundant indication of the concept of human rights as articulated by the Magisterium. Pope John Paul II has drawn up a list of them in the Encyclical *Centesimus Annus*: “the right to life, an integral part of which is the right of the child to develop in the mother's womb from the moment of conception; the right to *live in* a united family and in a moral environment conducive to the growth of the child's personality; the right to develop one's intelligence and *freedom* in seeking and knowing the *truth*; the right to share in the work which makes wise use of the earth's material resources,

and to derive from that work the means to support oneself and one's dependents; and the right *freely to establish a family*, to have and to rear children through the responsible exercise of one's sexuality. In a certain sense, the source and synthesis of these rights is religious *freedom*, understood as the right to live in the truth of one's faith and in conformity with one's transcendent dignity as a person"[317].

The first right presented in this list is the right to life, from conception to its natural end,[318] which is the condition for the exercise of all other rights and, in particular, implies the illicitness of every form of procured abortion and of euthanasia.[319] *Emphasis is given to the paramount value of the right to religious freedom*: "all men are to be immune from coercion on the part of individuals or of social groups and of any human power, in such wise that no one is to be forced to act in a manner contrary to his own beliefs, whether privately or publicly, whether alone or in association with others, within due limits".[320] The respect of this right is an indicative sign of "man's authentic progress in any regime, in any society, system or milieu"[321].

C. Rights and duties

156. *Inextricably connected to the topic of rights is the issue of the duties falling to men and women*, which is given appropriate emphasis in the interventions of the Magisterium. The mutual complementarities between rights and duties — they are indissolubly linked — are recalled several times, above all in the human person who possesses them.[322] This bond also has a social dimension: "in human society to one man's right there corresponds a duty in all other persons: the duty, namely, of acknowledging and respecting the right in question".[323] *The Magisterium underlines the contradiction inherent in affirming rights without acknowledging corresponding responsibilities*. "Those, therefore, who claim their own rights, yet altogether forget or neglect to carry out their respective duties, are people who build with one hand and destroy with the other".[324]

D. Rights of peoples and nations

157. *The field of human rights has expanded to include the rights of peoples and nations*: [325] in fact, "what is true for the individual is also true for peoples".[326] The Magisterium points out that international law "rests upon the principle of equal respect for States, for each people's right to self-determination and for their free cooperation in view of the higher common good of humanity".[327] Peace is founded not only on respect for human rights but also on respect for the rights of peoples, in particular the right to independence.[328]

The rights of nations are nothing but "human rights' fostered at the specific level of community life".[329] A nation has a "fundamental right to existence", to "its own language and culture, through which a people expresses and promotes ... its fundamental spiritual 'sovereignty'", to "shape its life according to its own traditions, excluding, of course, every abuse of basic human rights and in particular the oppression of minorities", to "build its future by providing an appropriate education for the younger generation".[330] The international order requires a *balance between particularity and universality*, which all nations are called to bring about, for their primary duty is to live in a posture of peace, respect and solidarity with other nations.

E. Filling in the gap between the letter and the spirit

158. *The solemn proclamation of human rights is contradicted by a painful reality of violations*, wars and violence of every kind, in the first place, genocides and mass deportations, the spreading on a virtual worldwide dimension of ever new forms of slavery such as trafficking in human beings, child soldiers, the exploitation of workers, illegal drug trafficking, prostitution. "Even in countries with democratic forms of government, these rights are not always fully respected".[331]

Unfortunately, there is a gap between the "letter" and the "spirit" of human rights,[332] which can often be attributed to a merely formal recognition of these rights. The Church's social doctrine, in consideration of the privilege accorded by the Gospel to the poor, repeats over and over that "the more fortunate should *renounce* some of their rights so as to place their goods more generously at the service of others" and that an excessive affirmation of equality "can give rise to an individualism in which each one claims his own rights without wishing to be answerable for the common good".[333]

159. *The Church, aware that her essentially religious mission includes the defence and promotion of human rights*,^[334] “holds in high esteem the dynamic approach of today which is everywhere fostering these rights”.^[335] The Church profoundly experiences the need to respect justice ^[336] and human rights ^[337] within her own ranks.

This pastoral commitment develops in a twofold direction: in the proclamation of the Christian foundations of human rights and in the denunciation of the violations of these rights.^[338] In any event, “proclamation is always more important than denunciation, and the latter cannot ignore the former, which gives it true solidity and the force of higher motivation”.^[339] For greater effectiveness, this commitment is open to ecumenical cooperation, to dialogue with other religions, to all appropriate contacts with other organizations, governmental and non-governmental, at the national and international levels. The Church trusts above all in the help of the Lord and his Spirit who, poured forth into human hearts, is the surest guarantee for respecting justice and human rights, and for contributing to peace. “The promotion of justice and peace and the penetration of all spheres of human society with the light and the leaven of the Gospel have always been the object of the Church's efforts in fulfilment of the Lord's command”.^[340]

FOOTNOTES

[197] Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, 22: *AAS* 58 (1966), 1042.

[198] Cf. John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Redemptor Hominis*, 14: *AAS* 71 (1979), 284.

[199] Cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1931.

[200] Congregation for Catholic Education, *Guidelines for the Study and Teaching of the Church's Social Doctrine in the Formation of Priests*, 35, Vatican Polyglot Press, Rome 1988, p. 39.

[201] Pius XII, Radio Message of 24 December 1944, 5: *AAS* 37 (1945), 12.

[202] Cf. John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Centesimus Annus*, 11: *AAS* 83 (1991), 807.

[203] Cf. John XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Mater et Magistra*: *AAS* 53 (1961), 453, 459.

[204] *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 357.

[205] Cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 356, 358.

[206] *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, title of Chapter 1, Section 1, Part 1; cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, 12: *AAS* 58 (1966), 1034; John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Evangelium Vitae*, 34: *AAS* 87 (1995), 440.

[207] Cf. John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Evangelium Vitae*, 35: *AAS* 87 (1995), 440-441; *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1721.

[208] Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, 12: *AAS* 58 (1966), 1034.

[209] Cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 369.

[210] John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Evangelium Vitae*, 35: *AAS* 87 (1995), 440.

[211] Cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2334.

[212] Cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 371.

[213] Cf. John Paul II, Letter to Families *Gratissimam Sane*, 6, 8, 14, 16, 19-20: *AAS* 86 (1994), 873-874, 876-878, 899-903, 910-919.

[214] Cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, 50-51: *AAS* 58 (1966), 1070-1072.

[215] Cf. John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Evangelium Vitae*, 19: *AAS* 87 (1995), 421-422.

[216] Cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2258.

[217] Cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, 27: *AAS* 58 (1966), 1047-1048; *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2259-2261.

[218] Cf. John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Fides et Ratio*, proem: *AAS* 91 (1999), 5.

[219] Cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 373.

[220] Cf. John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Evangelium Vitae*, 34: *AAS* 87 (1995), 438-440.

[221] Saint Augustine, *Confessions*, I, 1: PL 32, 661: “Tu excitas, ut laudare te delectet; quia fecisti nos ad te, et inquietum est cor nostrum, donec requiescat in te”.

[222] Cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1850.

[223] *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 404.

[224] John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation *Reconciliatio et Paenitentia*, 2: *AAS* 77 (1985), 188; cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1849.

[225] John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation *Reconciliatio et Paenitentia*, 15: *AAS* 77 (1985), 212-213.

[226] John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation *Reconciliatio et Paenitentia*, 16: *AAS* 77 (1985), 214. The text explains moreover that there is a *law of descent*, which is a kind of *communion of sin*, in which a soul that lowers itself through sin drags down with it the Church and, in some way, the entire world; to this law there corresponds a *law of ascent*, the profound and magnificent mystery of the *communion of saints*, thanks to which every soul that rises above itself also raises the world.

[227] John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation *Reconciliatio et Paenitentia*, 16: *AAS* 77 (1985), 216.

[228] Cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1869.

[229] Cf. John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, 36: *AAS* 80 (1988), 561-563.

[230] John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, 37: *AAS* 80 (1988), 563.

[231] John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation *Reconciliatio et Paenitentia*, 10: *AAS* 77 (1985), 205.

[232] Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, 22: *AAS* 58 (1966), 1042.

[233] Cf. Paul VI, Apostolic Letter *Octogesima Adveniens*, 26-39: *AAS* 63 (1971), 420-428.

[234] Pius XII, Encyclical Letter *Summi Pontificatus*: *AAS* 31 (1939), 463.

[235] John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Centesimus Annus*, 13: *AAS* 83 (1991), 809.

- [236] Paul VI, Apostolic Letter *Octogesima Adveniens*, 27: *AAS* 63 (1971), 421.
- [237] John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Redemptor Hominis*, 14: *AAS* 71 (1979), 284.
- [238] Cf. Fourth Lateran Ecumenical Council, Chapter 1, *De Fide Catholica*: DS 800, p. 259; First Vatican Ecumenical Council, *Dei Filius*, c. 1: *De Deo rerum omnium Creatore*: DS 3002, p. 587; First Vatican Ecumenical Council, canons 2, 5: DS 3022, 3025, pp. 592, 593.
- [239] John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Veritatis Splendor*, 48: *AAS* 85 (1993), 1172.
- [240] Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, 14: *AAS* 58 (1966), 1035; cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 364.
- [241] Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, 14: *AAS* 58 (1966), 1035.
- [242] Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, 14: *AAS* 58 (1966), 1036; cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 363, 1703.
- [243] Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, 15: *AAS* 58 (1966), 1036.
- [244] *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 365.
- [245] Saint Thomas Aquinas, *Commentum in tertium librum Sententiarum*, d. 27, q. 1, a. 4: “Ex utraque autem parte res immateriales infinitatem habent quodammodo, quia sunt quodammodo omnia, sive in quantum essentia rei immaterialis est exemplar et similitudo omnium, sicut in Deo accidit, sive quia habet similitudinem omnium vel actu vel potentia, sicut accidit in Angelis et animabus”; cf. Saint Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I, q. 75, a. 5: Ed. Leon. 5, 201-203.
- [246] Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, 26: *AAS* 58 (1966), 1046-1047.
- [247] Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, 27: *AAS* 58 (1966), 1047.
- [248] Cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2235.
- [249] Cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, 24: *AAS* 58 (1966), 1045; *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 27, 356 and 358.
- [250] *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1706.
- [251] Cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1705.
- [252] Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, 17: *AAS* 58 (1966), 1037; cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1730-1732.
- [253] Cf. John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Veritatis Splendor*, 34: *AAS* 85 (1993), 1160- 1161; Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, 17: *AAS* 58 (1966), 1038.
- [254] Cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1733.
- [255] Cf. Gregory of Nyssa, *De Vita Moysis*, II, 2-3: PG 44, 327B-328B: “unde fit, ut nos ipsi patres quodammodo simus nostri ... vitii ac virtutis ratione fingentes”.
- [256] Cf. John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Centesimus Annus*, 13: *AAS* 83 (1991), 809-810.
- [257] Cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1706.
- [258] John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Veritatis Splendor*, 35: *AAS* 85 (1993), 1161-1162.
- [259] *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1740.
- [260] Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Instruction *Libertatis Conscientia*, 75: *AAS* 79 (1987), 587.
- [261] Cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1749-1756.
- [262] John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Veritatis Splendor*, 86: *AAS* 85 (1993), 1201.
- [263] Cf. John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Veritatis Splendor*, 44, 99: *AAS* 85 (1993), 1168-1169, 1210-1211.
- [264] John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Veritatis Splendor*, 61: *AAS* 85 (1993), 1181-1182.
- [265] Cf. Encyclical Letter *Veritatis Splendor*, 50: *AAS* 85 (1993), 1173-1174.
- [266] Saint Thomas Aquinas, *In Duo Praecepta Caritatis et in Decem Legis Praecepta Expositio*, c. 1: “Nunc autem de scientia operandorum intendimus: ad quam tractandan quadruplex lex invenitur. Prima dicitur lex naturae; et haec nihil aliud est nisi lumen intellectus insitum nobis a Deo, per quod cognoscimus quid agendum et quid vitandum. Hoc lumen et hanc legem dedit Deus homini in creatione”: Divi Thomae Aquinatis, Doctoris Angelici, *Opuscula Theologica*, vol. II: *De re spirituali*, cura et studio P. Fr. Raymundi Spiazzi, O.P., Marietti ed., Taurini - Romae 1954, p. 245.
- [267] Cf. Saint Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I-II, q. 91, a. 2, c: Ed. Leon. 7, 154: “participatio legis aeternae in rationali creatura lex naturalis dicitur”.
- [268] Cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1955.
- [269] Cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1956.
- [270] Cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1957.
- [271] *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1958.
- [272] First Vatican Ecumenical Council, *Dei Filius*, c. 2: DS 3005, p. 588; cf. Pius XII, Encyclical Letter *Humani Generis*: *AAS* 42 (1950), 562.
- [273] Cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1960.
- [274] Cf. Saint Augustine, *Confessions*, 2, 4, 9: PL 32, 678: “Furtum certe punit lex tua, Domine, et lex scripta in cordibus hominum, quam ne ipsa quidem delet iniquitas”.
- [275] Cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1959.
- [276] John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Veritatis Splendor*, 51: *AAS* 85 (1993), 1175.
- [277] Cf. John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Evangelium Vitae*, 19-20: *AAS* 87 (1995), 421-424.
- [278] Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, 13: *AAS* 58 (1966), 1034-1035.
- [279] Cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1741.
- [280] Cf. John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Veritatis Splendor*, 87: *AAS* 85 (1993), 1202-1203.
- [281] Cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1934.
- [282] Cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, 29: *AAS* 58 (1966), 1048-1049.
- [283] Cf. Paul VI, Encyclical Letter *Octogesima Adveniens*, 16: *AAS* 63 (1971), 413.

- [284] Cf. John XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Pacem in Terris*, 47-48: *AAS* 55 (1963), 279- 281; Paul VI, Address to the General Assembly of the United Nations (4 October 1965), 5: *AAS* 57 (1965), 881; John Paul II, Address to the Fiftieth General Assembly of the United Nations (5 October 1995), 13: *L'Osservatore Romano*, English edition, 11 October 1995, p. 9-10.
- [285] Cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, 84: *AAS* 58 (1966), 1107-1108.
- [286] Cf. Paul VI, Address to the General Assembly of the United Nations, 5: *AAS* 57 (1965), 881; Paul VI, Encyclical Letter *Populorum Progressio*, 43-44: *AAS* 59 (1967), 278-279.
- [287] John Paul II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Christifideles Laici*, 50: *AAS* 81 (1989), 489.
- [288] John Paul II, Apostolic Letter *Mulieris Dignitatem*, 11: *AAS* 80 (1988), 1678.
- [289] John Paul II, Letter to Women, 8: *AAS* 87 (1995), 808.
- [290] John Paul II, Sunday Angelus (9 July 1995): *L'Osservatore Romano*, English edition, 12 July 1995, p. 1; cf. Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on the Collaboration of Men and Women in the Church and in the World: L'Osservatore Romano*, English edition, 11/18 August 2004, pp. 5-8.
- [291] John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Laborem Exercens*, 22: *AAS* 73 (1981), 634.
- [292] John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Laborem Exercens*, 22: *AAS* 73 (1981), 634.
- [293] John Paul II, Message for the International Symposium on the Dignity and Rights of the Mentally Disabled Person, 5 January 2004, 5: *L'Osservatore Romano*, English edition, 21 January 2004, p. 6.
- [294] Cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, 12: *AAS* 58 (1966), 1034; *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1879.
- [295] Cf. Pius XII, Radio Message of 24 December 1942, 6: *AAS* 35 (1943), 11-12; John XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Pacem in Terris*: *AAS* 55 (1963), 264-265.
- [296] *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1880.
- [297] The natural social disposition of men and women also makes it evident that the origin of society is not found in a “contract” or “agreement”, but in human nature itself; and from this arises the possibility of freely creating different agreements of association. It must not be forgotten that the ideologies of the social contract are based on a false anthropology; consequently, their results cannot be — and in fact they have not been — profitable for society or for people. The Magisterium has declared such opinions as openly absurd and entirely disastrous: cf. Leo XIII, Encyclical Letter *Libertas Praestantissimum: Acta Leonis XIII*, 8 (1889), 226-227.
- [298] Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Instruction *Libertatis Conscientia*, 32: *AAS* 79 (1987), 567.
- [299] Cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, 25: *AAS* 58 (1966), 1045-1046.
- [300] Cf. John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, 26: *AAS* 80 (1988), 544-547; Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, 76: *AAS* 58 (1966), 1099-1100.
- [301] *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1882.
- [302] Cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Declaration *Dignitatis Humanae*, 1: *AAS* 58 (1966), 929-930.
- [303] Cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, 41: *AAS* 58 (1966), 1059-1060; Congregation for Catholic Education, *Guidelines for the Study and Teaching of the Church's Social Doctrine in the Formation of Priests*, 32, Vatican Polyglot Press, Rome 1988, pp. 36-37.
- [304] John Paul II, Address to the 34th General Assembly of the United Nations (2 October 1979), 7: *AAS* 71 (1979), 1147-1148; for John Paul II, this *Declaration* “remains one of the highest expressions of the human conscience of our time”: Address to the Fiftieth General Assembly of the United Nations (5 October 1995), 2: *L'Osservatore Romano*, English edition, 11 October 1995, p. 8.
- [305] Cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, 27: *AAS* 58 (1966), 1047-1048; *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1930.
- [306] Cf. John XIII, Encyclical Letter *Pacem in Terris*: *AAS* 55 (1963), 259; Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, 22: *AAS* 58 (1966), 1079.
- [307] Cf. John XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Pacem in Terris*: *AAS* 55 (1963), 278-279.
- [308] John XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Pacem in Terris*: *AAS* 55 (1963), 259.
- [309] John Paul II, Message for the 1999 World Day of Peace, 3: *AAS* 91 (1999), 379.
- [310] Paul VI, Message to the International Conference on Human Rights, Teheran (15 April 1968): *L'Osservatore Romano*, English edition, 2 May 1968, p. 4.
- [311] John Paul II, Message for the 1999 World Day of Peace, 3: *AAS* 91 (1999), 379.
- [312] John Paul II, Message for the 1999 World Day of Peace, 3: *AAS* 91 (1999), 379.
- [313] John Paul II, Message for the 1998 World Day of Peace, 2: *AAS* 90 (1998), 149.
- [314] Cf. John XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Pacem in Terris*: *AAS* 55 (1963), 259-264.
- [315] Cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, 26: *AAS* 58 (1966), 1046-1047.
- [316] Cf. Paul VI, Address to the General Assembly of the United Nations (4 October 1965), 6: *AAS* 57 (1965), 883-884; Paul VI, Message to the Bishops Gathered for the Synod (26 October 1974): *AAS* 66 (1974), 631-639.
- [317] John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Centesimus Annus*, 47: *AAS* 83 (1991), 851-852; cf. also Address to the 34th General Assembly of the United Nations (2 October 1979), 13: *AAS* 71 (1979) 1152-1153.
- [318] Cf. John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Evangelium Vitae*, 2: *AAS* 87 (1995), 402.
- [319] Cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, 27: *AAS* 58 (1966), 1047-1048; John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Veritatis Splendor*, 80: *AAS* 85 (1993), 1197-1198; John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Evangelium Vitae*, 7-28: *AAS* 87 (1995), 408-433.
- [320] Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Declaration *Dignitatis Humanae*, 2: *AAS* 58 (1966), 930-931.
- [321] John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Redemptor Hominis*, 17: *AAS* 71 (1979), 300.
- [322] Cf. John XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Pacem in Terris*: *AAS* 55 (1963), 259-264; Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, 26: *AAS* 58 (1966), 1046-1047.

- [323] John XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Pacem in Terris*: *AAS* 55 (1963), 264.
- [324] John XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Pacem in Terris*: *AAS* 55 (1963), 264.
- [325] Cf. John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, 33: *AAS* 80 (1988), 557-559; John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Centesimus Annus*, 21: *AAS* 83 (1991), 818-819.
- [326] John Paul II, Letter on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the outbreak of the Second World War, 8: *L'Osservatore Romano*, English edition, 4 September 1989, p. 2.
- [327] John Paul II, Letter on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the outbreak of the Second World War, 8: *L'Osservatore Romano*, English edition, 4 September 1989, p. 2.
- [328] Cf. John Paul II, Address to the Diplomatic Corps (9 January 1988), 7-8: *L'Osservatore Romano*, English edition, 25 January 1988, p. 7.
- [329] John Paul II, Address to the Fiftieth General Assembly of the United Nations (5 October 1995), 8: *L'Osservatore Romano*, English edition, 11 October 1995, p. 9.
- [330] John Paul II, Address to the Fiftieth General Assembly of the United Nations (5 October 1995), 8: *L'Osservatore Romano*, English edition, 11 October 1995, p. 9.
- [331] John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Centesimus Annus*, 47: *AAS* 83 (1991), 852.
- [332] Cf. John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Redemptor Hominis*, 17: *AAS* 71 (1979), 295-300.
- [333] Paul VI, Encyclical Letter *Octogesima Adveniens*, 23: *AAS* 63 (1971), 418.
- [334] Cf. John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Centesimus Annus*, 54: *AAS* 83 (1991), 859-860.
- [335] Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, 41: *AAS* 58 (1966), 1060.
- [336] Cf. John Paul II, Address to Officials and Advocates of the Tribunal of the Roman Rota (17 February 1979), 4: *Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II*, II, 1 (1979), 413-414.
- [337] Cf. *Code of Canon Law*, canons 208-223.
- [338] Cf. Pontifical Commission "Iustitia et Pax", *The Church and Human Rights*, 70-90, Vatican City 1975, pp. 45-54.
- [339] John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, 41: *AAS* 80 (1988), 572.
- [340] Paul VI, Motu Proprio *Iustitiam et Pacem* (10 December 1976): *L'Osservatore Romano*, 23 December 1976, p. 10.