



Fr. Roger J. Landry
Leonine Forum New York
IESE Business School
October 17, 2017

Christian Anthropology: Man in the Modern World

- Introduction on the Importance of an adequate anthropology
 - Yesterday the Church marked the 39th anniversary of the election of St. John Paul II as the 263rd Peter.
 - He's had more influence on my thought than almost any other figure. He, I think, identified many of the most important questions and sought to answer them. Many of his questions and answers have no expiration date.
 - In preparation for Vatican II, Bishop Wojtyla wrote a document for the ante-preparatory commission that said that the biggest issue facing the Church was not reforming its own house but to give an adequate response to the yearnings, questions and provisional answers of the human person today. In the chaos that was coming from all of the "isms" of the 20th century — not just Nazism and Communism, but materialism, hedonism, individualism, relativism, atheism — modern man wanted to know whether Christian humanism was different from all the other humanisms out there, whether it had a real answer to the problem of modern despair. Everything in the Council, he said, should be organized according to this framework.
 - In his pre-papal philosophical work, most notably *Person and Act*, he sought to sketch out an adequate anthropology, something that blended together metaphysics and ethics, the person understood ontologically and the person in action, the person in his objective and subjective dimensions, his exterior and interior realities. He sought to do this through phenomenological personalism.
 - Wojtyla didn't persuade those in charge of the Council to accept his ideas about framing the whole Council in terms of Christian humanism *in toto*, but he remained convinced throughout the Council and beyond that the Church needed an *adequate anthropology*, an adequate understanding of the human person, to propose to the Augustines of the modern world, who like St. Augustine 16 centuries before, were seeking to find peace for their restless hearts in all types of false answers. Wojtyla knew their hearts would only be able to find rest in God.
 - While he didn't get the whole Council framed according to this schema, in the Pastoral Constitution of the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et Spes*, which was dedicated to the Church's positive articulation of the Gospel in response to modern anxieties, now-Archbishop Wojtyla played an enormous role in the formulation of this authentic Christian humanism. This hinged on two passages, which would eventually become the two most cited Vatican II passages of his papacy, because they dominated his thought:
 - GS 22 — The truth is that only in the mystery of the incarnate Word does the mystery of man take on light. ... By the revelation of the mystery of the Father and His love, [Christ] fully reveals man to man himself and makes his supreme calling clear. ... All this holds true not only for Christians, but for all men of good will in whose hearts grace works in an unseen way. For, since Christ died for all men, and since the ultimate vocation of man is in fact one, and divine, we ought to believe that the Holy Spirit in a manner known only to God offers to every man the possibility of being associated with this paschal mystery. Such is the mystery of man, and it is a great one, as seen by believers in the light of Christian

revelation. Through Christ and in Christ, the riddles of sorrow and death grow meaningful. Apart from His Gospel, they overwhelm us.

- GS 24 — Man, who is the only creature on earth which God willed for itself, cannot fully find himself except through a sincere gift of himself.
- John Paul II said in 1993 (CTK). “I had long been interested in man as a person. ... Then, when I discovered my priestly vocation, man became the central theme of my pastoral work.” He goes on to describe how he needed to answer questions of young people about how to live, work, and respond to the *isms* and how that led to his deeper articulation of the personalistic principle, an attempt to “translate the commandment of love into the language of philosophical ethics. The person is a being for whom the only suitable dimension is love. We are just to a person if we love him. ... Love for a person excludes the possibility of treating him as an object of pleasure.” Then he mentioned GS 24 and comments: “Here we truly *have an adequate interpretation of the commandment of love.* ... At the same time, the Council emphasizes that the most important thing about *love is the sincere gift of self.* In this sense the *person is realized through love.* ... *Man affirms himself completely by giving of himself.* This is the fulfillment of the commandment of love. This is also the full truth about man, a truth that Christ taught us by His life.”
- When he was elected the 263rd successor of St. Peter, these two related ideas became the program of his pontificate, which was encapsulated in his first encyclical entitled, “Christ, the Redeemer of Man.”
- He said, in *Redemptor Hominis*, that when he accepted in a spirit of obedience in faith the papacy, *it was to give a response to the fundamental question of how we could grow closer to Christ as we approached the third millennium.* “To this question... *a fundamental and essential response must be given.*” “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” By his incarnation, life, teachings and particularly his suffering and death, Christ reveals [who God is:] that God is love. “In man’s history, this revelation of love and mercy has taken a form and a name: Jesus Christ.”
- That leads to the moral consequence. In one of the most beautiful passages in any of his papal writings, he wrote, “*Man cannot live without love.* 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. This, as has already been said, is why Christ the Redeemer “fully reveals man to himself”. ... In this [human] dimension man finds again 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. He is newly created!* ... *The man who wishes to understand himself thoroughly-and not just in accordance with immediate, partial, often superficial, and even illusory standards and measures of his being-he 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.* If this profound process takes place within him, he then bears fruit not only of adoration of God but also of deep wonder at himself. How precious must man be in the eyes of the Creator, if he “gained so great a Redeemer” and if God “gave his only Son “in order that man “should not perish but have eternal life.” In reality, the name for that deep amazement at man’s worth and dignity is the Gospel, *that is to say: the Good News. It is also called Christianity. This amazement determines the Church’s mission in the world and, perhaps even more so, “in the modern world”.* This amazement, which is also a conviction and a certitude-at its deepest root it is the certainty of faith, but in a hidden and mysterious way *it vivifies every aspect of authentic humanism*-is closely connected with Christ. It also fixes Christ’s place-so to speak, his particular right of citizenship-in the history of man and mankind.
- So the Church’s mission in the modern world is all about this authentic humanism: to help the human person discover who he really is, to provide an answer to his deepest questions, to help him overcome the despair that sets in with nothingness or because of the accumulated pains and sufferings that no amount of psychobabble and booze can make disappear. This pursuit is clarified

when one turns with wonder to Christ, who reveals man to himself fully, and shows him the path to achieving that fulfillment, not through self-assertion, but self-gift.

- Elements of an adequate Christian Anthropology (taken from the Compendium on the Social Teaching of the Church)
 - First, the person is a creature
 - Don't create ourselves.
 - Enter into life as the gift of another.
 - Related to Creator. Related to parents. Certain filiation.
 - Called to participate in mystery of creation.
 - Second the person is fundamentally good
 - Must discover and respect his and others' value
 - Contemplate what God and others see as good in them.
 - Third, the Person is one in soul and body (*corpore et anima unus*)
 - In him is united the material and spiritual realms.
 - Both realms are good, not to be despised.
 - Spiritualism and materialism are both deficient
 - He has
 - Reason (to be discussed shortly)
 - Will (to be discussed shortly)
 - Emotions
 - Can feel.
 - Passions are fundamentally gifts but need to be ordered to truth and good.
 - Fourth, the person is the image of God
 - Reason
 - Can know
 - Bound to the truth about things.
 - Will
 - Can choose freely.
 - Freedom is valued but limited, because of his creatureliness.
 - Freedom is tied to responsibility, to the good, and to truth
 - It's the ability to do what we ought rather than whatever we like. Etzioni: "You can do what you want provided that you do what is right"
 - Freedom is not contrary to dependence on God.
 - Summoned to communion and love
 - He is a social being with a social nature, based on relation with God.
 - He is not solitary, not atomized
 - He is called to live in society
 - The gift of self leads to communion. Communion doesn't happen without sacrifice, without getting outside of oneself.
 - The whole ground for the family in self-mastery, self-possession and self-giving
 - He is called to work
 - The first command in the Gospel came right after God called us into existence: the calling to a three-fold work.
 - Gen 1:26 "Then God said, 'Let us make mankind in our image, according to our likeness... So God created mankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.'"

- JP II in *Laborem Exercens* 13. “We must go back to the fundamental issue of human work, which ... is of such importance for man — it constitutes one of the fundamental dimensions of his earthly existence and of his vocation.
- JP II in *Centesimus Annus* 6. “Work thus belongs to the vocation of every person; indeed, man expresses and fulfills himself by working. At the same time, work has a ‘social’ dimension through its intimate relationship not only to the family, but also to the common good.
- Man is the image of God partly through the mandate received from his Creator to subdue, to dominate, the earth. In carrying out this mandate, every human being reflects to some degree the very action of the Creator of the universe. This type of work distinguishes him from creatures.
- After the Fall, this vocation remained, but now would be accomplished “with the sweat of your brow,” and with the pangs of childbirth, but the toil is redemptive. ... By enduring the toil of work in union with Christ crucified for us, man in a way collaborates with the Son of God for the redemption of humanity.
- Work transforms both the worker and the world.
 - (LE) Work as a transitive activity changes creation in subduing the earth, the whole of the visible world. Man *dominates* the earth by the very fact of domesticating animals, rearing them and obtaining from them the food and clothing he needs, and by the fact of being able to extract various natural resources from the earth and the seas. But man "*subdues* the earth" much more when he begins to cultivate it and then to transform its products, adapting them to his own use. Industry in its turn will always consist in linking the earth's riches — whether nature's living resources, or the products of agriculture, or the mineral or chemical resources — with man's work, whether physical or intellectual.
 - (LE) Work as an intransitive activity develops the worker. As a person, man is therefore the subject of work, and independently of their objective content, his actions serve to realize his humanity. This dimension conditions the very ethical nature of work, involving a subject who decides about himself through freedom and virtue.
 - Work can allow people to develop or to be damaged. This is why John Paul II stated, “The sources of the dignity of work are to be sought primarily in the *subjective dimension*, not in the objective one.”
 - St. Gregory of Nyssa, we are our parents through our work.
 - *Facere versus agere*.
 - (LE) Since work in its subjective aspect is always a personal action, an ‘*actus personae*,’ it follows that the whole person, body and spirit, participates in it, whether it is manual or intellectual work. The Church sees as her particular duty to form a spirituality of work which will help all people to come closer, through work, to God, the creator and redeemer, to participate in his salvific plan for man and the world and to deepen their friendship with Christ.
 - All of this leads to what John Paul II called The Gospel of Work (LE): Man ought to imitate God, his creator, in working and in resting, because man alone has the unique characteristic of likeness to God. The truth that by means of work man participates in the activity of God himself, his creator, was given particular prominence by Jesus Christ. This “gospel of work,” is particularly powerful because he who proclaimed it was himself a man of work, a craftsman like Joseph of Nazareth.

- The person has a unity and a uniqueness
 - Capable of self-awareness self-understanding, self-possession and qualified self-determination
 - Intelligent, conscious and self-conscious.
- Fifth, there is the original differentiation between man and woman
 - Equal Dignity. Equally made in God's image and likeness
 - Complementarity. Biologically, metaphysically, psychologically
 - This original differentiation is tied to the nuptial meaning of the person
- Sixth, the person has and seeks transcendence
 - The human person has the capacity for God and is a spiritual being.
 - Can get out of oneself and into relationship. I-thou
 - Can exercise dominion over creatures
 - The person is stable. While parts of us change, who we are remains constant, because of this transcendence.
- Seventh, the person has a conscience
 - Inner organ of sensitivity in which we hear God's voice.
 - It's a judgment of the practical reason
 - Bound to the truth about right and wrong, to way things are, to law outside of ourselves, that is at the same time connatural.
- Eighth, the person is a moral agent, capable of choosing good and evil, virtue and vice, holiness and sin
 - Virtue builds oneself up, to become more human and more like God. Virtue is a sign of the possibility for growth.
 - Sin and vice tear us apart. Division within oneself and others. Sin through distrust, failure to hear and obey.
 - Sin and virtue impact our human nature, our "second nature." Sin wounds relationship with God, with others, with himself. There are social consequences. So, too, good actions build us up and positive impact our relationship with others.
- Ninth, the person has inalienable dignity and some inalienable rights flowing from that dignity
 - This dignity and these rights are given ultimately not by self, State, but found in relationship to Creature and others
 - They are beyond one's function. The disabled still have this existential dignity.
 - Human rights are an attempt to respond effectively to human dignity
 - Universal, inviolable and inalienable rights, like the right to life, right to religious freedom, on the basis of which other rights form.
 - They cannot be manipulated for ends foreign to his own development.
- Tenth, the human person suffers and dies.
 - Already talked about childbirth, sweat and toil.
 - Suffering and death and objective realities and subjective problems.
 - Problem of physical, psychological and moral pain and suffering.
 - Problem of the innocent suffering.
 - Suffering and death remain mysteries, but receive light in Christ who fully reveals man and makes his vocation clear.
 - These ontological evils can become moral goods, by the way we suffer and the way we respond to others' suffering.
 - Suffering unleashes love in the human person: SD 29. "Following the parable of the Gospel, we could say that suffering, which is present under so many different forms in our human world, is also present in order *to unleash love in the human person*, that unselfish gift of one's "I" on behalf of other people, especially those who suffer. The world of human suffering unceasingly calls for, so to speak, another world: the world of human love; and in a certain sense man owes to suffering that unselfish love which stirs in his heart and actions. The person who is a " neighbour" cannot indifferently pass by the suffering of another: this in

the name of fundamental human solidarity, still more in the name of love of neighbour. He must "stop", "sympathize", just like the Samaritan of the Gospel parable. The parable in itself expresses *a deeply Christian truth*, but one that at the same time is very universally human. It is not without reason that, also in ordinary speech, any activity on behalf of the suffering and needy is called "Good Samaritan" work."

- For that reason it becomes a Gospel
- Various anthropological issues today
 - Reductionistic understandings of human anthropology
 - Ontological
 - Materialism (we are just our matter, our chemicals)
 - Individualism (we have no social nature)
 - Dualism (Notion of the disembodied self)
 - Dehumanizing discrimination like racism (fails to recognize humanity in every human being)
 - Epistemological
 - Relativism (the person can't know the truth, because there is no *the* truth)
 - Gnosticism (the person can't know the most important truths)
 - Justice Anthony Kennedy, 1992, *Casey versus Planned Parenthood*: "At the heart of liberty is the right to define one's own concept of existence, of meaning, of the universe, and of the mystery of human life."
 - Ethical
 - Moral relativism (no moral absolutes, or a person cannot know them)
 - Emotivism (desire not to hurt another)
 - Voluntarism (everything determined by whether our intention is good)
 - Problems with identity
 - Self-definition contrary to the givens
 - Unshackling from human nature.
 - Gender confusion, dysphoria
 - Self-identifies.
 - Loretta Lynch said that to self-identify is a human right.
 - Rachel Dolezal claims she was black.
 - Pure will
 - Particular confusion with regard to love and human sexuality
 - Love considered a feeling rather than a commitment, a choice, willing the other's good for the sake of the other.
 - No longer universally understood as the gift of oneself.
 - Mutual utilitarianism and harmonious egoisms. Love is the opposite of using people.
 - Connection between true love and sex, between sex and marriage, and between marriage and children/family lost.
 - Sped up with the sexual revolution, which really came as a result of the pill, of a new form of contraception.
 - Sexuality
 - So many of the gender identity issues have to do with sexuality, the one to whom one is attracted or with whom acts out. There still is a connection between sex understood as male or female and sex understood as a verb.
 - Facebook now has 71 gender options. Others list far more.
 - Subject of those with Same-Sex Attractions
 - Called to live in love, but *philia*, *agape* and *storge*.
 - Not ordered to the purpose of human sexuality, love and life, complementarity. Importance of training in the real meaning of chastity

- Raising love to the dignity of the other person
- Linking it not just to temperance but to love as a gift of self.
- Never using another merely as a means.
- Linking it to purity and piety.
- With work
 - Many treat vacation as the norm of human life rather than work.
 - Issue of unemployment. Especially for youth.
 - Woman's work. Absolutely need to have meaning.
 - Training the young to work.
 - Work for the disabled.
 - Problem of "playing the system"
 - Study is a part of that work.
 - Communism/socialism/capitalism: what they get right, what they do not.
- With suffering
 - Suicide epidemic.
 - Opioid/painkiller epidemic.
 - Many no longer see any meaning in suffering and pain.
 - Treat human persons like we do pets and euthanize them.
 - Voluntary euthanasia changes the approach to suffering and leads to involuntary.
 - Importance of palliative care.
 - Importance of compassion, and making sure people do not suffer alone.
 - Allowing others' love to be unleashed when we are suffering, rather than robbing them of this growth in humanity.
- Conclusion and questions
 - Need for an adequate anthropology
 - Adequate in itself, that it corresponds to the data
 - Adequate in persuasion, that it corresponds to the questions.
 - Ideas are obviously important, but it must be lived. Living consistent with who we are.
 - *Soyez vous mêmes* of Francis de Sales.
 - Christ says, "follow me."
 - John Paul II was rich in humanity, poet, play write, philosopher, theologian, athlete, baritone singer and more.
 - We start off with this because it's central. The Leonine Forum seeks ultimately not just to inform but to help form in this adequate anthropology. Thanks for sharing in that project!