

John Paul II on Modernity, the Moral Structure of Freedom and the Future of the Free Society

-by Kenneth L. Grasso

John Paul II neither rejects modernity nor exalts the freedom it has engendered. Rather, he affirms the modern aspiration to achieve "the complete liberation of man," but does so in terms of "the complete truth about the human being" and "the truth and love revealed to men by Jesus Christ."

Contrary to what is occasionally suggested, the idea of freedom is not a discovery of the modern world. In fact, as has been pointed out countless times, this idea figures prominently in the biblical vision of the person and is a constitutive element of Christian anthropology. It is nevertheless true, however, that with the rise of modernity, freedom comes to assume a new importance, a new prominence. Walter Kasper expresses a commonplace when he observes that in the modern era "mankind in its freedom and its worth becomes the point of departure, and the middle and end point of thought."¹ In the political arena, this exaltation of freedom gave rise to a new type of polity. The hallmarks of what might be called the free society are its commitments to the idea of human rights, to religious, intellectual, artistic and scientific freedom, to equality before the law, and to the right of the people to participation in public affairs. These commitments, in turn, find expression in the idea of constitutional democracy, of government that is limited in its scope, subject in its operations to the rule of law, and responsible to those it governs.

John Paul's orientation toward the free society must be seen in the broader context of his approach toward modernity as a whole. The key to grasping this orientation is the recognition that John Paul rejects both the type of uncompromising antimodernism toward which Catholic thought often tended prior to the Second Vatican Council and the type of uncritical embrace of modern culture which has been so influential among Western Catholic intellectuals in the decades since the Council. Calling "upon the Church," as Kenneth L. Schmitz notes, "neither wholly to endorse nor wholly to condemn modernity,"² John Paul's thought reflects the approach to modernity that informs the vision of the Second Vatican Council (in which he was an active participant) and, especially, the Council's Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (in the drafting of which he played an important role).

A proper evaluation of modernity, this approach insists, must reckon with modernity in its full complexity, and thus take cognizance of both the ways in

which the modern world embodies affirmations and values rooted in the Christian vision of man and reality, and the ways in which it departs from that vision. In its confrontation with modernity, therefore, the Catholic mind must recognize and assimilate both the legitimate aspirations and accomplishment of the modern world and “the fundamental achievements of modern and contemporary thought,”³ while seeking to purify them of whatever in them is incompatible with Christian truth. Catholic thought, this is to say, must recognize the deep-seated ambiguity of modernity, seeking to rescue all that is valuable and, indeed, noble, in it from modernity’s own self-subverting and ultimately self-destructive tendencies.

It is this approach to modernity that has guided John Paul’s own pre-papal philosophical work—with its effort to enrich Catholic thought by assimilating into the Thomistic tradition the valid methods and legitimate insights of modern philosophies of freedom and consciousness.⁴ And it is this same approach that guides his engagement with the modern ideal of the free society.

I

On innumerable occasions in the course of his papacy, John Paul has invoked the opening sentences of a text he hailed as one of the foundational documents of contemporary Catholic social teaching: the Second Vatican Council’s Declaration of Religious Liberty. “A sense of the dignity of the human person,” the Declaration begins,

has been impressing itself more and more deeply on the consciousness of contemporary man. And the demand is increasingly made that men should act on their own judgment, enjoying and making use of a responsible freedom, not driven by coercion but motivated by a sense of duty. The demand is also made that constitutional limits should be set to the powers of government, in order that there may be no encroachment on the rightful freedom of the person and of associations. This demand for freedom in human society chiefly regards the quest for the values proper to the human spirit. It regards, in the first place, the free exercise of religion in society.⁵

Commenting approvingly on the developments referred to in this passage, John Paul affirms that “this heightened sense of the dignity of the human person and of his or her uniqueness, and of the respect due to the journey of conscience, certainly represents one of the positive achievements of modern culture.”⁶

It should perhaps be emphasized here that this appeal to human dignity is no mere rhetorical gambit. The idea of man’s dignity as a person lies at the heart of John Paul’s vision. In a letter to his friend, the great Jesuit theologian Henri de Lubac, written shortly after he became a Cardinal in 1968, he remarked that:

I devote my very rare free moments to a work that is close to my heart and devoted to the metaphysical sense and mystery of the PERSON. It seems to me that the debate today is being played on that level. The evil of our times consists in the first place in a kind of degradation, indeed in a pulverization, of the fundamental uniqueness of each human person. This evil is even much more of the metaphysical order than of the moral order. To this disintegration . . . we must oppose, rather than sterile polemics, a kind of “recapitulation” of the inviolable mystery of the person.⁷

The idea of the human person is central to both John Paul’s personalist philosophy and the Christocentric anthropology that informs his theological vision. “In Christ and through Christ,” as he proclaims in his first encyclical, *The Redeemer of Man*, “man has acquired full awareness of his own dignity, of the heights to which he is raised, of the surpassing worth of his own humanity.”⁸ The “almost divine dignity” of the human person, he has tirelessly insisted, is an integral part of the Gospel message and hence of the Church’s teaching.⁹

Nor is John Paul hesitant about embracing the implications of modern man’s “heightened” sense of the dignity of the human person. “One of the distinguishing marks of our times,” he notes, is a “universal longing for freedom.”¹⁰ Far from lamenting this longing, John Paul celebrates it, echoing the Second Vatican Council’s affirmation that the people of our day are right to value “freedom” highly and “pursue it eagerly.”¹¹ The “quest for freedom,” in fact, arises inexorably “from a recognition of the inestimable dignity and value of the human person,” and the consequent desire “to be given a place in social, political and economic life . . . commensurate with” this “dignity.”¹²

The connection between the recognition of man’s dignity as a person and the quest for freedom is not mysterious. Here again, John Paul is fond of invoking the Council’s Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World. “Authentic freedom,” the Council affirms, is an exceptional sign of the divine image in man.” Inasmuch as “God willed that man remain ‘under the control of his own decisions’ . . . so that he can seek his creator spontaneously, and come freely to utter and blissful perfection through loyalty to him,” man’s “dignity” requires him to seek truth and goodness through a “knowing and free choice, that is personally motivated and prompted from within, not under blind internal impulse, nor external pressure.”¹³ Respect for man’s dignity, in short, requires a commitment to human freedom.

This dignity, in turn, is the source of an order of “‘human rights’--rights inherent in every person and prior to any Constitution and state legislation” (*EV*, 18, 34). The human person, John Paul proclaims, by virtue of his “transcendent dignity . . . as the visible image of the invisible God, is . . . by his very nature the subject of rights which no one may violate--no individual group, class, nation or State. Not even the majority of a social body may violate these rights . . .”¹⁴ “Our . . . fundamental rights” therefore are “inalienable” because

they are grounded not in “social convention” but our “intrinsic dignity.” As such, “they precede all social conventions and provide the norms that determine their validity.”¹⁵ The recognition of man’s dignity as a person, therefore, finds expression “in the . . . lively concern that human rights should be respected, and in the . . . vigorous rejection of their violation.”¹⁶

Thus, the “long historical process” that “led to [the] discovering” of this idea must be hailed as one of the greatest achievements of the modern age (*EV*, 18, 34). Celebrating the United Nations’ *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* as “one of the highest expressions of the human conscience of our time,”¹⁷ he insists that “the common good . . . is brought to full realization only” when “the objective and inviolable rights of man” are respected.¹⁸ Indeed, he affirms that “to the Gospel message belong all the problems of human rights.”¹⁹

At the institutional level, John Paul’s solicitude for the freedom and rights of the human person translates into an embrace of the institutions and practices of constitutional democracy. “The free and responsible participation of all citizens in public affairs,” “the rule of law” and “respect for and promotion of human rights” are essential to “the ‘health’ of a community.” Thus, wherever conditions allow, the well-being of the body politic requires the establishment of “*democratic and participatory*” forms of government.²⁰ In fact, “democracy” is to be numbered among “the most precious and essential goods of society” (*EV*, 70, 115). Thus, “if today we see an almost universal consensus with regard to the value of democracy, this is to be considered a positive ‘sign of the times,’ as the Church’s Magisterium has frequently noted” (*EV*, 70, 115). Indeed, during a trip to Latin America early in his papacy he observed that “if democracy means human rights”--if it means a political system rooted in and dedicated to, the rights of the person --“it also belongs to the message of the Church.”²¹

II

It should be obvious that John Paul exhibits a genuine admiration for the principles, institutions, and practices that together compose the modern ideal of the free society. Any remaining doubts on this score can be dispelled by examining his comments regarding the foundations of the American democratic experiment.)²² At the same time, however, he is at pains to call attention to the shadows that today fall upon the free societies of the modern West. Not limited to the specific moral shortcomings of these societies, his concerns extend to the public philosophy--the understanding of the intellectual and moral foundations of the free society--that have come to inform their public life. On the one hand, he laments that “nowadays there is a tendency to claim that agnosticism and skeptical relativism are the philosophy and the basic attitude which correspond to democratic forms of political life.”²³ Relativism, it is held, is “an essential condition of democracy, inasmuch as it alone” can “guarantee tolerance, mutual respect between people and acceptance of the decisions of the majority.” The

idea of “objective and binding” moral truth, in contrast, leads inexorably to “authoritarianism and intolerance” (*EV*, 70, 114).

Alongside this emerging “alliance between democracy and relativism” (*VS*, 101, 123), we have witnessed the growth of “a completely individualistic conception of freedom,” a conception of freedom “which exalts the isolated individual in an absolute way” (*EV*, 19, 36). Government, in this view, exists to protect the moral autonomy of individuals, to safeguard their right to be subject to no moral norms not of their own making. Respect for this autonomy, in turn, demands that government “should not adopt or impose any ethical position but [instead must] limit itself to guaranteeing maximum space for the freedom of each individual, with the sole limitation of not infringing on the freedom . . . of any other citizen” (*EV*, 69, 113).

These trends, John Paul is convinced, represent a grave threat to the future of the free society and the authentic values it embodies. Indeed, the threat they pose is so grave that he wonders at one point if we have not arrived at “a turning point” in “the long historical process” that culminated in the establishment of these societies (*EV*, 18, 34).

“The value of democracy,” he maintains, “stands or falls with the values which it embodies and promotes.” Democratic institutions are “a means and not an end.” Their value derives from their capacity to embody and promote certain goods “fundamental” among which are “the dignity of every human person, respect for inviolable and inalienable human rights, and the adoption of the ‘common good’ as the end and criterion regulating political life.” “The basis of these values,” furthermore, “cannot be provisional and changeable ‘majority’ opinions, but only the acknowledgment of an objective moral law” (*EV*, 70, 115).

Democracy, therefore, “is only truly such when it acknowledges and safeguards the dignity of every human person” (*EV*, 20, 38). “The development of a sound democracy” thus requires the affirmation of “those essential and innate human and moral values which flow from the very truth of the human being and express and safeguard the dignity of the person: values which no individual, no majority and no state can ever create, modify or destroy, but must only acknowledge, respect and promote” (*EV*, 71, 116). It is these values which find expression in the demands of the objective and universal moral law. And because these values constitute nothing less than the moral foundation of democratic government, the acknowledgement of the “universal and unchanging” demands of the moral order represents “the unshakable and solid guarantee of a just and peaceful human coexistence, and hence of genuine democracy” (*VS*, 96, 118).

By denying the existence of such a truth, relativism simultaneously reduces “our intrinsic dignity” and “fundamental rights” to the status of mere “social conventions” and deprives us of an “objective standard to help adjudicate different conceptions of the personal and common good.”²⁴ Relativism thus

strikes at the very “foundations” of democratic government. Without a “sure principle for guaranteeing just relations between people,”²⁵ democracy is “reduced to a mere mechanism for regulating different and opposing interests on a purely empirical basis”(EV 70, 115) and “democratic politics to a raw contest for power.”²⁶ Under such conditions, law becomes nothing more than an expression of “the will of the stronger part”(EV, 20, 38), and “force . . . becomes the criterion for choice and action in . . . social life” (EV, 19, 36). Under such conditions, “democracy . . . becomes an empty word” because “the democratic ideal . . . is betrayed in its very foundations” (EV, 70, 116).

Thus, far from serving the cause of the dignity and rights of the person, when conceived in a relativistic fashion, democracy “easily turns into open or thinly disguised totalitarianism.”²⁷ In fact, “moral relativism” prevents a society from answering “questions [that are] fundamental to a democratic political community,” such as “Why should I regard my fellow citizen as my equal? Why should I defend someone else’s rights? Why should I work for the common good?” By doing so, John Paul concludes, “a climate of moral relativism” ultimately makes democracy “impossible.”²⁸

Similar dangers accompany the radically individualistic conception of freedom that has emerged in recent decades. Insofar as it makes “freedom . . . absolute in an individualistic way,” this conception ignores human freedom’s “essential link to the truth” and “inherently relational dimension.” By “giving no place to solidarity, to openness to others and service to them,” it leads to a rejection of our responsibilities towards others (EV, 19, 36-37). It thereby issues in

. . . a serious distortion of life in society. If the promotion of the self is understood in terms of absolute autonomy, people inevitably reach the point of rejecting one another. Everyone else is considered an enemy from whom one has to defend oneself. Thus society becomes a mass of individuals placed side by side, but without any mutual bonds. Each one wishes to assert himself independently of the other and in fact intends to make his own interests prevail. Still, in the face of other people’s analogous interests, some kind of compromise must be found, if one wants a society in which the maximum possible freedom is guaranteed to each individual. In this way, any reference to common values and to a truth absolutely binding on everyone is lost, and social life ventures on to the shifting sands of complete relativism. At the point, everything is negotiable, everything is open to bargaining (EV, 20, 37-38).

In practice, therefore, this “completely individualistic concept of freedom . . . ends up becoming the freedom of ‘the strong’ against the weak” (EV, 19, 36-37).

Thus, although “superficially attractive”, this view “ultimately destroys the personal good of individuals and the common good of society.” “Freedom as autonomy,” he writes,

by its single-minded focus on the autonomous will of the individual as the sole organizing principle of public life, dissolves the bonds of obligation between men and women, parents and children, the strong and the weak, majorities and minorities. The result is the breakdown of civil society, and a public life in which the only actors of consequence are the autonomous individual and the state. This, as the 20th century ought to have taught us, is a sure prescription for tyranny.²⁹

III

The obvious question here concerns how these tragic developments can be explained. Although John Paul praises modernity’s heightened sensitivity to the dignity and freedom of the person, he simultaneously laments that “this perception, authentic as it is, has been expressed in a number of more or less adequate ways, some of which however diverge from the truth about man as a creature and the image of God, and thus need to be corrected and purified in the light of faith” (*VS*, 31, 47-48). The crisis that assails the modern ideal of the free society is rooted in the very conception of human dignity and freedom that has historically undergirded it, and ultimately in the very metaphysics of the person that lies at the heart of modern thought.

“The deepest root” of the “confusion” that plagues “modern man” is found in “the eclipse of the sense of God” characteristic of “a social and cultural climate dominated by secularism.” This eclipse constitutes “the heart of the tragedy being experienced by contemporary man” (*EV*, 21, 39). For “when the sense of God is lost, there is also a tendency to lose the sense of man,” to lose sight of “the mystery” of man’s “own being” (*EV*, 22, 42). “When God is forgotten,” writes John Paul, echoing the Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, “the creature itself grows unintelligible” (*EV*, 22, 40). The loss of God issues in a profound misunderstanding of the nature of the human person which finds expression in “practical materialism,” “individualism,” “utilitarianism” and “hedonism” (*EV*, 23, 42).

If the eclipse of “the sense of God and of man” is the ultimate cause of the crisis besetting the free societies of the modern West, the immediate cause is the far-reaching “crisis of truth” (*VS*, 32, 48) that assails contemporary thought. While “modern philosophy clearly has the great merit of focusing attention upon man,” this very focus tends to create “a one-sided” emphasis on “human subjectivity.” The result is “an ever-deepening introversion,” which acts to lock “the human spirit . . . within the confines of its own immanence without reference of any kind to the transcendent,”³⁰ and culminates in the denial that the human mind is “equipped to know the truth and to seek the absolute.”³¹ The ultimate result of this crisis of truth is a “nihilism” that is at once “the

denial of all foundations and the negations of all objective truth,” and which ultimately leads “either to a destructive will to power or to a solitude without hope.”³²

Under the impact of these developments, we have witnessed “the denial of the very idea of human nature” (*VS*, 32,49), and the emergence of a new conception of freedom. Untethered from truth, freedom is exalted “almost to the point of idolatry” (*VS*, 54, 73) and elevated to the status of an “absolute” (*VS*, 32, 48). It thus comes to enjoy “a primacy over truth, to the point that truth itself” comes to be considered a “creation of freedom” (*VS* 35, 51). This absolutization of freedom thus fosters an individualistic ethos wherein “each individual” possesses “his or her own truth, different from the truth of others” (*VS*, 35, 51).

Absolutized in this fashion, “freedom alone, uprooted from all objectivity” (*VS*, 84, 106) becomes “the source of values,” (*VS*, 32, 48) laying “claim to a moral autonomy” which “would actually amount to an absolute sovereignty” (*VS*, 35, 51-52). As a result, “the individual conscience” is granted “the prerogative of independently determining the criteria of good and evil” (*VS* 32, 48). At the moral level, therefore, this radically individualistic ethos finds expression in the rejection of “the idea of the universal truth about the good, knowable by human reason” (*VS*, 32, 48), of the “idea that there exists a moral law inscribed in our humanity, which we can come to know by reflecting on our nature and our actions, and which lays certain obligations upon us because we recognize them as universally true and binding.” Indeed, “the very idea” of such a law is a violation of “the rights of conscience,” “an abrogation of freedom.”³³

Thus, at the center of the “crisis of moral culture”³⁴ that today threatens the free society is the detachment of freedom from “its essential and constitutive relationship to truth” (*VS* 4, 13). To be properly understood, human freedom must be seen in the context of “the truth about man” (*VS*, 87, 107-108). “Human freedom,” writes John Paul, “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. It is an essential part of the creaturely image which is the basis of the dignity of the person.” Accordingly, this freedom “is not absolute and unconditional,” but “limited” and finite. “At once inalienable self-possession and openness to all that exists,” it is ordered to truth, goodness and love (*VS*, 87, 107-108). It is only through these goods that freedom can achieve its purpose of enabling “people to realize themselves fully” by being “true to their nature”³⁵ and fulfilling the destiny to which they are called by their Creator.

Inasmuch as “God, who alone is good, knows perfectly what is good for man” and “proposes this good to man” through “the moral law,” it follows that “human freedom finds its complete and authentic fulfillment precisely in the acceptance” of this “law.” “God’s law does not reduce, much less do away with human freedom,” but instead “protects and promotes that freedom” (*VS*, 35, 51) because “by submitting” to it “freedom submits to the truth of creation,”

to “the requirements and the promptings” of “divine wisdom” (*VS*, 41, 56). Since “the good of the person is to be in the Truth and to *do* the Truth” (*VS*, 84, 105), it is only through “obedience to God’s law” (*VS*, 41, 56) that human freedom can achieve its goal of enabling human beings “to realize themselves fully.”

Human freedom, therefore, “is not unlimited.” When man rejects “the moral law given by God” (*VS*, 35, 50), the result is “the death of true freedom: ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, every one who commits sin is a slave to sin’ (Jn 8:34)” (*EV*, 20, 39). For this reason, authentic freedom is “never freedom ‘from’ the truth but always and only freedom ‘in’ the truth” (*VS*, 64, 82). Indeed, precisely because freedom has its foundation and finds its “complete and authentic fulfillment” (*VS*, 35, 51) in the truth, “there can be no freedom apart from or in opposition to truth” (*VS*, 96, 118).

Given “the fundamental dependence of freedom upon the truth” (*VS*, 34, 50), the attempt to establish freedom apart from the truth can only have catastrophic consequences. “When freedom, out of a desire to emancipate itself from all forms of tradition and authority,” writes John Paul,

shuts out even the most obvious evidence of an objective and universal truth, which is the foundation of personal and social life, then the person ends up by no longer taking as the sole and indisputable point of reference for his own choices the truth about the good and evil, but only his own subjective and changeable opinion or, indeed, his selfish interest and whim (*EV*, 19, 37).

Such a conception of freedom effectively absolutizes the will of the individual or the group by granting to the one or the other “*the right to determine what is good and evil*” (*VS*, 35, 51).

By depriving politics of “an objective moral grounding” (*EV*, 70, 116), such an understanding of freedom reduces justice and the rights of the human person to the status of mere social conventions, and politics to nothing more than a struggle for power, thereby legitimizing the oppression and exploitation of the weak by the strong. Indeed, totalitarianism “arises” precisely from a “denial of truth in the objective sense” and the consequent “rejection of an objective criterion of good and evil beyond the will of those in power.”³⁶ Thus, when “its essential link to the truth” is severed, “freedom negates and destroys itself, and becomes a factor leading to the destruction of others” (*EV*, 19, 37).

Freedom, therefore “is not simply the absence of tyranny or oppression.” Nor is it “license to do whatever we like.” On the contrary, freedom has a “moral structure,” an “inner architecture,” which must be respected if it is to exist. Freedom, this is to say, possesses

an inner “logic” which distinguishes it and ennobles it: freedom is ordered to the truth, and is fulfilled in man’s quest for truth and in man’s living in the truth. Detached from the truth about the human person, freedom deteriorates

into license in the lives of individuals, and, in political life, it becomes the caprice of the most powerful and the arrogance of power. Far from being a limitation upon freedom, or a threat to it, reference to the truth about the human person--a truth universally knowable through the moral law written through the hearts of all--is, in fact, the guarantor of freedom's future.³⁷

As the grim events of this century confirm, "once the truth is denied to human beings, it is pure illusion to try to set them free. Truth and freedom go together hand in hand or together . . . perish in misery."³⁸

IV

Last year, John Paul told a group of American Bishops that in rejecting today's pervasive "skepticism regarding the existence of 'moral truth' and an objective moral law," and affirming "the essential bond" between freedom and truth,

you will be challenging one of the great forces in the modern world. But at the same time, *you will be doing the modern world a great service*, for you will be reminding it of the only foundation capable of sustaining a culture of freedom: what the Founders of your nation called "self-evident" truths.³⁹

The "great service" he asks them to perform consists in helping to save modernity from itself by helping to rescue one of the noblest aspirations of the modern era--the quest for freedom--from the currents within modernity itself that threaten it. The threat stems from the flawed metaphysics of the person through which modernity has conceptualized this dignity and its demands, and the tragic misunderstanding "of the moral structure of freedom"⁴⁰ in which it has issued. Inasmuch as true freedom and authentic democracy are possible "only . . . on the basis of a correct conception of the human person,"⁴¹ and hence of a proper understanding of liberty's "inner 'logic,'"⁴² this flawed anthropology has deformed and frustrated the modern world's quest for freedom.

In a manner reminiscent of Jacques Maritain, John Paul rejects neither modernity as such, nor the exaltation of freedom it has engendered.⁴³ On the contrary, he affirms that modernity's "aspiration" to achieve "*the complete liberation of man*" is a "noble" one.⁴⁴ Likewise, he embraces the quest for freedom which this aspiration has prompted in political life, insisting that respect for the dignity of the human person necessarily entails a commitment to the protection and promotion of freedom. He advocates neither a retreat to the premodern past nor the embrace of some new type of authoritarian political order. Rather, insisting that "freedom is the measure of man's dignity and greatness" and that the "great challenge" confronting us "today is the responsible use of freedom, in both its personal and social dimensions,"⁴⁵ he calls on us to carry the modern quest for freedom through to a successful

conclusion. To do so, however, will necessarily involve correcting and purifying it in the light of "the complete truth about the human being,"⁴⁶ and thus of "the truth and love revealed to men by Jesus Christ."⁴⁷

Notes

1. Walter Kasper, *The Christian Understanding of Freedom and the History of Freedom in the Modern Era: The Meeting and Confrontation Between Christianity and the Modern Era in a Postmodern Situation*, The 1988 P re Marquette Lecture in Theology (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1988), 12-13.

2. Kenneth L. Schmitz, *At the Center of the Human Drama: The Philosophical Anthropology of Karol Wojtyla/Pope John Paul II* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University Press of America, 1993), 122.

3. *Fides et Ratio [On the Relationship Between Faith and Reason]* (Boston: Pauline Books and Media, 1998), section 85, p. 107. In citing conciliar and papal documents which are divided into numbered sections, the page number in the edition being employed will be preceded by the section number.

4. For accounts of this project, see Schmitz; Rocco Buttiglione *Karol Wojtyla: The Thought of the Man Who Became Pope John Paul II* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1997); and George H. Williams, *The Mind of Pope John Paul II: Origins of His Thought and Action* (New York: Seabury, 1981). Although it is not a study of John Paul's philosophy, John Crosby's *The Selfhood of the Human Person* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University Press of America, 1996) offers some extremely perceptive comments about the nature of this project. Wojtyla's personalist philosophy of man, as Crosby remarks, does "not" seek "to replace" the "'cosmological' understanding of man" characteristic of "the Aristotelian tradition" which analyzes "human beings . . . in terms of substance, potentiality, rationality, and the like." Rather, "to complete it" both by exploring dimensions of human existence that the latter tradition gives short shrift to and showing how the truths contained in the cosmological approach "are in fact understood more deeply through the personalist approach" which "gives special attention to personal subjectivity" and analyzes man in categories "such as interiority, self presence, self donation" (4, 82).

5. Declaration on Religious Freedom (*Dignitatis Humanae*) in *The Sixteen Documents of Vatican II* (Boston: Pauline Books and Media, 1999), 1, 491.

6. *The Splendor of Truth [Veritatis Splendor]* (Boston: St. Paul Books & Media, n.d. [1993]), 31, 45. Hereafter, citations of this document will be given parenthetically with its title abbreviated as *VS*.

7. Quoted in Henri de Lubac, *At the Service of the Church* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1993), 171-172.

8. *The Redeemer of Man [Redemptor Hominis]* (Washington, D.C.: United States Catholic Conference, 1979), 11, 32.

9. John Paul II, *The Gospel of Life [Evangelium Vitae]* (Boston: St. Paul Books & Media, n.d. [1995]), 25, 46. Further citations of this document will be given parenthetically with its title abbreviated as *EV*.

10. "Address to the General Assembly of the United Nations," October 5 1995 in *Make Room for the Mystery of God: Visit of John Paul II to the USA 1995* (Boston: Pauline Books & Media, 1995), 21.

11. Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World [*Gaudium et Spes*] in *The Sixteen Documents of Vatican II*, 17, 639.

12. "Address to the General Assembly," 21, 19.

13. Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, 17, 639.

14. *On the Hundredth Anniversary of Rerum Novarum [Centesimus Annus]* (Boston: St. Paul Books & Media, n.d., [1991]), 44, 64.

15. "Freedom and the Moral Law" in *Springtime of Evangelization: The Complete Texts of the Holy Father's 1998 ad Limina Addresses to the Bishops of the United States*, ed. Thomas D. Williams, L.C. (San Diego: Basilica Press, 1999), 5, 117.

16. *On Social Concern [Sollicitudo Rei Socialis]*, (Boston: St. Paul Books and Media, n.d. [1987]), 26, 42.

17. "Address to the General Assembly," 20.

18. *Redeemer of Man*, 17, 63.

19. Quoted in *New York Times*, April 6, 1987. Cited in George Weigel, *Freedom and Its Discontents* (Washington, D.C.: Ethics and Public Policy Center, 1991), 45.

20. *On Social Concern*, 44, 84.

21. Quoted in *New York Times*, April 6, 1987. Cited in Weigel, 45.

22. See, for example, "John Paul on the American Experiment," *First Things*, no. 82 (April 1998): 36-37. This article consists of the text of John Paul's remarks on receiving the credentials of the Honorable Lindy Boggs as Ambassador to the Holy See on December 16, 1997.

23. *On the Hundredth Anniversary*, 46, 65.

24. "Freedom and the Moral Law," 5, 117; 6, 118.

25. *On the Hundredth Anniversary*, 44, 64.

26. "Freedom and the Moral Law," 6, 118.

27. *On the Hundredth Anniversary*, 46, 65.

28. "Freedom and the Moral Law," 6, 118.

29. *Ibid.*, 2, 112.

30. *Fides et Ratio*, 5, 13-14; 81, 102.

31. *Ibid.*, 47, 64.

32. *Ibid.*, 90, 111.

33. "Freedom and the Moral Law," 2, 111-112.

34. *Ibid.*, 2, 111.

35. *Fides et Ratio*, 25, 39.

36. *On the Hundredth Anniversary*, 44, 64-65; 45, 65.

37. "Address to the General Assembly," 30, 31.

38. *Fides et Ratio*, 90, 111.

39. "Freedom and the Moral Law," 2, 111; 6, 119; 4, 116, my emphasis.

40. "Address to the General Assembly," 30.

41. *On the Hundredth Anniversary*, 46, 65.

42. "Address to the General Assembly," 30.

43. For a brief account of Maritain's analysis of the modern quest for freedom, see Maritain, "The Conquest of Freedom" in *Freedom: Its Meaning*, ed. Ruth Nanda Anshen (New York: Harcourt Brace and Co., 1940), 631-649.

44. "God's Self-Revelation to Humanity" in *Springtime of Evangelization*, 6, 43.

45. "Address to the General Assembly," 30.

46. John Paul II, *Puebla: A Pilgrimage of Faith* (Boston: St. Paul Editions, 1979), 110.

47. "God's Self Revelation to Humanity," 6, 43.

