

Prophet of Justice and Hope: John Paul II and the Dignity and Rights of Workers

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The man who works honestly, as a free and intelligent being, continues the work of creation, achieving communion with God, becoming a participant in redemption until arriving at the gradual and full participation in divine life.¹

The splendor of the human person and the inherent dignity of the individual has been at the center of the pontificate of John Paul II. Living through an epoch that has been witness to an egregious contempt for human life and to tragic abuses of the intrinsic dignity of the human person, the Holy Father has served as a prophet to the world. With consistent effort, he has attempted to reach the ends of the earth with a message of hope for humanity. This hope is based in the person of Christ who reveals to all people their dignity and worth. In union with *Dignitatis Humanae*, John Paul II reflected that the consciousness of human dignity and the promotion of human rights are becoming more prevalent in the modern world,

The first positive note is the full awareness among large numbers of men and women of their own dignity and of that of every human being. This awareness is expressed, for example in the more lively concern that human rights be respected, and in the more vigorous rejection of their violation.²

Although there are considerable theological and pastoral contributions by the Holy Father in regard to the promotion of human dignity, his message of the importance of human labor and the respect due to workers has been one of truly great significance. Through relentless preaching, public addresses and, principally, the encyclical, *Laborem Exercens*, John Paul II has consistently championed the dignity of workers and the fundamental right of individuals to meaningful employment. In precise terms, as the Holy Father proclaimed to Portuguese laborers,

“In the Encyclical, *Laborem Exercens*, I wanted to exalt the preeminent figure of the ‘working man.’ This is the essential key for the interpretation and solution of social problems.”³

John Paul II’s theology of human work and the rights of laborers has its basis in the dignity of the human person and in the concept of a “civilization of love.”⁴ Only within a civilization of love can work be awarded its valid honor, workers be liberated from manipulation and the human person reach his or her full potential in Christ. Additionally, the rights of workers have been promoted through an account of the dignity of work based on a reflection of the Genesis story and the work of Jesus. In order to come to a consummate comprehension of the Pope’s concept of the dignity of human work and the rights of the worker, one must consider initially his theological anthropology. Thus, the full understanding of the authentic human person, who an individual is, his or her proper end and the true meaning of that person’s existence will be properly illustrated. While studying these subjects, it is imperative to include the Pontiff’s understanding of the position of individuals within society. It is because of the respect of the true ‘end’ of the human person and an understanding of the human vocation to live in community and to love and be loved that the Church insists that “work is a fundamental dimension of an individual’s existence on earth.”⁵

In his first encyclical letter, *Redemptor Hominis*, the Holy Father illustrated the importance of the issue of human dignity when he affirmed, “She [the Church] is at once a sign and a safeguard of the transcendence of the human person. Accordingly, what is in question here is man in all his truth and all his magnitude.”⁶ The mission to promote endlessly the good of the person has been imperative to the Pope because he considers that “perhaps one of the most glaring weaknesses of our present civilization is an inadequate view of the human being.”⁷ Therefore, to combat the forces of what he calls the “culture of death,”⁸ John Paul II believes that:

What had to be salvaged and reconstituted... was the full truth of the human person.... The truth that is splendid... is the truth about the human person. This is a truth revealed by God in Christ who not only reveals to us the mystery of the mind and heart of God, but also, and at the same time reveals to us the truth about ourselves.⁹

A concept integral to John Paul II's thought on the value of work and the dignity of the individual worker is the "fundamental value of human life."¹⁰ The sacredness of human life is the concept that John Paul II wishes to constantly reiterate to the world. It is also what underlies the Church's pursuit of authentic human development and, ultimately, human salvation: "Man is the primary route the Church must travel in fulfilling her mission, he is the primary and fundamental way for the Church..."¹¹ Promotion of the authentic dignity of the human person is the 'route' of the Church due to the reality that each person is created by God in the *imago Dei*, is loved by God and is redeemed by Christ. In the words of John Paul II,

Labor is a great thing. Man however is incomparably greater. Man is sacred. This sacredness needs to be recognized and professed in every circumstance, even when the individual subject has made himself unworthy of it. The sacredness of the human person is inviolable and irrevocable. This sacredness is the root from which all human prerogatives are born.... Any undertaking that desires to have a sound moral basis cannot take on a configuration foreign to this hinge or divergent from it or in contrast to it.¹²

Therefore, according to the Pope, the cornerstone of the rights and dignity of workers proceeds from the inherent sacredness and inviolability of the rational free human subject. It is important to remark that the Pope honors the human person as the 'subject' of work. This is the element bestowing the moral or ethical value upon labor: "This circumstance... [shows] that the basis for determining the value of human work is not primarily the work being done, but the fact that the one doing it is a person."¹³ The person as the 'subject' of work is important to accentuate. It establishes the dignity of the individual worker regardless of the enterprise in which he is engaged, by asserting that the human person is more important than the work being done by that

person. In the words of John Paul II, “However true it may be that man is destined to work, and called to it, in the first place work is ‘for man’ and not ‘man for work’....In the final analysis it is always man who is the purpose of the work.”¹⁴ The Holy Father concludes that although there may be more or less merit associated with diverse occupations, the dignity belonging to the work and the worker proceeds not from the productivity or admiration of a profession, rather “each sort is judged above all by the measure of the dignity of the subject of the work, that is to say, the person, the individual who carries it out.”¹⁵

The Church, because she travails for the good of the human person and considers herself “an expert in humanity,”¹⁶ works to serve each individual in the realization of their final end: “God, who alone is goodness, fullness of life, the final end of human activity, and perfect happiness.”¹⁷ In this capacity, the Church has declared that work is more than a right, a gift or simply a duty. Rather, according to the Pope, work “...is a fundamental dimension of man’s existence”¹⁸ and “...is man’s fundamental vocation on earth.”¹⁹ The interest of the Church in the dignity of human labor is concerned with the good of the human agents, whose potential toward the transcendent can only be realized as they are united to Christ by living out their vocation.²⁰ The Church therefore considers itself bound “always to call attention to the dignity and rights of those who work, and to condemn situations in which that dignity and those rights are violated.”²¹

One’s ‘vocation’ as a worker united to Christ is experienced in community since the human person is not called to live in isolation from others.²² From the creator “comes the social character of human aspirations, the need to join together and to unite to one another.”²³ In this sphere, human work is the foundation of family, social and human life.²⁴ Through their toil, individuals build up a more human society, beginning with the smallest social structure, the family, and extending to their nation and world. In the words of the Holy Father: “Human work

really is at the heart of all social life, through it justice and social love are formed.”²⁵

The civilization of love comes about as the citizens of the kingdom through their labor have a “participation in God’s activity ...by their labor they are unfolding the Creator’s work,... and contributing... to the realization in history of the divine plan.”²⁶ This divine plan is concerned with creating a social order based on charity in which the dignity and rights of the human subject are protected and promoted. In this culture, the aspiration is for authentic human development, which is based on the true nature of the individual.²⁷ In terms of the importance of the duties and rights of the subjects whose labor participates in the divine plan for the family, nation and world, John Paul II stated,

Etymologically, the word ‘civilization’ is derived from ‘*civis*’ (‘citizen’), and it emphasizes the civic or political dimension of the life of every individual. But the most profound meaning of the term ‘civilization’ is not merely political, but rather pertains to human culture. Civilization belongs to human history because it answers man’s spiritual and moral needs. Created in the image and likeness of God, man has received the world from the hands of the Creator, together with the task of shaping it in his own image and likeness. The fulfillment of this task gives rise to civilization, which in the final analysis is nothing else than the ‘humanization of the world.’²⁸

Thus, the social order is founded on the free response of the individual, the *civis*, to the call of God to live in community. Each human person contributes to the ‘civilization of love’ through his labor, which must be directed to the *authentic* development of the society.²⁹ Because people find an aspect of their fulfillment in work, advancing the good of themselves and their neighbor, the dignity of their employment is evident. In this layout, the value of human work is appreciated as a method used to orient one’s life to God, to promote authentic human development and to advance the dignity of human civilization. Therefore,

Man combines his deepest human identity with membership of a nation, and intends his work also to increase the common good developed together with his

compatriots, thus realizing that in this way work serves to add to the heritage of the whole human family.³⁰

As referred to above, the rights due to workers because of their human dignity is further advanced by John Paul II through a reflection on the human duty to work as considered in the Genesis account and particularly in the life of Christ. In this reflection, the command that humans “fill the earth and subdue it” (Gn 1:28), bestows a high value to human labor by giving it a spiritual value. Furthermore, Christ as a worker teaches that: “In the sign of Christ, work is the way of perfection and supernatural elevation, the vehicle of holiness. It never loses its proper significance.”³¹

In his reflection on the significance of the Genesis story to human work, John Paul II states that through work men and women share in the very work of God. In what he refers to as the first “gospel of work,”³² the creation story in Genesis teaches humanity that through our toil, we share in the creative work of God since “man in a sense continues to develop that activity and perfects it as he advances further and further in the discovery of the resources and values contained in the whole of creation.”³³ This assertion is based on the premise that human beings are created in the image and likeness of God, and because of this unique characteristic (i.e., bearing the divine image and likeness), human work takes on a spiritual value. Thus, work is an imitation of God who worked for six days (Cf. Gn. 2:2; Ex. 20:8-11) and a continuation of God’s work. This fact, that human labor is ordained so that through it humans are enabled to continue the creative work of God, is an endorsement of the tremendous dignity awarded to it. By their participation in the continuation of the Creator’s activity all people “are unfolding the Creator’s work... and contributing by their personal industry to the realization in history of the divine plan.”³⁴ In reference to this great commission, the Pope exclaims, “How noble is this mission

that only man, by his work can realize!”³⁵

The relationship of spirituality to work is further promoted by the person of Christ and his humble employment as a craftsman. Further, the religious value of work is emphasized by the gospels since, “The house at Nazareth is the heart, and, at the same time, the summit of the “gospel of labor.”³⁶ The life long employment of Jesus is a witness to the dignity of employment and it enables human work to go beyond itself and reach into the scope of the transcendental. Work is elevated out of the commonality and drudgery frequently associated with it into a sphere of a redemptive magnitude. In the theology of John Paul II, human work shares in Christ’s mystery of redemption. According to the Holy Father,

When the truth that work was done by the human hands of the very Son of God in the little workshop of Nazareth is embraced, the effort to transform the world becomes liberation from moral evil and insertion in a new long-range project, extending beyond the confines of history. With faith in Christ, man participates in the project which is in the process of being realized: the salvation of the whole man.³⁷

Human labor is a way of participating in the mission of Christ. As previously mentioned, this participation takes place as humanity reflects the image of God in their labor and continues the creative aspect of the divine. The work of God is further perpetuated through labor as humans share in the mystery of the cross of Christ in their daily toil. It is important to note that experience discloses to us that work is not always fulfilling and gratifying. As indicated in the Genesis narrative, work has been affected by human sin, “In toil you shall eat its yield Thorns and thistles it shall bring forth to you, as you eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your face shall you get bread to eat” (Gen 3:17-19). The toil and sweat involved with labor are understood only when the perspective of the cross is at hand. As we share in the passion of Jesus by uniting

our toil and sweat with the cross of Christ, “we help bring about the new earth where justice dwells, and we contribute mightily to the coming of the Kingdom of God.”³⁸

As individuals accept the suffering associated with their labor and join their hardships to the cross of Christ, they collaborate obediently with Christ who was obedient unto death (Phil 2:8). Sharing in the cross of Christ is invariably a participation in the resurrection. Christ, because of his obedience, was glorified, “I glorified you on earth by accomplishing the work you gave me to do. Now glorify me, Father, with you, with the glory that I had with you before the world began” (Jn 17:4-5). Thus all workers are commissioned to share in the work of Christ and do so by making the death and resurrection of Christ present to the world through their labor. As John Paul II articulated in *Laborem Exercens*,

The Christian finds in human work a small part of the cross of Christ and accepts it in the same spirit of redemption in which Christ accepted the cross for us. In work, thanks to the light that penetrates us from the resurrection of Christ, we always find a glimmer of new life,... in which man and the world participate precisely through the toil that goes with work. Through toil and never without it. On the one hand this confirms the indispensability of the cross in the spirituality of human work; on the other hand the cross which this toil constitutes reveals a new good springing from work itself, from work understood in depth and in all its aspects and never apart from work.³⁹

The ‘gospel of work’ which is based on the human person being imprinted with God’s own image and likeness and our necessity to imitate God’s work has been radically advanced by Christ who toiled himself as a man of work. Therefore, each individual worker has their inestimable dignity established in these principles. The rights of workers are grounded in the dignity of the human person who labors in order to fulfill his vocation as a human being. Each person becomes whole through his work, reflecting the creative work of God and participating in the redemptive mission of Jesus the worker.

Proceeding from the inherent dignity of each worker we aspire to John Paul II's axiom that, "... the man who works is much more important than the product of his work. Human work comes from man; it is intended to benefit man, to promote his God-given dignity"⁴⁰ and thus there are specific rights due to working men and women. So that the Holy Father's theology of the dignity and rights of workers may be fully reviewed, the particular rights of workers ought to be considered. The motivation for his promulgation of definitive rights of workers is to promote the true good of the human person and encourage authentic human development. According to John Paul II, "Man becomes more fully man by means of work freely undertaken and performed. Work is not punishment, but an honor."⁴¹ This truism stated by the Pontiff is certainly not achieved to the fullest extent possible. Many workers are not afforded the opportunity to experience this honor and become more fully human, since they can be "often treated as a mere instrument of production, like a material tool.... In these cases the worker is not respected as a true collaborator of the Creator."⁴² Therefore, in order to heighten consciousness and advance the conditions of workers, John Paul II has declared definitive rights for workers requisite to their dignity.

The Holy Father begins his exposition of the rights of workers by drawing attention to the responsibility that all people share, however involved in the network of human employment, to be conscious of the rights of the individual. John Paul II rightly points out that there is a great interdependence of workers, groups, governments and nations brought together in "mutual dependence,"⁴³ by participation in their economic ambit. Because of their action within this sphere of human relations and dependence, each individual, group or nation is held accountable to promote the dignity of workers and build up a just social order.⁴⁴ For example, the Pope states that it is unjust and exploitative for those with the means of production to condition the

economic system in a way that the working environment of those dependent is “below the objective requirement of workers.”⁴⁵

The economic framework in which humans toil is very complicated and thus it is imperative that individuals or groups occupied with labor hold in high esteem the dignity of the person as they conduct their affairs, since “the rights of the human person are the key element of the whole social order.”⁴⁶ According to John Paul II, the rudimentary factor in advancing the rights of workers is acknowledging that all work and economic progress and development is to profit the good of humanity. Believing this to be true, John Paul II stated,

Even the biggest city, the most complicated computer, the greatest nation, is only something made by man and is meant to serve man, to benefit man. Never the other way around.... Justice also requires that the workers themselves benefit from the success of the enterprise in which they work, and that they have the satisfaction of knowing that through ... work they are thereby contributing to the social development of their country.⁴⁷

Therefore, the first premise of the rights of workers, is the recognition that the advancement of each individual human agent is the motivation for the industry at hand. All persons are to be viewed as an end in themselves rather than an instrument or means of revenue.

John Paul II asserts that the right to suitable employment for those capable is the second basic principle necessary for the promotion of the just socioeconomic order. In furthering this idea, the Pope encourages those who are responsible for organizing human labor to strive for this human right. Since work is a fundamental vocation of the human person, unemployment of able workers is “particularly painful,”⁴⁸ “an evil, and... an open sore.”⁴⁹ In this vein, John Paul II stated, “Providing employment must not be taken lightly, or considered a secondary aspect of the economic order and of development. It should be a central element in the aims of economic theory and practice.”⁵⁰ The right of capable persons to work is a basic and fundamental good for

the person and for their society. Without this right, individuals are unable to take part in an action constitutive of their humanity since, “from the viewpoint of faith, work corresponds to the will of God the Creator. It is a part of God’s plan for man and for the fulfillment of the human person.”⁵¹

The Holy Father also addresses the importance of just and livable wages as a right of workers. The importance and determination of a just salary for the working individual is based within the realm of family life. Certainly, the Pope recognizes that fairness dictates that the workers receive a “real and just share in the wealth that they help to produce,”⁵² but the more considerable reason for a just wage is predicated upon an individual’s ability to support the well being of the family. An individual who unfairly compensates his workers is acting contrary to God’s plan. According to John Paul II, “To be so poorly paid that you can hardly support yourselves and your families, that you become slaves rather than free and responsible workers this too is not just. This is not the will of God.”⁵³ The earnings of the worker ought to suffice to meet the needs of raising a family and caring for the future of the household.

John Paul II places great emphasis on the importance that workers earn what he calls a “family wage.”⁵⁴ This denotes compensation which allows the head of the family to support the household without their spouse having to find employment. The family wage may be a higher income, or may be offered through social benefits. In *Laborem Exercens*, John Paul specifies “grants and family allowances to mothers devoting themselves exclusively to their families”⁵⁵ as examples of aid necessary for the good of the family. The importance of the mother having the opportunity to be at home full-time is clear in his thought. The good of the family is a primary concern for the Pope. Thus, he places great reverence and honor on the mission of the mother, and emphasizes her importance in the home when it is possible. It is unfortunate for the family

and society when, because of unjust wages, women are forced to leave the home against their will in order to support their family outside of the home. In John Paul II's thought the concept is devoted to the good of the family and to the dignity of the mother as worker. Further, it is important to accentuate his assertion that women warrant absolute equality in all domains relating to employment mentioned above when they are counted among the workforce. His concern is that the right and possibility of women to be in the home to care for young children is protected and fostered. This view is not based on a denial of the ability of women to succeed in the workforce or a judgment that men are superior in some manner. Rather, it is founded upon the primacy of the good of the family which is promoted as one of the spouses recognizes parenthood as ministry. The Pope thus asserted,

The true advancement of women requires that labor should be structured in such a way that women do not have to pay for their advancement by abandoning what is specific to them and at the expense of family, in which mothers have an irreplaceable role.⁵⁶

In order to secure the dignity and health of the human person, it is essential that workers are afforded proper rest as a fundamental right. Just as the vocation to work comes from the imitation of God's work and the call to participate in God's creative labor, so too does the command to rest come from God: "Man ought to imitate God both in working and also in resting, since God himself wished to present his own creative activity under the form of work and rest."⁵⁷ Bearing the image and likeness of God, humans must rest from their labor and exercise their religious duties, namely sharing in the day of rest and blessing that God has sanctified (Ex 20:11). Human dignity requires that work not dehumanize or encumber spiritual growth. Thus, a weekly day of rest and spiritual renewal are essential. Although work is a duty of the human person, rest cultivates within the individual a spirituality of work, allowing one's

duties to be lived “...as love, as a source of honor, and as prayer.”⁵⁸ Also important is a period each year longer in duration, in which the laborer may experience holy recreation. Specifically, this means that an employer ought to provide an appropriate amount of time yearly for employees to experience rest since God wills them to be refreshed and recreated. These rights are fundamental to workers for spiritual as well as emotional renewal, allowing one to labor as a servant of God. As John Paul II noted, “...man’s work not only requires a rest every seventh day, but also,... it must leave room for man to prepare himself, by becoming more and more what in the will of God he ought to be.”⁵⁹

Further regarded as essential rights of workers are specific social benefits, viz., affordable health care and a pension for work related accidents and retirement. Although the Pope does not devote much time in providing a profound exposition on the particulars of these rights, they are discussed as fundamental rights because they are necessary for the good of the person and in particular, the family. John Paul II encourages employers to offer medical benefits “cheap or even free of charge”⁶⁰ to laborers who are injured while working. In addition, the pension for retirees is necessary for families to assist and care for their elders. As he states, “These must be structured in such a way that the vocation of the family is effectively assisted and that those who have completed their contribution are guaranteed a decent and peaceful existence.”⁶¹

The Holy Father praises labor unions and extols their importance as an association that promotes the dignity and rights of workers. Thus, he asserts, “The experience of history tells us that organizations of this type are an indispensable element of social life.... Representatives of every profession can use them to ensure their own rights.”⁶² Unions are able to speak for workers and advance their basic rights in a manner not possible for an individual. The work of these groups is not given absolute license, rather, they are encouraged to act in solidarity with the

Church by fulfilling their task of defending “the existential interests of workers in all sectors in which their rights are concerned.”⁶³ Unions are also called to exercise prudence and discretion when discerning a strike, and they are also advised that they should further encourage loyal service from their members to their employers. The right of workers to form and participate in unions is thus promoted and defended by John Paul II. In the formation of worker’s unions, individuals join in solidarity with fellow workers in order to combat the situations of disturbing injustice and elicit support for their common dignity and for the good of their family life.

Lastly, the Holy Father speaks of two general insights on worker rights as additional support of the dignity of laborers and in order to communicate a unity and basis for the rights of workers. As he stated, “...there should never be overlooked the right to a working environment and to manufacturing processes which are not harmful to the workers’ physical health or their moral integrity.”⁶⁴ First, John Paul II addresses the necessity for workers to enjoy an atmosphere that is conducive to their physical well being. This may seem apparent to an individual who is privileged to work in positive conditions that foster human growth, but to many this issue is exceedingly problematic.

Secondly, the spiritual and transcendent nature of the human person is reiterated. The Holy Father asserts that optimally, work ought to dignify the worker and be an aspect of his spiritual life; and when this is not conceivable, there ought to be at the very least nothing that hinders the laborer from his true end. According to John Paul II, “They [workers] must have possibilities of ‘being more’ a man and, at the same time, of being treated in keeping with their human dignity.”⁶⁵ Thus, the theological foundation of the rights and dignity of workers has proceeded full circle for the Holy Father. The human person finds his or her vocation to work founded in their integrity as children of God and in relation to the living and loving God.

The work of John Paul II on the dignity and rights of laborers has truly been a monumental contribution to Catholic theology and to the humanization of people everywhere. The profound significance he has attributed to each and every worker by his or her very nature as human persons has promoted the dignity and human rights of laborers throughout the world. The true spirituality of work has been articulated, which has advanced the good of each and every human person. John Paul II has provided a vision that encourages men and women to seek God and partake in the very mission of God daily as they travail for their daily bread. In this way, holiness is a reality to be sought in the everyday events of life, work and family, not a compartmentalized aspect of life belonging solely to an hour on Sundays. As John Paul II has said,

Since Christ assumed and practiced work, he transformed it into a reality that is both redeemed and redemptive.... Work, therefore, is not something that people do for the sole purpose of earning a living; it is a human dimension that can and must be sanctified, in order to bring people to the total fulfillment of their vocation as creatures made in the image and likeness of God. By means of work the person fulfills himself, obtains the resources necessary to support the family, and contributes to the betterment of society in which he lives. Every work is a witness to human dignity, of humanity's dominion over creation and all honest work is worthy of respect.⁶⁶

Notes

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1. John Paul II. Homily, May 11, 1982. Villa Vicosa, Portugal. Reprinted by Harmony Media. Gervais, OR. 1998. All further references to John Paul II's spoken and written words are taken from "The Teachings of John Paul II" Harmony Media. Gervais, OR. 1998.
 2. John Paul II. *On Social Concern*. 1987. # 26.
 3. John Paul II. Homily, May 11, 1982.
 4. The idea of a "civilization of love" is borrowed largely from Paul VI. Quoting Paul VI, John Paul II explained, "A civilization which precisely because it originates in love for mankind and strives to give man the experience of sharing in this love, will have to aim at seeking and affirming the true and complete values of life, even though that raises incomprehension, difficulty and opposition." (General Audience, January 21, 1976. Harmony Media).
 5. John Paul II. *Laborem Exercens*. 1981. # 12.
 6. John Paul II. *Redemptor Hominis*. 1979. # 13.
 7. John Paul II. Puebla Conference. January 28, 1979.
 8. For more on the "culture of death," cf. John Paul II. *Evangelium Vitae*. 1995. # 12ff..
 9. Hanigan, James. "Veritatis Splendor and Sexual Ethics." P. 209. In: Allsopp, M. and O'Keefe, J.. *Veritatis Splendor: American Responses*. Kansas City, MO: Sheed and Ward, 1995.
 10. John Paul II. "Letter to Bishops." May 19, 1991.
 11. *Redemptor Hominis*, # 14.
 12. John Paul II. Public Address, March 19, 1986. Prato, Italy.
 13. *Laborem Exercens*, # 6.
 14. *Ibid.*, # 6.
 15. *Ibid.*, # 6.
 16. *On Social Concern*, # 7.
 17. John Paul II. *Veritatis Splendor*. #9.
 18. *Laborem Exercens*, # 12.
 19. John Paul II. Homily, June 20, 1983. Muchowiec Airport, Poland.
 20. The centrality of the human individual in the mission of the Church is stated clearly in *Centesimus Annus*, "Her [the Church's] sole purpose has been the care and responsibility for the human person." It is necessary for the Church to advocate the meaning of human life to the world because "... a person's true identity is only fully revealed him through faith." Or in the words borrowed from Paul VI, John Paul II continued, "In order to know man,

authentic man, man in his fullness, one must know God” (John Paul. *Centesimus Annus*. 1991. # 53-55).

21. *Laborem Exercens*, # 1.

22. Cf. *Centesimus Annus* #54, also for more detail on the role of the individual in society cf. *Christifideles Laici*, #12, 18-20, and 33.

23. John Paul II. Homily, June 20, 1983. Muchowiec, Poland.

24. Cf. *Centesimus Annus*, # 40.

25. Homily, June 20, 1983. Muchowiec, Poland.

26. *Laborem Exercens*, # 6. Also, cf. *Gaudium et Spes*, # 34.

27. Cf. *On Social Concern*, # 27-34.

28. John Paul II. *Letter to Families*. 1994.

29. It is imperative to clarify the Holy Father’s use of this term. Authentic human development “must be measured and oriented according to the reality and vocation of man seen in his totality, namely according to his *interior dimension*” (*Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* 29). Also cf. #'s 27-34.

30. *Laborem Exercens* # 10.

31. Address, March 19, 1986. Prato, Italy.

32. *Laborem Exercens*, # 25.

33. *Ibid.*, #25. Also, in his Address to the workers of Prato, John Paul II also added to this notion, “I wish to affirm from the very beginning of our meeting that labor is, in the primary analysis, a vocation for man; a qualifying sign of his nature as a rational being endowed with intellect and will, created in the image of God, and able to subdue the innumerable forces of creation.” Address, March 19, 1986. Prato, Italy.

34. *Ibid.*, # 25. Also, cf. *Gaudium et Spes*, # 34.

35. John Paul II. Homily, May 5, 1984. Pusan Korea.

36. Address, March 19, 1986. Prato, Italy.

37. Homily, May 5, 1984. Also, John Paul II commented, “Work is immeasurably ennobled by Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of man. By his work as a carpenter in Nazareth and by his many labors he sanctified all human work, thus conferring on workers a special solidarity with himself and giving them a share in his own redemptive work of uplifting humanity, transforming society, and leading the world to the praise of his Father in heaven.” Homily: February 21, 1981.

38. Homily, May 5, 1984. Pusan, Korea.

39. *Laborem Exercens*, # 27.

40. Homily, May 5, 1984.

41. John Paul II. Homily, February 21, 1981.

42. Homily, May 5, 1984.

43. *Laborem Exercens*, # 17.

44. Quoting Vatican II, John Paul II states, "In the socio-economic realm the dignity and total vocation of the human person must be honored and advanced along with the welfare of society as a whole, for man is the source, the center and the purpose of all socio-economic life" (*Christifideles Laici* #43).

45. *Laborem Exercens*, # 17.

46. *Ibid.*, # 12.

47. Homily, May 5, 1984.

48. *Laborem Exercens*, # 18.

49. Address, March 19, 1986.

50. Homily, February 21, 1981.

51. Homily, February 21, 1981.

52. Homily, February 21, 1981.

53. Homily, February 21, 1981.

54. *Laborem Exercens*, # 19.

55. *Ibid.*, # 19.

56. *Ibid.*, # 19. Also, John Paul II stated, "In this area, social legislation still leaves much to be desired. I am referring in particular to the situation of women, who, while seeing their work in the home go unrecognized and undefended from a juridical point of view, are often subjected to a stressful pace in work outside the home, which keeps them away from their husbands and children, often leading them to renounce the grandeur of maternity." Address, December 13, 1986.

57. *Ibid.*, # 19.

58. John Paul II. Homily, July 7, 1980.

59. *Laborem Exercens*, # 25.

60. *Ibid.*, # 19.

61. Address, March 19, 1986.

62. *Laborem Exercens*, # 20.

63. *Ibid.*, # 20.

64. *Ibid.*, # 19.

65. Homily, July 7, 1980.

66. Homily, May 8, 1988.