A person holding a baby

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PHILOSOPHICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

COURSE NOTES

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**CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

Why is the philosophy of human nature (anthropology) important?

We need to know ***what***we are before we can know anything about the other big questions that confront the mind, such as:

What is the reason for our existence?

Where did we come from?

Why are we here? Where are we going?

What happens to us after we die?

Do I have a soul?

Does human nature give us dignity and rights?

What is the basis for law and morality?

In what does happiness consist for the human being?

Man has always been in search of an adequate answer to the question, who are we? We play like actors on a stage, but once we stop playing with our masks, we find that it is not easy to discover oneself, so why is it so hard to “know thyself”? Obviously, we find it easy to answer that we are human beings, but ***what is that?***

The first philosophers had been interested in the mysteries of the world in which man finds himself. They asked questions about the sun, the moon and the stars and about the stuff out of which everything is made. But with Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, the nature of man himself, rather than the physical universe, became the most important mystery for the study of the philosopher.

The philosophers of the Middle Ages, while not ignoring the world around them, also stressed the study of man above the problems of the physical world. And although there are sharp differences in the outlook of the ancient world and the world of the Middle Ages, there was substantial agreement on the all-important point, which the Greeks had been the first to justify on grounds of reason, that man is different from the rest of the animals in that he possesses the distinctive powers of reason and free will.

This concept of man as responsible and rational has exerted a continuing and profound influence on the political and social thinking and institutions of the West. Yet, in our own times, probably no element in our cultural inheritance has been more called into question.

Probably the most widely held view of man today in opposition to the older, traditional view is that man is simply one more of the brute animals - a superior animal, to be sure, but still just an animal, with the same questionable and transitory value of any other animal. And just as animals in general are creatures of instinct, with no real control over their instinctive drives or over the pull on their senses from the outside, so too man is impelled purely by the attraction of sense goods and by the blind drive of instinct.

A still grosser view of man sees him as a kind of machine, a bundle of conditioned reflexes which respond necessarily to the impersonal laws of mechanics and physics as the leaf falling from the tree. Manipulate the physical stimuli which act on man and you can control both the individual and society as surely as you can control machinery: given the proper stimulus, the reflex will be mechanic, automatic, and foreseeable.

Common to both these doctrines is the view that man is a freakish and haphazard, appearance in an ever evolving universe, a chance collection of atoms, an insignificant dot destined to last but the flash of an instant in the vast perspective of time unending: a being without meaning, without destiny, without hope.

Man is of course an animal, and as such, a part of the physical universe. As a material being, he is obedient to the laws of physical nature. If he puts his hand in fire his hand will burn. If he goes out in the rain, he will get wet. If he doesn't breathe or eat, he will die.

Yet, just as something shines out of the picture or the sonnet which is more than a mere arrangement of physical elements, so too something shines out of man which is more than the sum total of any possible arrangement of the physical elements which go into the make-up of his body.

Man has a whole range of activities for which there is no parallel in the rest of the animal kingdom - activities which are explainable as the product of reason and unexplainable otherwise.

***Sources:***

Kreeft, Peter. The Philosophy of Jesus, St Augustine’s Press, South Bend Indiana, 2007.

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Scott Sullivan. Classical man & the traditional Ethic: *A Contemporary Défense, at* [www.scottmsullivan.com](http://www.scottmsullivan.com)

**CHAPTER 2 THE SENSITIVE DIMENSION TO HUMAN LIFE**

**EXTERNAL SENSES**

Animal-information processing is solely based on sense and the result is pure sense knowledge. Animals know things and not just appearances. Their knowing is an imagining, remembering, smelling, tasting, seeing, hearing, or touching. It is a knowing that is tied to particular colours, tastes, shapes, and smell. The result of such knowing is called “sensation”. Sensation results from the impingement of a stimulus on a bodily sense organ. Thus, the sensation or sense of sight arises from the impingement of light on the organ (eyes). ***Sensorial knowledge*** is characterized by its dependence on material inputs from the outside world, the organization of these sensorial data is done by what the Aristotelian-Thomist tradition calls the “central sense”. Sense knowledge is always particularized because it results from things with matter, clothed with material conditions, yet received by the senses without matter but with the concrete material conditions. For example, the form of colour red is received into the pupil without the pupil becoming red. This form is not material in the way it is received by the sense, but what is seen is still a concrete red colour. This particularized form is still sensible and is to be differentiated from the abstract form of thought.

So in summary: the first step in our knowledge is information received by the external senses; they are the gateway of the intellect to the outside world.[[1]](#footnote-1) As Aristotelian-Thomist tradition puts it, "there is nothing in the intelligence that was not first in the senses. Our knowledge of the external world is therefore mediated. The data received from the senses are put together by the central sense.

**INTERNAL SENSES**

There is a variety of **internal senses**. The internal senses organize, present, and arrange the data provided by the external senses. There are four internal senses:

**Central sense**: This is the “organizing power”. Vision only gives us colours, hearing only sounds, etc. In order to know that the red colour provided by vision, the round and cool texture provided by the touch of the hand, and the sweet taste provided by the tongue belongs to the one apple, there must be some power that organizes these various sensations and centralizes them. This is the work of the **central sense**. The individual senses themselves cannot do this, for example, vision can say nothing about the cool surface of the apple. There must be a separate power to do this because sight and touch cannot do this alone. One sense faculty cannot know the proper object of another (touch cannot know colour). Since we do make such distinctions, the ability to do so must lie somewhere other than in the external senses. We are also aware of our sensing, but this does not come from the external sensory powers themselves, e.g., we don’t see our seeing nor touch our touching. We both see and are aware that we see, but not by the faculty of sight alone but by the operation of this central sense. The central sense is the organizer and “meeting place” for all the external senses.

**Imagination**: The imagination is the ability to make a sensory representation of objects that are ***not present***, the result being an image. Insofar as these images are removed from perceptual experience, they tend to be less distinct and washed out. This power can combine sensory images into fanciful combinations, like a Pegasus for example. It is not surprising then to realize this power can be very active when the external senses are subdued during sleep. Moreover, this power is usually considered the ground for creativity because it allows us to be independent of present experience and “go beyond the present reality”. Thus, it is an important factor for scientists, poets, artists, and inventors. Of course, this power can go too far as well and cause an erroneous intellectual conviction or **delusion**.

**Memory**: The object of memory is past experience ***as past***. This is different from imagination’s object that forms an image that is not present. The two powers, however, are closely related. Since both play a role in habitually recalling stored images, they play a large role in learning.

Both the imagination and memory powers aid the intellect in learning and knowing by providing it with images to work with and from which it can gather concepts.

**Estimative sense**: This is the ***instinctual***power by which an animal knows, without prior learning, how to respond to some object insofar as to attain goods and avoid evils and all ***without previous knowledge***. This power is a distinct faculty because the other sensitive powers cannot account for this ability. It is from this power that the animal has a sense-based prudence and knows to flee or fight, eat, mate, make a nest or hive, etc. It is by this power that an animal makes judgments about the beneficial and harmful, and this can be immediate or more remote. Even animals when placed in complete isolation from others of their species, operate in distinctive ways appropriate to their species, i.e., mating, knowing how to build nests, and could not possibly have been learned behaviour or imitation. This power in the human however is called the **cogitative power**. The reason for giving this power a different name in human beings is that for humans, the instinctual information is closely informed by the intellect and thus differs from that of animals. Because of this cooperation, the cogitative power has much more flexibility than the estimative. Yet this does not change the nature of the power itself which is still essentially animal and based upon sensations.

It should be noted that there is a large interdependence between the distinct internal powers, in both animals and humans.

**THE TENDENTIAL DYNAMISM**

As human beings, we do not merely desire to know, but we also act according to our knowledge. The philosophical term for this tendency is ***appetite***, and the power that does the tending is the ***appetite***.

Insofar as an act of knowing “stops” in the knower, it is a static sort of activity, but desiring on the other hand is motivational and compels us to “move” and seek out the object which we desire.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Human Activities** | |
| **Knowing**  Intellection (acts of the intellect)  Sensory knowledge:  Sensation  Perception  Memory  Imagination | **Desiring**  Volition (acts of the Will)  Sensory appetite:  Drives  Feelings  Impulses |
| Vegetative Powers[[2]](#footnote-2) | |

**CONCUPISCIBLE AND IRASCIBLE APPETITE**

The sensible appetites are divided into the concupiscible and irascible. What Aquinas called the ***concupiscible appetite***is the simple desire for pleasure and the avoidance of pain. The ***irascible appetite*** is the willingness to endure danger and hardship in order to achieve a remote good. The irascible appetite has been known as the “champion” and “defender” of the concupiscible appetite.

The concupiscible appetite is the desire for pleasurable existence while the irascible is the desire to combat whatever threatens that existence. In the concupiscible it is a desire for pleasure’s sake, while in the irascible, it is the desire to fight and struggle for pleasure’s sake.

Objects can be presented as good or evil. Goods that are easy to obtain (concupiscible) = generate simple responses of desire and aversion.

Objects difficult to obtain (irascible) = the appetite is different as the good is now linked with what is evil or dangerous, an obstacle, and not a simple attainment, and thus creates a whole new set of responses. Yet the initial love/hate of the concupiscible remains.

|  |
| --- |
| Good Beyond ones power = despair  Good Within power = hope  Evil beyond power = sorrow  Evil within power = daring |

**CHAPTER 3: HUMAN INTELLIGENCE**

**INTELLECT AND REASONING**

Just as each sense has a proper object that impinges on it, the object the intellect grasps is the **abstract nature** of a material reality. In other words, natures which in themselves are universal. There is no radical jump from pure sensation to abstract thought because there exists a bridging of pure thought and pure sensation via perception. From there, the immaterial intellect does an abstraction or separation of what is universal from the material reality perceived. The result of this separation would be the abstracted form, which is a concept or idea. Through the process of abstraction, the intellect moves from the concrete particularised form provided by the senses to the universal abstract form devoid of material conditions. Abstraction corresponds to the first operation of the mind, called ***simple apprehension****,* an operation which takes charge of grasping the answer to the most fundamental question we referred to earlier: What is it?

Once we know what a thing is, the intellect affirms or denies a predicate of the subject by way of a proposition using the verb "to be." This is called "**judgment**'' as a second operation of the mind. To say, "The house is white," is a judgment whereby the predicate "white" is attributed to the subject "house." If this attribution confirms the house as it is —there really is a house and it is white— extra-mentally, i.e., in given reality, the judgment is said to be true. Otherwise, the judgment is false. This is why we speak of error or falsehood in judgments. Hence, truth and falsehood are said of judgments, but with some basis in reality.

Truth has a reflective character. The intellect, being immaterial can go back to itself and check whether its judgment is true or false. The perfection of the intellect consists in knowing truth. This means that the intellect naturally tends towards truth, just as sight tends towards colour. Since truth is not created but discovered via the reality-check we should be making of our judgments, then we must seek the truth.

When the intellect moves from one judgment to another, we speak of it as "reason" or “**reasoning**”. Reasoning is the third operation of the mind. By this, we emphasize that the Intellect's search for truth or its acquisition of knowledge is not given to it immediately and all at once. Rather, the intellect moves step by step, at times painstakingly and arduously from one judgment to another. Sometimes, we make mistakes in the reasoning process. For instance, we draw a conclusion from wrong reasons (premises) or we give the wrong reasons to support a conclusion. These mistakes are called fallacies.

**REASON AND ITS USES**

**First**, the human being uses reason theoretically. That is to say, reason is used to acquire knowledge without having any immediate application to action. It has to do with "knowing-that, knowing-why." Theoretical reason is speculative reason. There are two habits of theoretical reason: wisdom (Greek= *sophia)* and science (Greek= *episteme).* Classic philosophers understood wisdom to mean knowledge of things by their deepest causes. This knowledge has been traditionally attributed to philosophy. ***Episteme***meant science, rigorous, and orderly knowledge of the principles of things.

Theoretical reason allows man to create concepts of the world, language systems, different bodies of knowledge (disciplines) or sciences and philosophy.

**Second**, reason is used practically (Greek= *praxis,* Latin= *agere).* It is used to apply speculative knowledge to human activity in relation to oneself, other humans, nature, and the divine. It is "knowing-how" –a doing in human action. The habits of mind forged by practical reason are prudence (Greek= *phronesis)* and justice (Greek= *dike).* With prudence, reason judges the best course of action to be done "here-and-now," given specific circumstances. With justice, reason judges what is to be given (due) to an individual or group of persons. The organization, ruling of human personal and collective activity through created systems, institutions, and norms -ethical, judicial, and legislative- are all due to practical reason.

**Third**, reason is used artistically and technically (Greek= *poeisis, techne;* Latin= *facere*, *ars*). Reason uses speculative knowledge to make, and manufacture a thing (artefact, produce) that was not present before. Reason is used to transform the pre- given elements of the material world to produce fruits of the land or sea, as well as to create "artificial" products of technology and arts, like machines, paintings, and poems. Poetical reason imitates nature in and through art.

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**CHAPTER 4: THE WILL**

The will is the intellectual appetite, the tendency that regards an object known intellectually. The object of the will is being as good and it follows upon the object of the intellect which is being as true. So the will and the intellect are two distinct powers with formally distinct objects.

**RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INTELLECT AND WILL**

As the will acts upon the knowledge provided by the intellect, we need to ask how this is so. The intellect does not act upon the will like an agent, but by providing a final cause, in other words “wooing” it. The act of the will is elicited[[3]](#footnote-3) by the intellect’s providing it with a desirable object. In other words, the intellect gives the will a goal which it naturally seeks (the good object), so there is a complementary relationship between the two powers.

Volition is ***desire***if the object is absent, and enjoyment and complacency if the object is present. Volition may be called ***intention***as it directs its activity towards a certain end, and ***choice***if it involves selecting between alternative means.

We desire things based upon our knowledge of them. This is an obvious fact or our experience. What we choose is largely based upon what we know about it and what appears good or good to avoid. Knowledge would not be very useful if we did not act upon it. In short, knowledge provides the goal and appetite is the inclination towards it. So there is a close relation to what we know and what we desire, between cognition and appetite. This close relation between appetite and cognition gives us the basis for saying there are different kinds of appetites. For every type of cognition, there is a corresponding type of appetite.

**SPIRITUALITY OF THE WILL**

The will is a spiritual power of the soul, and thus can also operate independently of any bodily organ.

**Object of the Will**

Often philosophers distinguish between material and formal object, here we briefly describe one and the other.

The **material object** is that which attracts the will, the actual thing itself. It may be a material thing like a good dinner, it may be a universal such as the notion of justice, or it may be a spiritual reality like the object of religious devotion.

The **formal object** (the way it is considered) is the particular aspect by which it is perceived as good. The will seeks goodness in general, and it may even be negative in the sense that something is good to avoid. Moreover, the good may be real or only apparent, someone may think a cigarette is good right now, but the goodness is only apparent if in reality the cigarette is harmful to one’s health. Even the killing of someone may seem good, and thus an apparent good, but it may really be evil and not a real good after all.

***Sources:***

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**CHAPTER 5: AFFECTIVITY: EMOTIONS, TEMPERAMENT AND VIRTUE**

**PURPOSE AND VALUE OF EMOTIONS**

The human person is ordered to happiness by his deliberate acts: the passions or feelings he experiences can dispose him to it and contribute to it.

Emotions or movements of the sensitive appetite incline us to act or not to act in regard to something felt or imagined to be good or evil. By his emotions man intuits the good and suspects evil.

The emotions are natural components of the human psyche; they form the passageway and ensure the connection between the life of the senses and the life of the mind.

The principal passions are love and hatred, desire and fear, joy, sadness, and anger.

The most fundamental passion/affection is love, aroused by the attraction of the good. Love causes a desire for the absent good and the hope of obtaining it; this movement finds completion in the pleasure and joy of the good possessed. The apprehension of evil causes hatred, aversion, and fear of the impending evil; this movement ends in sadness at some present evil, or in the anger that resists it.

**EDUCATING AND INTEGRATING EMOTIONS**

Emotions are said to be voluntary, "either because they are commanded by the will or because the will does not place obstacles in their way." (St. Thomas Aquinas, STh I-II,24,1 corp. art.)

It belongs to the perfection of the moral or human good that the emotions be governed by reason. (Cf. St. Thomas Aquinas, STh I-II,24,3.)

Strong emotions are simply the inexhaustible reservoir of images and affections in which the moral life is expressed. Emotions are morally good when they contribute to a good action, evil in the opposite case. The well-ordered will orders the movements of the senses it appropriates to the good and to happiness; an evil will succumbs to disordered emotions and exacerbates them. Emotions and feelings can be taken up into the virtues or perverted by the vices.

Moral perfection consists in the human person being moved to the good not by his/her will alone, but also by their sensitive appetite.

***Sources:***

Sullivan,D.J*., Introduction to Philosophy*, Ch 12 (pp.88-97)

Lombo, J.A., Russo, F., *Philosophical Anthropology,* Ch 7 (pp.70-9), Ch 10 (pp.103-119).

*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, nn. 1762-1775

**CHAPTER 6 FREEDOM**

The will as we have seen is a kind of corollary of reason. Knowing good leads us to desire it, however the actual choice of that good or any other belongs to freedom. We could say that the freedom of choice is the mechanism by means of which our freedom is realized.

Free choice is not an end in itself but rather is given to us in order that we may realize our full potentialities as human beings. Men do not all agree, however, on what makes for truly human fulfilment. Some place their fulfilment in wealth, some in power, some in sense pleasure, some in beauty, some in virtue, some in God. Some place their fulfilment, in short, in self-aggrandizement, others in self-giving: a false liberty may be set against true liberty.

Only if man uses his freedom of choice rightly will he enjoy true liberty - the freedom of self-realization, the freedom of autonomy or self-rule, as the Greeks called it. For although man is free to choose, he cannot free himself from the laws of the universe of which he is a part and cannot therefore escape the consequences of his choice. If someone chooses to jump out the window, he is free to do so, but he is not free to float in the atmosphere independent of the law of gravity. If a man chooses to make drunkenness his chief good in life, he is free to do so, but he must accept the ravages to his health and fortune that such a choice entails.

True freedom is found only in the man who has mastered himself, so that neither the constraint of instinct from within nor the pressure of force from without can make him deviate from the line of his conscience; it is the freedom of the man who has freed himself from the chains of ignorance and vice.

**TOWARDS A DEFINITION**

Part of the difficulty of giving a definition lies in the fact that freedom is such a broad term, it has to do with not being confined, or oppressed; with political and civil liberty; with liberty of opinion and worship and work and expression, etc. All these fields that could cause confusion can be ordered and classified within a hierarchy of values. But the deepest notion of freedom presents difficulties beyond this course. It will suffice here to enunciate some of the elements that in our view should be included in the notion of freedom.

Freedom finds **its roots both in the intellect and the will**. The former “discovers” and “studies” the good, the latter “wants” it. Man can and should be achieving truth and good because they are proper to him. This statement implies several things. First, good and truth can only be obtained freely. They cannot be obtained with imposition. Second, we have no guarantee that we will indeed obtain them precisely because they are not necessarily a given. We need to move towards them freely. In short, their acquisition is dependent on our freedom. Third, we do not have any specific predetermined way of obtaining these ends. In short, we freely choose one way over another.

Through freedom **I determine the ends**, or goals, or ideals that I want to “achieve”, “pursue”, “conquer”.

Freedom is “something” **without which we cannot conceive or explain the nature of a human being.** Freedom is one of most specific features of a person. We say that the person is ***free***because he is the ***owner of his acts****.* He owns the principle of his acts; therefore, he does what he wants to and does not do what he does not want to. He owns his interiority, something he alone knows and freely manifests to others.Because he has self-possession, he lives and perfects himself voluntarily, i.e., freely. Since he is lord of his actions, he is also lord of the development of his life and his destiny. He chooses both things. He who can act this way is a person; or better insofar as one is a person, he can act this way, i.e., freely.

Freedom is a **subjective experience**, i.e. it is “something” that we experience in our lives and it could be present or absent at different stages and at different levels. In other words, at times we can make a decision feeling entirely free on that respect, but in some way limited on other aspects, for instance the girl who wants to marry a man but he is not approved by some members of the family. She may feel entirely free on her choice, however curtailed by someone different from her.

Freedom takes place within a ***moderate indeterminism****.*

***Moderate indeterminism*** recognizes the influence of motives but motives do not always determine. There must be an adequate motive, but not every sufficient cause is a necessitating cause. The question is not whether motives attract and influence, they certainly do, but whether motives necessitate. Heredity and environment are important – but moderate indeterminism still recognizes we can still determine to some extent what we do with our heredity and environment. Freedom of choice does not mean a lack of influences – it means those influences do not force me.[[4]](#footnote-4)

Freedom in us **is not absolute**. Precisely because we are finite beings our freedom will have limits and boundaries; this doesn’t mean that it is defective or incomplete. It only corresponds to God to have absolute freedom. Here we are not referring to what is normally understood as something libertine or unrestrained, and its derivations, which will be misunderstood notions of real freedom.

Freedom in its deepest meaning has a **Theo-centric character**, as opposed to the anthropocentrism which different modern philosophies have insistently proposed in more or less recent times. Another idea related to this last characteristic is the fact that with our freedom we “save” ourselves, with the help of Grace obviously; God will not take us to heaven against our own desire.

**LEVELS OF FREEDOM**

1. **FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOM**

Fundamental freedom can be defined as a self-possession in one's origin, a being lord of oneself and a lord of one's manifestations and actions. No external factor —torture, imprisonment, or brainwashing— can destroy this deepest level of freedom.

At this level of freedom, a person embraces his beliefs, desires or a love within oneself. This *"inside-ness"* is inviolable because the person's *being is free.* We are saying therefore much more than affirming that a person "has" freedom. We are positing the following: "We cannot remove fundamental freedom without annihilating the person himself."

Fundamental freedom enables a person to propose ends for himself. It is the freedom by which a person is said to be in his own hands *(causa sui).* It is the freedom that shapes a person’s conduct freely. Fundamental freedom is therefore the restlessness of freedom to manifest itself externally, to take shape in self-perfecting actions.

1. **PYSCHOLOGICAL FREEDOM**

The second internal level of freedom is ***freedom of choice*** *(liber arbitrium)* or psychological freedom. This freedom refers to the capacity of the human will to determine itself in two ways:

1. The will determines itself to do or not to do *(freedom of exercise)* and;
2. The will determines itself to do things *this or that* way *(freedom of specification).*
3. **MORAL FREEDOM**

The third level of freedom is *moral freedom,* or increase of, or growth of freedom.

Moral freedom is freedom that results from the good use of choice. Because man is perfectible and is a project to himself, he not only chooses what is within his reach to perfect himself but simultaneously acquires habits in the process. Good habits or virtues strengthen his capacity to develop himself amidst obstacles from within and from outside himself. In short, *moral freedom* consists in the exercise of virtues. Hence, the exercise of moral freedom is directly proportional to the growth of freedom because the exercise of virtues capacitates the person to accomplish things he could not do before. Virtue expands human capacity. **Freedom increases with the good use of choice**. On the contrary, freedom decreases with the bad use of choice.

1. **POLITICAL FREEDOM**

The last and most external level of freedom is *political or social freedom.* It is in this level that we observe situations of misery and opportunities for persons.

Society must provide opportunities for persons to realize themselves freely. ***Social freedom***therefore consists in allowing persons to achieve their ideals as they wish and allowing ideals to be lived.

**FREEDOM AND RESPONSIBILITY**

Motivation precedes human action; consequences follow it. The exercise of freedom cannot fail to consider the possible consequences of each choice: for oneself and for others. In fact, this foreseeing of the consequences is normally a part of motivation itself.

No sense of personal freedom can be genuine if it is not accompanied by an equally personal sense of responsibility. Since every action has its consequences, anyone who feels free to direct his choices along one particular way rather than another must realize that he shares in the consequences for others which necessarily derive from his free choices. If I deliberately jump a red light, I make myself liable to a fine or responsible for an accident. The more likely the consequence, the more I should foresee it, and act responsibly. The less foreseeable the consequence, the less the responsibility.

The sense of responsibility serves to confirm the awareness of being personally free. The action is mine; and precisely for this reason, I am at least a partial cause of the consequences. The person who will not accept responsibility does not understand the true scope and meaning of his freedom, is not fully in possession of it, or is perhaps afraid of it.

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**CHAPTER 7 PERSONHOOD**

Before we get into the thick of this chapter it will help to have a look at what people think about the concept of Person. Some definitions that have been proposed in response to the question ‘What is a person?’ are:

• ‘A human being regarded as an individual’ (OED)

• ‘A being that has certain capacities or attributes such as reason, morality, consciousness or self-consciousness, and being a part of a culturally established form of social relations such as kinship, ownership of property, or legal responsibility’ (Wikipedia)

• ‘An individual substance of a rational nature’ (Boethius)

• ‘A being "capable of desiring to continue as a subject of experience and other mental states"’ (Michael Tooley)

* A being of autonomous intellect. It is conceivable that a machine one day might be constructed having that characteristic.’ (Robert Kolker)

The above answers give some insights but also show that without a deep study it is difficult to provide an accurate answer.

Philosophical anthropology's main concern is the human being and one of its central themes is personhood, the ultimate source of human dignity and the reason for man's inviolability. It is, in fact, the most specific core of the human being. Without any need to go into the evolution of the concept of person or exhaust all the issues about personhood that can be philosophically considered, this chapter limits its focus to the basic features of the person. The question "What am I?" is a question about essence, about a categorization that explains why I have the form and existence that I have. I possess a specific nature that accounts for this form and mode of existence. The answer to "What am I?" is "I am a human being." To say "human being" is to locate my identity within a biological category, the human species, and to identify my nature with the generic "human" nature. In short, because I belong to this species, I am a human being and consequently possess a human nature. "Human being" is a collective criterion of identity because all those belonging to the same species share it. I am not unique as a human being and by having a human nature. In contrast, I am unique as a person. That is why philosophical anthropology cannot limit itself to clarifying what human being means by simply contrasting humans from sub-human modes of living (animal) from sub-human modes of non-living (machines), or from supra-human modes of existence (angelic or divine). It must try to understand human beings from what is peculiar about being a person. In other words, human being is clarified best, albeit not exclusively, by making reference to personhood and its features that are actually drawn from human nature.

**SOME BASIC FEATURES OF THE PERSON**

The following features may be referred to as ***phenomenological*** aspects of the human person. They offer us the opportunity to understand what a human person is through thinking about our experiences of ourselves and of other persons:

***Intimacy: A person is a self, an ‘I’ who possesses an inner world.***

Intimacy signifies inner life, what belongs to oneself, what is “personal”. What a person thinks and wills is immanent (i.e., it remains within the person, as part of his or her inner life). In fact, intimacy is the greatest manifestation of immanence. No one else can know what a person thinks or desires unless that person decides to reveal it. Our personal intimacy makes us vulnerable, and we can experience shame when it is exposed to others without our wishing it (e.g., we don’t want others looking over our shoulders at what we’re writing). From this comes the concept of privacy, a refuge not open to strangers (e.g., no one just enters one’s house). Intimacy is not static, but creative. Thus, intimacy among persons is not the same. One’s inner life gives rise to something incommunicable, individual, and unique. A person responds to the question ‘who are you?’, not ‘what are you?’

***Personal intimacy makes us all unique and unrepeatable.***

For this reason, a person is a ‘someone’, a ‘who’, not ‘something’ or a ‘what’. The question ‘who am I?’ indicates personhood. Person has to do with the ‘I’, my unrepeatable absolute core.

***Persons tend to, and actually manifest, their intimacy.***

The sense of privacy (the right to one’s intimacy) and of ‘shame’ protects the sanctuary of one's inner world. Expressing one's intimacy requires a context of trust/confidence, because it means that a person is willing to share his or her inner world with some other. A person shows his or her inner world through a variety of ways: action, speech, and bodily gestures. A person inserts himself/herself in the world through action, which is inclusive of speech. Speaking manifests intimacy. Our thoughts are made public for the purpose of being understood by others. Persons speaks because they are social, i.e., open to others. Humans invented language to be shared with others. By manifesting intimacy in society through action and speech, persons make themselves culture-creating beings. This manifestation is called culture.

***A person is free to manifest his or her intimacy.***

We have freedom because we are able to decide what to manifest of ourselves and to whom.

***A person has the capacity to give not just things, but to give self.***

This capacity is implied in the act of showing oneself, in taking something from one’s inner life one considers valuable and offering it to another. This is exhibited especially in the act of loving. In fact, love is not so much in giving things, but in giving of oneself to the beloved. That is why love is the most sublime activity of beings capable of thinking and willing. Giving of self fulfils the self. Now, to give one's intimacy there needs to be a receiver of intimacy, i.e., an ‘other’ who likewise has intimacy. It also implies vulnerability, as the offering of oneself brings with it the possibility of rejection, of not being valued, or by being reduced to the status of an object to be used or enjoyed by others instead of being recognised as unique and of incommensurable value. This is what moves us to protect our intimacy, deciding to whom, and in what circumstances, it is appropriate to reveal and share our innermost selves.

***A person has the capacity to receive the gift of intimacy.***

A person has the capacity to receive the gift of intimacy of or the gift of self of another. To be a recipient of intimacy is to accept and admit a given intimacy (gift) into one's own intimacy. That is, the receiver receives the gift as his or her own. This is also part of the act of love. Without the other, the gift of intimacy becomes senseless or frustrating. In other words, the self-giving of the giver must be reciprocated and corresponded to. If the gift of intimacy is not received by another, then it is not so much given, as left.

***A person has the capacity to dialogue with another intimacy, someone.***

Because self-giving entails another self-receiving intimacy, dialogue becomes not just an exchange of ideas or words but an exchange of intimacies. Dialogue is a reciprocal exchange of the selves’ inner worlds, of what each self is. To say that the person is ‘dialogical’ means that sharing of intimacies is social and communitarian. Each person in dialogue shares his or her own intimacy and learns from the intimacy of the other, thereby enriching the inner worlds of both. This growth cannot take place if the person speaks to himself/herself alone, or with something. Human personhood, human personality, and the education of humans are forged not by the accumulation of information, but through dialogue with others. Dialogue is mediated by language. There is no need for language if we are not open to others. In fact, many human conflicts arise due to lack of communication. Communication is not simply a gathering of people to talk. It has to do with dialogue, i.e., an exchange of interiority, therefore with a readiness to listen and to grow in the language of the others. This entails that the speakers are open to the truth of the other. There can be no true dialogue if speakers have no interest in truth because it is, in fact, that truth which is shared.

**Personal Dignity**

All persons have equal dignity. In the Christian conception of dignity, human beings have dignity because they are made in the image and likeness of God and they have a supernatural vocation which is the gift of God. Thus all human beings have inherent dignity (worth or value). All human beings are equal in dignity. This is a dignity that can neither be acquired nor lost. It is inherent and inalienable. All human beings have this inherent dignity, which, along with our common human nature, is the foundation for being able to talk about human equality and universal human rights. The root reason for human dignity lies in man's call to communion with God. From the very circumstance of his origin man is already invited to converse with God. For man would not exist were he not created by God’s love and constantly preserved by it; and he cannot live fully according to truth unless he freely acknowledges that love and devotes himself to His Creator. (Gaudium et Spes, 19.)

The dignity of every person before God is the basis of the dignity of man before other men. Moreover, this is the ultimate foundation of the radical equality and brotherhood among all people, regardless of their race, nation, sex, origin, culture, or class. (CSD, n. 144)

In contemporary culture it is also common to speak about dignity in another sense: as the worth or value of a person as they are perceived, either by themselves (dignity as a sense of self-worth), or as what others perceive and judge a person to be worth. If dignity is understood only in this way, it can be acquired and can be lost. A person’s value is the value they subjectively place on their own lives. Inherent dignity is fundamental and is the basis for being able to talk about dignity at all, but we also need to be able to appreciate our own dignity and worth. A true appreciation of one’s inherent dignity helps us to appreciate our worth. At the same time, if others fail to recognise our inherent dignity and to not treat us with the respect due to all human beings, we can lose sight of our sense of self-worth. Discrimination, violence, bullying, constant criticism, neglect and abuse, especially in children, and conduct that demeans a person or violates their rights can lead a person to form a distorted view of their own dignity and worth. On the positive side, this can also work the other way. The way we treat people can help them appreciate their own worth or dignity and can even help people discover, or rediscover, their dignity. Occasionally a person can lose their sense of self-worth as a result of their actions or behaviour. In these cases, encountering others who value them and recognise their dignity can be critical in helping them to rediscover it for themselves, with a result that they find the hope and impetus to change their lives.

**Valuable for their own sake**

Persons have an inherent value and are never to be reduced to or used as, an object or means. Man in his interiority transcends the universe and is the only creature willed by God for its own sake. (CSD, 133) ‘For this reason neither his life nor the development of his thought, nor his good, nor those who are part of his personal and social activities can be subjected to unjust restrictions in the exercise of their rights and freedom’. ‘In no case … is the human person to be manipulated for ends that are foreign to his own development, which can find complete fulfilment only in God and his plan of salvation’. (CSD, 133) It is necessary to consider every neighbour without exception as another self, taking into account first of all his life and the means necessary for living it with dignity. Every political, economic, social, scientific and cultural programme must be inspired by the awareness of the primacy of each human being over society. (CSD, 132) The human person can be said to be absolute in the sense that a person is an end in himself or herself, as the philosopher Immanuel Kant put it, valuable in him or herself, and not to be reduced to an instrument to be used by another. However human beings are also relative in the sense that we receive this absolute character from another source – we do not confer it on ourselves. This in fact allows one to be respectful of the absoluteness of other persons. In short, there is a higher instance that tells me I should respect others and they should respect me. The dignity of the human person does not come from a human person. This is the point where God and revelation become relevant. Being an end in oneself is something received: dignity is a gift.

To say that the person is an end in him or herself is to say that her or she can never be a means to an end. S/He is therefore not an object to be used for something else. To use persons is to transform them into objects; it is to treat them as non-selves. To use them for the personal interests of others is to manipulate them, which is ethically wrong. To recognise other people’s personhood and dignity is a practical behaviour (praxis) before it is a theoretical juridical abstract declaration.

**Person and self-transcendence**

We have said that a person’s identity is achieved in an existential manner. One obtains self-realization by reaching new heights. Thus, it is fitting to say that human nature is self-transcendence, that is, openness, activity, and possession of those ends proper to the person. A person reaches his or her identity by becoming what he or she still is not. The way we look at a person should include the perspective of what they can become.

**The classical definition of ‘person’**

Metaphysically the concept of person as ‘an individual suppositum of a rational nature’ used by the philosopher Boethius, and St Thomas Aquinas, highlights the following: Individual Individuality means oneness or undividedness, unrepeatableness, uniqueness, singularness. An individual is undivided in itself and separate from the rest who are also individuals but not necessarily persons. The meaning of individual is more complex when applied to persons. A person is always an individual and he or she is so, not simply because of his or her undividedness but because of his or her autonomy, self-centredness, and non-transferability of his or her being to others. Persons are individuals because of their bodily Ness; autonomous because they can transcend whatever is received from the outside world. Suppositum means that a human being is the existing substance in which all his qualities inhere (body structure, complexion, height, IQ, EQ, temperament, profession, civil status, or religious affiliation). Rationality refers to the thinking and willing capacities of a human being. Fourth, nature means essence, as the principle of activity or operation. Human nature is common to all humans.

**Inadequacy of reducing the human person to his acts or conscious life**

After all that has been said regarding the person, would we be able to say that a person is still a person even when he or she is not thinking, willing, or performing any of those acts proper to him as a person? Even if the individual exists, but does so in a Quasi vegetative state or has suffered a serious mental disorder, could he or she still be called a person? Is the embryo a person? While there is much discussion regarding this issue, it is necessary to affirm that a person cannot be reduced to his or her acts or conscious life. True, a person has to realize his or her full potential as one through the decisions that make up his or her life project. However, he or she is not less of a person if he or she does not do so. Perhaps the best way of putting it would be to say that ‘if someone is not a person, he or she could never act as one, and if someone could, in the future, act as one, he or she has that capacity to do so because he or she is already a person’. Thus, we can say that what determines the nature of a person are not his or her secondary acts, i.e., conscious life, but his or her primary act of being, (i.e., ontological constitution as an individual subsisting substance of a rational nature). The very fact of doubting whether or not someone in the above-mentioned situations is a person or not, provides sufficient basis to affirm that there is something that indicates he or she could be a person. One never doubts that a dog is not a person. The fact that a person could be a person is enough to show respect for their personal dignity.

**CHAPTER 8: THE PSYCHOSOMATIC UNITY OF MAN**

So far, the study has focused on the “operations” proper to man, or proper to the powers of man. The next challenge is to look for the cause of these operations if we are allowed to put it this way. The ultimate principle of man’s operations is the soul. Some of the most contentious points relating to the study of the soul include its origin, its spiritual nature and its immortality.

The spiritual nature of the soul leads, more or less hand in hand, to the study of the human body, since the soul is created to inform a body; this leads to the issue of when it is created and when it can be found in the body. The human body is either male or female, so then a study of human sexuality, from an anthropological point of view, comes to the fore.

**The Human Soul**

**The Meaning of Soul**

The basic meaning of the word ‘soul’ is that of vitalising principles, the principle, that is, by which a thing is able to perform the activities which we associate with ‘being alive’.

In the sense of ‘vitalizing principle’, then, it is proper to say that plants, animals, and men have souls, though not of the same kind. The animal soul differs from the plant soul in that it adds to the minimum of vital functions the power of sensation and of movement from place to place. The human soul differs from the animal in that it adds the powers of the intellect and will to the animal powers.

**The Existence of the Soul**

By studying the powers of the soul we learn about the nature of the soul itself as the ground and origin of these powers. The powers themselves cannot be the soul because they are not always in act. We do not think, for example, when we are asleep or unconscious. We do not see when our eyes are closed. Yet the power to think and the power to see remain. There must be some anterior reality, the, in which these powers are seated. Because we do not have immediate, first-hand knowledge of the soul but have to learn about it indirectly through its activities, some philosophers have denied its existence. No one has ever seen a soul, they say, or photographed one, or isolated one in a test tube, or weighed one in a laboratory. We know that the soul exists through inference. It follows necessarily from certain observed facts, in the same way, for example, that an astronomer may know there is a certain body in the heavens, even though he cannot see it with his telescope’ he knows it because the movements of other heavenly bodies which he can see make the presence of the unseen heavenly body necessary as the only possible explanation. Similarly in the case of man, certain activities are performed which cannot be explained in their totality merely as a response of inert matter to physical forces. These activities differ in kind from purely material activities, and therefore we have to conclude that there is a special way of being which is the ground and explanation of these activities. This principle of being we call the soul.

**The Human Soul**

Human beings are first of all bodily substances (substances are beings capable of existing on their own, unlike colour or taste, for example which only exist in other things). Following Aristotle’s terminology we say that substances have ‘substantial forms’, and so a human being, as a substance, has a substantial form. This means that humans have a certain basic way of being which gives them their particular kind of being as distinct from other basic kinds of being, e.g. ‘human’ against ‘tree’. Since a human being is a bodily substance, his or her substantial form is limited by matter, otherwise there would not be individual human beings but only ‘humanness’. A human being therefore is a being made up of matter (the body) and form.

Matter and form are complementary principles – one does not come into existence without the other. In the case of human beings, the soul could not have come into existence except as the form of the human body. It also means that the living human body always has a rational soul, which is what makes it be alive. Without the rational soul, it is not a human body. The unity of the human being is so profound that the body and soul should not be thought of as two separate beings. They are, rather, two distinct aspects of the same being, the human person. The root of a person’s activities is in their form. The first act of the form is the act of living or being alive. We refer to the form as the ‘soul’, which means ‘life principle’, and say that the rational (human) soul is the substantial form of the human person. The soul is also at the root of all our other capacities or powers, which range from basic activities of nutrition, growth and reproduction, which are found in plant life, up through the animal powers to the specifically human powers.

We learn about our souls by studying the operations they perform. We cannot directly know our soul as it is does not fall under our senses. We can work out what kind of soul something has by observing what it does. While many activities human beings perform are bodily acts (nutrition, sensing, and other activities also performed by plants and animals), the activities of understanding and willing do not basically depend upon anything material. They are spiritual activities, revealing that human beings have the faculties or powers to perform these spiritual activities. This tells us about the nature of the human soul – that it is spiritual – able to exist and operate independently of matter. The human soul is an ‘incomplete’ spirit, however, as it can come into existence in the first place only in union with matter, as the soul of the body.

There is an ‘accidental’ dependence on the body even for the acts of thinking and willing because the soul would be a ‘blank slate’ without the senses which are the channels of information to be thought about. The human soul, separated from the body which it animates, is an incomplete substance, for it is the nature of the soul to be the form of a body.

What makes a being a human being is not to have a body, or life, or emotions (animals have all these too), but to have intelligence and freedom, powers which, as we have seen, are spiritual. What makes a man to be a man, is the substantial form, life principle, or ‘soul’, whose nature is spiritual. The rational human soul is a spiritual soul, meaning that it possesses spiritual faculties or powers (intellect and will), not possessed by plants or animals, that enable the human being to perform spiritual activities (reasoning, loving, etc). The spiritual soul, as the life principle, actualizes the body and all its potencies, and constitutes a human being that is a substantial union composed of body and soul. The fact that the human soul is spiritual makes it a very special type of substantial form, since it has a "subsistence" of its own: it is not totally absorbed by the body but exceeds the body, so to speak; it not only in-forms the body but is an act in itself. In other words, when the body dies the soul, being spiritual, lives on by virtue of its own subsistence: the human soul as we shall see, is immortal.

Spirit cannot be produced from matter, nor can it create itself. It must have its origin in some spiritual being who has the power to create new beings. The spiritual being who has the power to create new beings out of nothing is the being we call God. Every human soul is a direct creation of God and is infused into the human body generated by the parents. The human body proceeds from the parents by generation: they transmit human nature in its material part, thus preparing it for the reception of the soul from God. Three persons then intervene in the begetting of a human being: the man, the woman and God. That is why human generation is called procreation: the Creator intervenes directly.

In the case of human beings, the soul is the form and life principle of the body, but it is also spiritual. It has activities that, being intrinsically independent of the body for their exercise, indicate an act of existence independent of the body. The human soul, then, does not die, for it cannot be broken into parts nor is it vitally dependent on some other being whose destruction it would share. The only conceivable way the soul could go out of existence is by annihilation, which would be an act of destruction by the Creator of the soul, and for this philosophy can envisage no good reason.

**CHAPTER 9. THE SOCIAL NATURE OF THE HUMAN PERSON**

**Aristotle**

Aristotle remarks that "every man feels naturally like a friend to other men". The natural and spontaneous feeling of man towards other men is friendliness. It is then natural and spontaneous for men to form societies: there is no need for an explicit contract.

\* For more on this topic see Aristotle’s text the *Politics* and Book IX and X of the *Nicomachean Ethics.*

* Dialogue and communication
* Language and symbol
* Nature of society
* Forms of social relations
* Friendship and its characteristics
* Flourishing as individuals and society

**Introduction**

Earlier, when studying the characteristics of person, we saw man’s dialogic nature, that is, his natural tendency to interact with other people. Man needs others to behave according to what he is and thus reach his fullness. Therefore, we affirm that man is naturally altruistic: he is naturally concerned about the welfare of others. This then leads him to relate to them. The reason why man needs other men is because his human nature cannot fully develop without others. He needs others for his nourishment and growth when he is still a baby. He depends on others for his education and training. As an adult, his interaction with other people helps him develop socio-cultural traits that form his personality. Only rational creatures can form communities because the end has to be known and wanted in conjunction with others. Several elements of social life arise in order to achieve those ends: human action, language, communication or exchange, money, authority, division of labour or the organization of common duties, and justice and law. Non-rational beings merely group together. Since they do not know ends but act only out of instinct, their grouping together is simply to preserve the species, e.g., for mutual protection, for nourishment, for reproduction. Thus, the individuals of a group become merely means to serve the ends of the species. They do not establish ends for themselves; they are given in their nature and they tend towards them instinctively.

**Dialogue and communication between humans**

When the members of a community share the same ends and means, they need to dialogue with one another. Communication and exchange thus comes into play. It should be kept in mind that different types of goods can be exchanged or communicated.

There are material goods, like money or property. These types of goods cannot be shared by many. They are rather distributed among many. If one person has them, another cannot have them. Moreover, material goods usually serve as means to achieve ends.[[5]](#footnote-5)

Then there are spiritual goods, like ideas, knowledge, a country’s laws. These goods are shared through language and, in modern times, through means of mass communication. In contrast to material goods, spiritual goods do not diminish when shared. On the contrary, they are multiplied. Furthermore, spiritual goods have value in themselves. They are not means to an end. But their important characteristic is that they can be shared, which is precisely what makes a community possible: many share in something common.

One can also communicate services, a mixture of material and spiritual goods. In a community authority is necessary to establish order in the sharing of goods and in the achievement of ends. Authority is a form of service. Also, common action has to be organized to achieve ends and use the means most efficiently. Thus, division of labour now comes into play.

**Language and symbol**

Language is a demand of inter-subjectivity. People have to communicate with one another and they do so through language. But language is also a consequence of inter-subjectivity. Men have to concur in a manner of expression which can be understood by others. Voice in itself does not have meaning, but only manifests internal states. A dog’s bark indicates whether it is happy, angry, or in pain. In that sense, it communicates. However, it cannot vocalize concepts. Human voice therefore needs language in order to express meaningful concepts. Language has to use conventional symbols (letters grouped together into words, characters, figures) to be able to carry out this function. The symbols used have to be agreed upon and this is where we see that language is a product of a rational nature. The symbols chosen reflect the culture of the persons who developed the language. It has been rightly said that symbols in language are a continuation of nature.

**The Nature of Society**

Society in general refers to any union of persons which aims, under a constant authority, at a common end. Societies may be of different kinds depending on their origin and ends. There are natural societies (e.g.: the family) and other societies (e.g.: cultural, religious, or professional societies).[[6]](#footnote-6)

**Forms of social relations**

Depending upon one’s point of view, social relations can take on varied forms. The most basic form of social relation is that of friendship and love, when one person relates to another or several other persons, but in such numbers that one can establish a close relationship. If we look at social relations from the point of view of achieving the ends of man, that is, man’s fulfilment as a person, then several social institutions are involved. These institutions then give rise to specific forms of social relations, usually directed towards achieving the ends that they try to achieve. They are as follows:

**The Family**

The family is the first and most basic human institution. It is natural in its origin. It is where the person is born, grows, reproduces, and dies. The relationship of personal love is proper to a family. It is the venue where the individual is loved for his own sake and learns to love others in turn. Furthermore, through the family, the original stock is also spread and is perpetuated through generations. However, the family does more than account for man’s biological life. It is also in the family where man develops his personality. He acquires knowledge, ways of behaving and thinking, customs, habits.

**The family is the first natural society.**

The Church considers the family as the first natural society, with underived rights that are proper to it, and places it at the centre of social life. Relegating the family “to a subordinate or secondary role, excluding it from its rightful position in society, would be to inflict grave harm on the authentic growth of society as a whole”. The family, in fact, is born of the intimate communion of life and love founded on the marriage between one man and one woman. … it is the principal place of interpersonal relationships, the first and vital cell of society. The family is a divine institution that stands at the foundation of life of the human person as the prototype of every social order.[[7]](#footnote-7)

**Importance of the Family for the Person**

The family has central importance in reference to the person. It is in this cradle of life and love that people are born and grow; when a child is conceived, society receives the gift of a new person who is called “from the innermost depths of self to communion with others and to the giving of self to others”. It is in the family, therefore, that the mutual giving of self on the part of man and woman united in marriage creates an environment of life in which children “develop their potentialities, become aware of their dignity and prepare to face their unique and individual destiny”. …

“The first and fundamental structure for ‘human ecology' is the family, in which man receives his first formative ideas about truth and goodness and learns what it means to love and to be loved, and thus what it actually means to be a person”. The obligations of its members, in fact, are not limited by the terms of a contract but derive from the very essence of the family, founded on the irrevocable marriage covenant and given structure in the relationships that arise within it following the generation or adoption of children.[[8]](#footnote-8)

Importance of the Family for Society The family, the natural community in which human social nature is experienced, makes a unique and irreplaceable contribution to the good of society. The family unit, in fact, is born from the communion of persons. “‘Communion' has to do with the personal relationship between the ‘I' and the ‘thou'. ‘Community' on the other hand transcends this framework and moves towards a ‘society', a ‘we'. The family, as a community of persons, is thus the first human ‘society'“. A society built on a family scale is the best guarantee against drifting off course into individualism or collectivism, because within the family the person is always at the centre of attention as an end and never as a means. It is patently clear that the good of persons and the proper functioning of society are closely connected “with the healthy state of conjugal and family life”. Without families that are strong in their communion and stable in their commitment peoples grow weak. In the family, moral values are taught starting from the very first years of life, the spiritual heritage of the religious community and the cultural legacy of the nation are transmitted. In the family one learns social responsibility and solidarity.[[9]](#footnote-9)

The priority of the family over society and over the State must be affirmed. The family in fact, at least in its procreative function, is the condition itself for their existence. With regard to other functions that benefit each of its members, it proceeds in importance and value the functions that society and the State are called to perform. The family possesses inviolable rights and finds its legitimization in human nature and not in being recognized by the State. The family, then, does not exist for society or the State, but society and the State exist for the family.

Every social model that intends to serve the good of man must not overlook the centrality and social responsibility of the family. In their relationship to the family, society and the State are seriously obligated to observe the principle of subsidiarity. In virtue of this principle, public authorities may not take away from the family tasks which it can accomplish well by itself or in free association with other families; on the other hand, these same authorities have the duty to sustain the family, ensuring that it has all the assistance that it needs to fulfil properly its responsibilities.[[10]](#footnote-10)

Natural Societies

As distinct from "artificial" or voluntary societies, such as a university or a business corporation, "natural" societies are those which arise spontaneously, without any new inclination of the will. These are the family, and civil society.

On a wider scale, one can refer to the human family, the family of mankind: different societies comprising the larger international community. In a manner of speaking, one can also refer to the human race, since all men descended from a single stock. With the phenomenon of globalization, the awareness of a need for nations to help and support one another to achieve common goals, namely, the universal common good.[[11]](#footnote-11)

**Economic and Professional Institutions**

*Economic* and *professional* institutions exist to provide the means to satisfy man’s needs through technology and work. The basic institution is the company. Persons are usually valued for their utility. Through division of labour and task specialization, each is needed to achieve the company’s goals. However, it is also possible that friendship is also developed among workers in a company, but this does not alter the relationship of utility.

**Political and Juridical Institutions**

*Political* and *juridical* institutions establish authority in a community, for the sake of ordering towards the common good. The usual form of this type of institution is the government or state. The relationships between persons that arise are based on justice.[[12]](#footnote-12)

**Educational Institutions**

*Educational* institutions train persons to carry out their role in society by giving them a profession and pointing out the way for them to achieve their fulfilment as persons. An educational institution is in fact a microcosm of society were authority, friendship, division of labour exist. To a certain point, an educational institution can even be an extension of the family, where parents are involved in the formation of their children.

**Cultural and Religious Institutions**

*Cultural* and *religious* institutions help men develop certain values. The more important ones are those that are directed towards the development of human behaviour, namely those that try to achieve moral and religious ends. What is specific to these types of institutions is the cultivation of man and his inner life, as well as the worship due to his Creator. The relations between persons in such institutions can even be stronger than in any of the above-mentioned institutions.

**Friendship and its characteristics**

Friendship is a relationship of benevolent love, that is, loving the good for the other person, valuing the person as “another I”. However, friendship adds the characteristic of dialogue and reciprocation. Love that is not reciprocated cannot be called friendship. Likewise, it has been said that “friendship is a habitual dialogue, a conversation that is interrupted only on some moments”. There are two types of friendship: personal and private, meaning that one shares one’s intimacy with one or some friends; civil or friendly relations, directed towards all persons. In both cases the characteristics of friendship apply, though less intensely in the latter than in the former. Let us now study those characteristics:



“Friendship is born at that moment when one person says to the other:

‘What! You too? I thought I was the only one.’”

C.S Lewis



1. Friendship does not seek one’s own interest or pleasure. It is disinterested. A friend is loved for his or her own sake.

2) True friendship springs from sharing a common task. One characteristic typical to friendship is to seek the company of a friend. This companionship is usually achieved in the fulfilment of a shared task, striving for a common objective.

3) Disagreements can arise between friends. However, disagreements do not necessarily have to be divisive. They can be an opportunity to dialogue and share experiences and thus enrich each one’s point of view.

4) Friendship implies likeness. They are alike in their tastes and interests. This is another aspect of sharing something in common. This explains why friends are motivated to do things which they would not do if they were alone. To be with people we know is also a natural preference.

5) Friendship develops with time. The reason for this is that true friendship starts only when friends open up their inner lives to one another. As long as this does not happen, then friendship is superficial and eventually disappears. This characteristic depends on the character of persons. Timidity, shyness, high regard for one’s privacy will evidently make friendship more difficult.

6) Once friendship has developed, it becomes stable because it is based on an intimate and personal knowledge of another which facilitates help, understanding, dialogue, and sharing of one’s own concerns. As long as dealing continues, friendship develops even more and intensifies.

7) Friendship is related to justice. To be a friend means to give what is due to the other. However, in the case of friendship, love goes together with justice since it leads one to love the other as deserved.

**Flourishing as Individuals and in Society**

“Far from being the object or passive element of social life, the human person is rather, and must always remain, its subject, foundation and goal. The origin of social life is therefore found in the human person, and society cannot refuse to recognize its active and responsible subject; every expression of society must be directed towards the human person.”

[Cite your source here.]

**Society is for the person, not the person for society[[13]](#footnote-13)**

**Pluralism**

The social nature of human beings is not uniform but is expressed in many different ways. In fact, the common good depends on a healthy social pluralism. The different components of society are called to build a unified and harmonious whole, within which it is possible for each element to preserve and develop its own characteristics and autonomy. Some components — such as the family, the civil community and the religious community — respond more immediately to the intimate nature of man, while others come about more on a voluntary basis. “To promote the participation of the greatest number in the life of a society, the creation of voluntary associations and institutions must be encouraged ‘on both national and international levels, which relate to economic and social goals, to cultural and recreational activities, to sport, to various professions, and to political affairs'. This ‘socialization' also expresses the natural tendency for the sake of attaining objectives that exceed individual capacities. It develops the qualities of the person, especially the sense of initiative and responsibility, and helps guarantee his rights.”[[14]](#footnote-14)

*We can say that the end, purpose, or goal (telos) of society is the good of every man in that society.*

**The Common Good**

The common good is defined as "the sum total of social conditions which allow people, either as groups or as individuals, to reach their fulfillment more fully and more easily."[[15]](#footnote-15)

The common good concerns the life of all, and has three essential elements:

First, the common good presupposes respect for the person. In the name of the common good, public authorities are bound to respect the fundamental and inalienable rights of the human person. Society should permit each of its members to fulfil his vocation. In particular, the common good resides in the conditions for the exercise of the natural freedoms indispensable for the development of the human vocation, such as "the right to act according to a sound norm of conscience and to safeguard . . . privacy, and rightful freedom also in matters of religion."[[16]](#footnote-16)

Second, the common good requires the social well-being and development of the group itself. ... Certainly, it is the proper function of authority to arbitrate, in the name of the common good, between various particular interests; but it should make accessible to each what is needed to lead a truly human life: food, clothing, health, work, education and culture, suitable information, the right to establish a family, and so on.[[17]](#footnote-17)

Finally, the common good requires peace, that is, the stability and security of a just order. It presupposes that authority should ensure by morally acceptable means the security of society and its members. It is the basis of the right to legitimate personal and collective defence.[[18]](#footnote-18)

It is the role of the state to defend and promote the common good of civil society, its citizens, and intermediate bodies.[[19]](#footnote-19)

Human interdependence is increasing and gradually spreading throughout the world. The unity of the human family, embracing people who enjoy equal natural dignity, implies a universal common good. This good calls for an organization of the community of nations able to "provide for the different needs of men; this will involve the sphere of social life to which belong questions of food, hygiene, education, and certain situations arising here and there, as for example, alleviating the miseries of refugees dispersed throughout the world, and assisting migrants and their families."[[20]](#footnote-20)

The common good of society is not an end in itself; it has value only in reference to attaining the ultimate ends of the person and the universal common good of the whole of creation. God is the ultimate end of his creatures and for no reason may the common good be deprived of its transcendent dimension, which moves beyond the historical dimension while at the same time fulfilling it … A purely historical and materialistic vision would end up transforming the common good into a simple socio-economic well-being, without any transcendental goal, that is, without its most intimate reason for existing.[[21]](#footnote-21)

Society is essential to the fulfillment of the human vocation.[[22]](#footnote-22) The Social Doctrine of the Church enunciates fundamental principles, ‘including those pertaining to the social order,’ ‘to the extent that they are required by the fundamental rights of the human person or the salvation of souls”.[[23]](#footnote-23)

With her social doctrine, the Church aims “at helping man on the path of salvation”. This is her primary and sole purpose. There is no intention to usurp or invade the duties of others or to neglect her own; nor is there any thought of pursuing objectives that are foreign to her mission. This mission serves to give an overall shape to the Church's right and at the same time her duty to develop a social doctrine of her own and to influence society and societal structures with it by means of the responsibility and tasks to which it gives rise.[[24]](#footnote-24)

In the social doctrine of the Church can be found the principles for reflection, the criteria for judgment and the directives for action which are the starting point for the promotion of an integral and solidary humanism.[[25]](#footnote-25)

The key principles of the Church’s social teaching are human dignity, the common good, subsidiarity and solidarity. The principles are interconnected and must be appreciated in their unity, not taken partially or separately.[[26]](#footnote-26)

A summary of some of the Church’s key social principles and teachings is included in the supplementary readings.

**Individualisms and Collectivisms**

*Individualist doctrine regarding life in society*

In the history of philosophy, men have sometimes emphasized the importance of the individual to the extent of downplaying his social nature. Society would be a body of autonomous individuals who have no other choice but to live with one another. Thomas Hobbes was the principal proponent of this modern liberal individualism. His thought can be summarized in the following points:

1) Each man’s free choice ends where another man’s begins;

2) Man seeks his own interests above everything else and is incapable of disinterested actions.

There is nothing wrong in affirming the importance of freedom and that it should be exercised according to each one’s manner of being. However, liberal individualism focuses on the egoistic aspect of a person’s actions. Egoism fosters self-interest above all, leading people to isolate themselves from others. Human beings then consider themselves to be self-sufficient and to not need others for anything. It creates the mentality of “each to their own”. Individualism establishes an exaggerated separation between private and public life. One’s private life is the domain of personal beliefs, values, interests, in a word, one’s intimacy. No one can meddle in this. One’s public life, on the other hand, consists of one’s relations with others. Beliefs and values have no place in public life because they would be impositions on other people’s beliefs and values. It is the state’s duty to regulate individuals so that their privacy is respected and so that each one contributes to the state the way they should.

*Collectivist doctrines*

Collectivism is the exact opposite of individualism. Whereas the latter focuses on the unbounded freedom of the individual, the former places society above the individuals composing it.

As a philosophical doctrine, collectivism originated with French socialism at the end of the 18th century. The first socialist movement failed during the French revolution in 1796. It was revived by Count de Saint-Simon (1760-1825), a socialist whose principal contribution was to propose a naturalistic science of society as a guide to social reconstruction. Charles Fourier (1772- 1837) performed some social experiments, grouping people into communities which were autonomous, self-sufficient, devoted to work and love in an atmosphere of freedom, enthusiasm and harmony. Louis Blanc advocated a socialist state that would enforce equality by state ownership of the means of production. From him came the slogan, “from each according to his ability, to each according to his need.” Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831) maintained that individual man disappears into the collective historical spirit, that is to say, the evolutionary process of the spirit achieving self-revelation through dialectics. These different philosophies would influence Karl Marx (1818-1833) in his doctrine of the socialist state with its revolutionary praxis to set-up the dictatorship of the proletariat, eventually giving way to the definitive communist state.

The human person may never be thought of only as an absolute individual being, built up by himself and on himself, as if his characteristic traits depended on no one else but himself. Nor can the person be thought of as a mere cell of an organism that is inclined at most to grant it recognition in its functional role within the overall system. Reductionist conceptions of the full truth of men and women have already been the object of the Church's social concern many times, and she has not failed to raise her voice against these, as against other drastically reductive perspectives, taking care to proclaim instead that “individuals do not feel themselves isolated units, like grains of sand, but united by the very force of their nature and by their internal destiny, into an organic, harmonious mutual relationship”[234]. She has affirmed instead that man cannot be understood “simply as an element, a molecule within the social organism”, and is therefore attentive that the affirmation of the primacy of the person is not seen as corresponding to an individualistic or mass vision.[[27]](#footnote-27)

Further Reading:

Boudreau, J., *Ubuntu- “I am what I am because of who we all are”* What does the Church say about the Common Good? (10 second summary) Promoting Human Flourishing: Principles and Major Themes of Catholic Social Teaching.

**SUPPLEMENTARY READINGS ON THE INDIVIDUAL PERSON AND SOCIETY**

• Boudreau, J., Ubuntu- “I am what I am because of who we all are”.

• Promoting Human Flourishing: Principles and Major Themes of Catholic Social Teaching

Ubuntu- “I am what I am because of who we all are” Jen Boudreau, 2 December 2002.

https://motivationinspirationandlife.wordpress.com/2012/06/02/ubuntu-i-am-what-i-ambecause-of-who-we-all-are

**“Ubuntu is a philosophy that considers the success of the group above that of the individual.” Stephen Lundin- Ubuntu!**

The word ‘Ubuntu’ originates from one of the Bantu dialects of Africa and is pronounced as uu-Boon-too. It is a traditional African philosophy that offers us an understanding of ourselves in relation with the world. According to Ubuntu, there exists a common bond between us all and it is through this bond, through our interaction with our fellow human beings, that we discover our own human qualities. Or as the Zulus would say, “Umuntu Ngumuntu Ngabantu”, which means that a person is a person through other persons. We affirm our humanity when we acknowledge that of others. The South African Nobel Laureate Archbishop Desmond Tutu describes Ubuntu as:

It is the essence of being human. It speaks of the fact that my humanity is caught up and is inextricably bound up in yours. I am human because I belong. It speaks about wholeness; it speaks about compassion. A person with Ubuntu is welcoming, hospitable, warm and generous, willing to share. Such people are open and available to others, willing to be vulnerable, affirming of others, do not feel threatened that others are able and good, for they have a proper self-assurance that comes from knowing that they belong in a greater whole. They know that they are diminished when others are humiliated, diminished when others are oppressed, diminished when others are treated as if they were less than who they are. The quality of Ubuntu gives people resilience, enabling them to survive and emerge still human despite all efforts to dehumanize them.[[28]](#footnote-28)

“An anthropologist studying the habits and customs of an African tribe found himself surrounded by children most days. So he decided to play a little game with them. He managed to get candy from the nearest town and put it all in a decorated basket. at the foot of a tree. Then he called the children and suggested they play the game. When the anthropologist said “now”, the children had to run to the tree and the first one to get there could have all the candy to him/herself. So the children all lined up waiting for the signal. When the anthropologist said “now”, all of the children took each other by the hand ran together towards the tree. They all arrived at the same time divided up the candy, sat down and began to happily munch away. The anthropologist went over to them and asked why they had all run together when any one of them could have had the candy all to themselves. The children responded: “Ubuntu. How could any one of us be happy if all the others were sad?” Ubuntu is a philosophy of African tribes that can be summed up as “I am what I am because of who we all are.”[[29]](#footnote-29)

“A person with Ubuntu is open and available to others, affirming of others, does not feel threatened that others are able and good, based from a proper self-assurance that comes from knowing that he or she belongs in a greater whole and is diminished when others are humiliated or diminished, when others are tortured or oppressed” -Desmond Tutu “One of the sayings in our country is Ubuntu – the essence of being human. Ubuntu speaks particularly about the fact that you can’t exist as a human being in isolation. It speaks about our interconnectedness. You can’t be human all by yourself, and when you have this quality – Ubuntu – you are known for your generosity. We think of ourselves far too frequently as just individuals, separated from one another, whereas you are connected and what you do affects the whole World. When you do well, it spreads out; it is for the whole of humanity.” -Desmond Tutu

**Promoting Human Flourishing**

**Principles and Major Themes of Catholic Social Teaching**

This material is sourced and paraphrased from the Diocese of St Paul Minneapolis, <http://www.osjspm.org/> Used by: Tohill, Angela, Passion for Justice: A Social Justice Teaching Resource. Copyright: St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria, 2004. Used with permission.

The following summary highlights ten major themes from Catholic Social Teaching (CST) of the last century or more. It’s informed by various publications including documents by popes, bishops and synods. These principles are not exclusive to the Catholic Church of course but are common to many religious traditions and humanist approaches to full human development. They have come to be known as the Principles of Catholic Social Teaching because they are articulated and enshrined in many of the official documents of the Church.

**Dignity of the Human Person**

Belief in the intrinsic dignity of the human person is the basis of all Catholic social teaching. Human life is sacred and the dignity of the human person is the starting point for an ethical vision of society. This principle is grounded in the idea that the person is made in the image of God. The dignity of the human person is not diminished by age, ability, ethnicity, economic status or any other factor. Human dignity belongs to all people at all times simply by virtue of their being human.

**Common Good and Community**

The human person is both holy and social. Humans realise their dignity and human rights in relationship with others, in community. Human beings grow and achieve completion in community. Human dignity can only be realised and protected in the context of relationships with the wider society. How we arrange our society – in economics and politics, in law and policy – directly affects human dignity and the capacity of individuals to grow in community. The obligation to ‘love our neighbour’ has an individual dimension, but it also requires a broader social obligation. Everyone has a responsibility to contribute to the good of the whole society, to the common good.

**Preferential Option for the Poor**

The moral test of a society is how it treats its most vulnerable members. The poor have the most urgent moral claim on the conscience of the nation. We are called to look at public policy decisions in terms of how they affect the poor. The ‘preferential option for the poor’ is not an adversarial slogan that pits one group or class against another. Rather it states that the deprivation and powerlessness of the poor wounds the whole community. The option for the poor is an essential part of society’s effort to achieve the common good. A healthy community can be achieved only if its members give special consideration to those with special needs, to those who are poor or on the margins of society.

**Subsidiarity**

The State has a positive moral function. It is an instrument to promote human dignity, protect human rights and build the common good. All people have a right and a responsibility to participate in political institutions so that government can achieve its proper goals. The principle of subsidiarity holds that the functions of government should be performed at the lowest level possible (that is, at the level closest to those people who are affected by decisions and policies) as long as they can be performed adequately. When the needs in question cannot be adequately met at the lower level, then it is not only necessary but crucial that higher levels of government intervene. In other words, the Principle of Subsidiarity holds that no responsibility should accrue to a higher body that can rightly and satisfactorily be undertaken by a lesser body.

**The Universal Purpose of Goods**

The goods of Earth are for all people to share. People have the right to own private property, however, this right comes with a caveat: we may not accumulate excess wealth for ourselves alone. Justice demands that all people should have access to the goods of society and that these must be equally shared in order to allow all to flourish.

**Stewardship of Creation**

The goods of Earth are gifts from God and they are intended for the benefit of everyone. There is a ‘social mortgage’ that guides our use of the world’s goods, and we have a responsibility to care for those goods as stewards and trustees, not as mere consumers and users. How we treat the environment is a measure of our stewardship, not only for the present but for generations yet to come. Earth is home not only to the human family but to a wide diversity of plant and animal life as well. Stewardship means safeguarding the diversity of all life and recognising the interdependence of all life forms on the planet.

**Promotion of Peace**

Christian values promote peace as a positive, action-oriented concept. In the words of Pope John Paul II, ‘… peace is not just the absence of war. It involves mutual respect and confidence between peoples and nations. It involves collaboration and binding agreements.’ There is a close relationship between peace and justice. Peace is the fruit of justice and is dependent upon right order among human beings. The common good is able to flourish more readily in a peaceful context.

**Participation**

All people have a right to participate in the economic, political and cultural life of society. It is a fundamental demand of justice and a requirement for human dignity that all people be assured of a minimum level of participation in the community. It is wrong for a person to be excluded unfairly or to be unable to participate in society.

**Global Solidarity**

We are one human family. Our responsibilities to each other cross national, racial, economic and ideological differences. We are called to work globally for justice. Authentic development must be fully human development. It must respect and promote personal, social, economic and political rights, including the rights of nations and of peoples. It must avoid extremes of underdevelopment on the one hand and ‘super development’ on the other. Accumulating material goods and technical resources will be unsatisfactory and debasing if there is no respect for the moral, cultural and spiritual dimensions of the human person.

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**CHAPTER 10. CULTURE AND HUMAN PRAXIS**

* Manifestations of human nature in culture
* Cultural relativism and evaluation of cultures
* Values as ends of human behaviour.
* Transcendental foundations of human values
* Language and tradition
* Expressions of culture
* Formation of human person in time
* Inculturation of the faith

**Introduction: What is culture?**

Human activity can be classified as natural, and cultural or artificial.

1. Natural activity includes those actions that spring from the essence of man, in accordance with the classical adage operari sequitur esse (action follows being). Such activities (e.g. thinking, willing, laughing, etc) would be common to all men since all men possess the same essence.

2. Cultural or artificial activities are those that spring from what man has made himself to be, (e.g. that a man plays the guitar, or can sing certain songs, or that he becomes a doctor).

These two spheres of human activity are not opposed. In fact, as we will see later on, human nature and culture are not two separate spheres of activity but belong to the same reality of the person. What is necessary to point out at this stage is that no human activity can be dissociated from the good of man. Since actions are commanded by the will, following the intellect’s operation, they all determine man in relation to his end, to what he wants to make of himself. Man’s activity either develops him as a person or degrades him. Our choices and actions play a role in making us into the people we become.

**Culture**

The verb *colere* comes from the Latin world and has three meanings:

1. Physical (to cultivate the earth)

2. Ethical (to cultivate oneself according to the ideal of humanitas), and

3. Religious (to give cult to God). In socio-cultural anthropology, the term "culture" has its own meaning, different from its everyday usage, however it conserves the three meanings of colere.

All cultures have a system of evaluation (an ethos), a series of cognitive existential elements (world view) and a deposit of sacred symbols (religion). The combination of these three activities and, more specifically, the result of the three is called "culture."

**Manifestations of human nature in culture**

From one perspective, culture can be viewed as everything that man learns and retains in himself as part of his inner life. It therefore has the connotation of interior wealth. A person who thus knows a lot about a particular subject is said to be cultured. From another point of view, culture is a manifestation of human nature. In this sense, one can speak of several dimensions:

1) Culture is composed of expressive actions, since one characteristic of the person is the external expression of what is inside of him. In this case, culture would be knowing how to speak, etiquette and courtesy towards others, etc.

Culture: Objective *and* Subjective

Culture can be viewed objectively and subjectively. Objectively, culture would be the reality grasped by persons which begins to form part of their inner life as well as the product of possessing culture.

However, culture is also subjective in the sense that knowledge is processed by the person and acted upon in his own particular way perhaps different from another person.

For example, music is the science or art of ordering tones or sounds in succession, in combination, and in temporal relationships to produce a composition having unity and continuity. This is its objective meaning. However, when composing or interpreting music, a Japanese person might do so differently from an American or Cuban person.

2) Human expression makes use of material to which it adds a form not there before. This is what happens when man performs productive actions that end up in human works, such as producing a painting.

3) Culture also has a symbolic function: things have certain use and an end. Thus, for example, a clenched fist can signify victory for some people, and can mean a physical challenge to others. Language also varies from one people to another.

4) Culture is historical. Since human beings are immersed in time and develop over time, their actions can also vary over a historical period.

**Human Beings are Cultural Beings**

We have mentioned that nature and culture are linked in the reality of the person. Some philosophies have seen an opposition between the two. Nature is identified with what is purely biological in man, what is stable in him: his essence. Culture would be whatever is added on to that nature, what changes. However, this would be reducing human nature to what is least human. Man would be a merely biological entity with a different configuration from other biological entities.

However, nature should not be understood in its mechanistic or naturalist sense that is, as something completely self-sufficient and enclosed in itself. Nature is rather the principle of operations. It tends towards an end, which is the good of the possessor of that nature. Therefore, when man engages in activity, he grows in culture and manifests the culture he has. Thus, man can be called a cultural being. Nature is not opposed to culture but flows into it.

**Cultural relativism and evaluation of cultures**

Nonetheless, truth always underlies any subjective cultural manifestation. Culture is not merely the expression of subjectivity, but also an expression of truth seen from a subjective point of view.

Furthermore, culture is a manifestation of human nature. This is objective. Therefore, certain cultural traits can indeed be contrary to human nature and be judged as such. One would not say that cannibalism is a legitimate cultural trait of some tribal people or that the offering of human sacrifice is culturally acceptable generally. Cultural relativism is an error. To say that all cultures or cultural traits are good because they all depend on a cultural group’s use of their legitimate freedom is wrong. Cultures can be evaluated from the standpoint of the truth and of human nature. A culture that does not meet those criteria is de-humanizing.

**Values as ends of human behaviour.**

Any culture will typically end up possessing values. Certain practices or traditions will be observed because they are valuable. Values therefore make reference to the end (purpose or goal) of an action. Often, those ends are the values each one possesses. For example, elegance is a value that guides a person’s way of dressing, and it is believed that elegance dignifies a person. Values have “value” in themselves. All other things are measured in reference to those values.

Through different sources, man adopts a set of values. These values are not equally important. They have a certain hierarchy. The more intensely and profoundly they affect the person as such, the higher they are. As to their origin, three sources can be pinpointed:

1. Values followed in the society one lives in;

2. Values received through education, be it through learning institutions or the family;

3. Values discovered through personal experience, either one’s own or through friends.

**B. Norms**

The second cultural pattern is the establishment of rules or norms to regulate human relations and individual and social activity. Since man has no instincts in the strict sense, his natural tendencies are substituted or made up for by the forging of habits and by the institutionalization of socially agreed upon customs and juridical and ethical norms.

**C. Human language**

The third cultural pattern is language. A language is understood as a system of communication used by a social group (lingua, languages or language systems). It is distinguished from human language or the human capacity for intelligible speech. What we are interested in here is the latter, a specifically human phenomenon.

[Cite your source here.]

Values are manifested in personal lifestyles. These lifestyles give rise to models, and it is through these models that values are often transmitted to others. A model is presented as a hero or idol, someone who has achieved a humanity that is more perfect than one’s contemporaries, therefore, models can have a positive effect on others. The problem is choosing the right models. People can end up choosing models who really have no qualification to be so. In modern times, popularity or success is mistakenly equated to being a model, which often should not be the case.

**Universal Cultural Patterns**

*Cultural patterns* of behaviour have been found since the beginning of mankind to the present. They are universal.

1. **Utensils**

The first cultural pattern is the making of tools, instruments, or utensils. Anatomically equipped with a brain, the human intelligence enables man to adapt to the environment, remember the past and gather experience, correct the past, analyse the present, and prepare for the future.

His ability to experiment leads him to extend his body parts like the hands. Thus, tools were invented and will continue being invented to achieve his goals efficiently and more comfortably: from stones to knives, from spears, hooks to nets, from axes to arrows, from horse carriages to cars and ships, from airplanes to computers and handheld gadgets. He also invented ways of procuring food: from hunting and fishing to the domestication of animals to agriculture.

From worshipping fire, humans learned to domesticate it and use it for light and to keep warm. From being nomadic, he learned to settle down, first living in caves, then in huts and today in high-rise buildings and even in space for research purposes. All tools are, in fact, a result of the intelligence's ability to abstract and objectivise.

[Cite your source here.]

**Transcendental foundations of human values**

Values are not arbitrary. Without a solid foundation or basis, they lose their meaning. There is a current trend of thought that bases values on a person’s subjective understanding of what is important or not. Since this understanding can vary from person to person, no fixed set of values exists. One person’s value system can very well differ from another’s. But as has been said earlier, without a solid basis for values, there will then be no common ground for agreement as to which values should be respected. Such common basis will then have to be provided by something else, for example, by authority through legislation, or by some conventional agreement among the members of a society. Even then, one could question that right to establish one particular set of values and not another.

Values have to be based on the truth and the good, which are the natural ends of man. The truth and the good are objective and do not depend on different ways of understanding a situation. Values, in fact, are the concrete application of the truth and the good. In the end, it can be said that values have the being of things as their foundation: what things are, not what I perceive them to be.

**Language and tradition**

How is culture transmitted from one generation to another? The more common channels are language and tradition.

**Language**

By language, we refer not only to the commonly understood use of the term, but to any expressive or communicative actions. Culture is nothing other than the expression of the human spirit. On the one hand, gestures and behaviour (body language) are a first form of language. Simple gestures such as a wave or a handshake, to more complicated forms of behaviour, indicate the cultural background of people. On the other hand, we have language, which has its varied manifestations in the spoken or written word, transmitted through conversation or through the mass media. Language reveals our thoughts, feelings, interior states, and the cultural milieu in which we have been brought up.

Human being is the most biologically deficient animal. Nonetheless, human anatomy, man's hands, and brain make up for this deficiency. With his hands and brain, man creates what his physiological structure does not provide. This deficiency and the indetermination of his morphology produces a kind of behaviour that builds up on what we could call the process of humanization.

Humanization is the process of creating culture models of behaviour.  
  
The humanization process does not end with full development of the body. It rather ends with the death of the individual. For the collectivity of mankind, humanization does not end with an individual's death but with the end of the world.

**Tradition**

Any community builds up a treasury of experiences, practices, and knowledge in the course of pursuing its common objectives. This deposit is called ‘tradition’ insofar as it is transmitted from one generation to another. The notion tradition adds to culture is its link to the past and the ability to work on it so that it be a vehicle for future actions. Tradition forms the culture of an institution or community.

The most effective way of preserving culture and tradition is through the creation of institutions. Institutions unify the different roles in a community under authority, through juridical regulation, placing them at the service of a common task. When persons assume their roles and work, their work is an expression of their cultural background. Institutions therefore preserve the culture of a society or nation because they express the culture of the people belonging to them. For example, building houses in a particular way indicates the cultural influences of the people constructing them. This would be the institution of house design or construction.

More specifically, cultural institutions play a direct role in guarding the culture of a people. They are more directly concerned with the values of a people.

**Expressions of culture**

**Religion**

Religiosity is an observable phenomenon in man. We have seen how the spirit of man is in itself open to the Absolute, the infinite, which transcends his own existence and this world, but who can be reached. One can also determine the existence of the Absolute from the examination of oneself. Religion is a cultural phenomenon because it gives rise to behaviour that is made up of symbols of special intensity because they often realize what they symbolize. For example, to kneel in adoration symbolizes the reality of a person’s internal adoration of the Supreme Being. Religion is also expressed in cult and liturgy, in the feast and rituals which accompany them. Through religion, a person enters into a relationship with the Divinity and this affects his moral behaviour, thus producing a certain lifestyle and way of being in society.

**Art**

Any cultural product that is characterized by beauty can be thought of as art. The dimensions of art in its historical perspective are varied. The historical beginning of art is characterized by its symbolic function. The first uses of art were magical and religious. Thus, art does not merely expressive the subjective state of the artist, but is also a representation of the mysterious, the spiritual, or simply what is distant to man. The production of an art work needs technical skill or technique. As the Greeks understood it, technique is not merely technical knowledge, but also art. Art was used for the production of things that were functional, like weapons, houses, and other structures. Pre-modern artists were artisans, experts in certain techniques. The symbolic function was still present because whatever was constructed symbolized goods needed by men. In modern times, art tends to be more expressive and independent from function and need. It seeks more the aspect of beauty and is governed more by laws of aesthetics.

**Law**

Law can be defined in several ways. For our purposes, we can define law as a measure of the movement by which something reaches its fullness. When the laws of nature are followed, they allow all creation to live in harmony. When persons follow the laws of a country, they are helped to reach the common and individual good proper to them. From the anthropological point of view, laws guide persons by helping them acquire habits and customs. In fact, laws themselves derive from custom. We have seen earlier how customs facilitate man’s conduct. Customs become law when the legislator sanctions and promulgates them as approved modes of behaviour. Sometimes customs are not promulgated but remain what we call unwritten law.

**Formation of human person in time**

A human person develops in time. We have also studied that man needs to learn. He does not act merely on instinct but needs to acquire knowledge in order to act in a human way. This formation takes time and has to keep pace with his biological growth. The end of this formation is for man to acquire the necessary perfections in his operative powers that will allow him to develop himself as a human person. In other words, man has to learn what has been called *the art of living*.

**Education**

Education comes from the Latin words ex + ducere, which mean to draw out or lead out from something. In effect, if one were to strictly follow the etymological meaning of the word, education would mean drawing out knowledge from man, rather than giving it to him. However, we know quite well that man has no innate knowledge, no pool of pre-existing ideas in his mind. Man gets all his knowledge from reality outside of him, then processes that information to gain more knowledge of the essence of things or to apply it to action. The “drawing out” of education would then make reference to this process by which man is helped to formulate more elevated concepts and judgments from the more primitive knowledge one possesses.

A more complete notion of education can be as follows: Education is transmitting and teaching, not only theoretical knowledge, but models and values that guide practical knowledge and action, and help one acquire convictions and ideals. Education is an education in values and virtues, in the use of freedom, and in the search of goods proper to living a good life within the framework of certain customs and laws. Since the good follows upon the truth, education then deals with the knowledge of the truth.

Education therefore has a practical end. Its aim is to help man live his life to the full. Education is an inter-personal effort. Men need to help one another in order to transmit knowledge and culture to their fellowmen. The agents of education are persons: friends, teachers, one’s own parents and relatives. Different means can be used. The primary and most basic educational institution is the family, where a person learns the rudiments of being a person: values, customs, etc. Society in general is also a means of education. In society, man’s knowledge begun in the family is widened. He learns social customs and gets to exercise the values taught to him at home. Educational institutions like schools and universities help man specialize in his knowledge and give him a broader outlook in life.

Education is incomplete without the transmission of culture. Culture is the deposit where personal experiences and aspirations acquire meaning. One’s own world is enriched through the assimilation of culture. This is why the effort to grow in cultural knowledge makes a person a better person. Note however that this enrichment will not be achieved simply by the acquisition of information. A person is enriched when he makes an effort to live whatever he has learned, when he makes it his life and allows it to influence his decisions.

Since he lives in space and time, man cannot avoid also adopting the culture of the society he is in. Likewise, with his personal achievements, man should also be concerned about enriching the social culture he is immersed in.

**Culture and time**

Contemporary culture tries to overcome time through speed, i.e., dominating the clock with precision. Speed results in productivity, competitiveness, and benefits. The rule is to do more things in less time and well ahead of the rest. Primacy is given to what has immediate results; everything has to be swift. Technology has achieved this but has generated the pathologies called rush, doping and stress. It has not developed in persons the capacity to be patient and to wait. Persons instead are slaves of schedules and results. In the end, since great things are savoured in a hurry, people miss out on important values gained only with patience and serenity, such as growing through experience and time. Maturity cannot be hurried. The fear of silence and hyper-activism does not lend to the practice of contemplation.

Human temporality requires persons to live everything at its time. Hence, there is time to be serious and time to have fun, time for work and time for rest or leisure. What is serious is what is necessary, done with effort, what requires our attention here and now, what is definitive, obligatory, important, noble, valuable, and true. Work in this light is something "serious."" What is not serious, on the other hand, is something not obligatory, something easy and light, and something bright. At times, it takes the form of a modification of the real, like a joke. We celebrate feasts (non-serious) after a serious event (achievement).

Time spent in leisure is not time where there is mere absence of work, having free time or time simply being entertained. Leisure is not being lazy or inactive. It is time lived actively because it requires learning (leisure in Greek is schole from which "school" comes). Living leisurely is a way of being before reality, of looking at it, and abandoning oneself in viewing it. It is living time in an attitude of receptive perception; it requires the attitude of listening, which requires in turn silence and serenity. This is the origin of liberal arts or humanities in so far as they require an attitude of listening and cultivating human excellence. Some activities proper to leisure are the viewing works of art, reading good books, creative activities, conversation, and crafts.

Past, present and future are not mere abstractions of time. We live them not simply cognitively, i.e., recalling, concentrating, and planning; we live them with affections, emotionally. One can live the past, present and future in poor or better ways. The past is lived poorly in resentment, in useless regrets, in bitterness. It is lived better in gratitude, even about negative past events, and in forgiveness since these ways bring about happiness in the present. One can live the future poorly in anxiety, in agitation, in wanting to control what in fact cannot be subject to human foresight or foreknowledge, in impatience, which is to find the present moment meaningless. Instead, one can live the future better in hopeful planning and joyful expectation. This occurs when one realistically does something at present towards that which he hopes for. Finally, one can live the present poorly in dissipation, in "doing" without any direction, in not focusing on what is at hand, either going backward to the past or forward to the future leading the person to a state of uneasiness, restlessness, and even anger. It can be a present that is lived cut off from the past, especially a past that provides relevant information and perspective, or a present lived disconnectedly with the future, especially when there is a need for foresight.

**Inculturation of the faith**

One final element needs to be dealt with, namely, the so-called inculturation of the faith. The idea behind inculturation of the faith depends upon the area of application, be it in the liturgy, doctrines of the faith, or morality. Correctly understood, it means integrating the faith with the culture of a society or a people, without modifying what is essential, that is, whatever pertains to doctrinal or moral truth. Such an attempt deserves consideration since the truth and the good have to be grasped within a particular cultural context for them to be understood. Thus, for example, we see how Jesus Christ explained truths with parables drawing on different aspects of the culture of his period. However, inculturation does not mean adapting the faith to a culture to the point of sacrificing its truthfulness or morals to the extent of overlooking the good, which is what some attempts at inculturation have done.

Certain difficulties always appear in inculturation:

1) Establishing what practices really belong to the culture of a people or a society. It may occur that what is considered part of a culture is nothing more than the practice of a few or of one sector of society.

2) Distinguishing between what is a cultural tradition and what is merely a passing fad.

3) The need to purify a culture of certain practices that are clearly against the truth and the good of human nature or against revealed doctrine (which, in the final analysis, does not contradict human nature).

4) The faith transcends space and time. Its truths are perennial. Culture is always situated in a spatial-temporal dimension. Care must be exercised in order not to reduce what is valid for all time to something applicable only to a certain historical period.

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• Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation Amoris Laetitia on Love in the Family, Pope Francis, 19.3.16 (nn. 191-193)

**Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation Amoris Laetitia on Love in the Family, Pope Francis, 19.3.16, nn. 191-193**

**Life in the Wider Family.**

The nuclear family needs to interact with the wider family made up of parents, aunts and uncles, cousins and even neighbours. This greater family may have members who require assistance, or at least companionship and affection, or consolation amid suffering. The individualism so prevalent today can lead to creating small nests of security, where others are perceived as bothersome or a threat. Such isolation, however, cannot offer greater peace or happiness; rather, it straitens the heart of a family and makes its life all the narrower. …

**The elderly**

“Do not cast me off in the time of old age; forsake me not when my strength is spent” (Ps 71:9). This is the plea of the elderly, who fear being forgotten and rejected. Just as God asks us to be his means of hearing the cry of the poor, so too he wants us to hear the cry of the elderly.211 This represents a challenge to families and communities, since “the Church cannot and does not want to conform to a mentality of impatience, and much less of indifference and contempt, towards old age. We must reawaken the collective sense of gratitude, of appreciation, of hospitality, which makes the elderly feel like a living part of the community. Our elderly are men and women, fathers and mothers, who came before us on our own road, in our own house, in our daily battle for a worthy life”.212 Indeed, “how I would like a Church that challenges the throw-away culture by the overflowing joy of a new embrace between young and old!”213.

Saint John Paul II asked us to be attentive to the role of the elderly in our families, because there are cultures which, “especially in the wake of disordered industrial and urban development, have both in the past and in the present set the elderly aside in unacceptable ways”.214 The elderly help us to appreciate “the continuity of the generations”, by their “charism of bridging the gap”.215 Very often it is grandparents who ensure that the most important values are passed down to their grandchildren, and “many people can testify that they owe their initiation into the Christian life to their grandparents”.216 Their words, their affection or simply their presence help children to realize that history did not begin with them, that they are now part of an age-old pilgrimage and that they need to respect all that came before them. Those who would break all ties with the past will surely find it difficult to build stable relationships and to realize that reality is bigger than they are. “Attention to the elderly makes the difference in a society. Does a society show concern for the elderly? Does it make room for the elderly? Such a society will move forward if it respects the wisdom of the elderly”.

217 The lack of historical memory is a serious shortcoming in our society. A mentality that can only say, “Then was then, now is now”, is ultimately immature. Knowing and judging past events is the only way to build a meaningful future. Memory is necessary for growth: “Recall the former days” (Heb 10:32). Listening to the elderly tell their stories is good for children and young people; it makes them feel connected to the living history of their families, their neighbourhoods and their country. A family that fails to respect and cherish its grandparents, who are its living memory, is already in decline, whereas a family that remembers has a future. “A society that has no room for the elderly or discards them because they create problems, has a deadly virus”;218 “it is torn from its roots”.219 Our contemporary experience of being orphans as a result of cultural discontinuity, uprootedness and the collapse of the certainties that shape our lives, challenges us to make our families places where children can sink roots in the rich soil of a collective history.

211 Cf. Relatio Finalis, 17-18.

212 Catechesis (4.3.2015): L’Osservatore Romano, 5.3.2015, p. 8.

213 Catechesis (11.3.2015): L’Osservatore Romano, 12.3.2015, p. 8.

214 John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation Familiaris Consortio (22.11.1981), 27.

215 Id., Address to Participants in the “International Forum on Active Aging” (5.9.1980), 5.

216 Relatio Finalis, 18.

217 Catechesis (4.3.2015): L’Osservatore Romano, 5.3.2015, p. 8.

218 Ibid.

219 Address at the Meeting with the Elderly (28.9.2014): L’Osservatore Romano, 29-

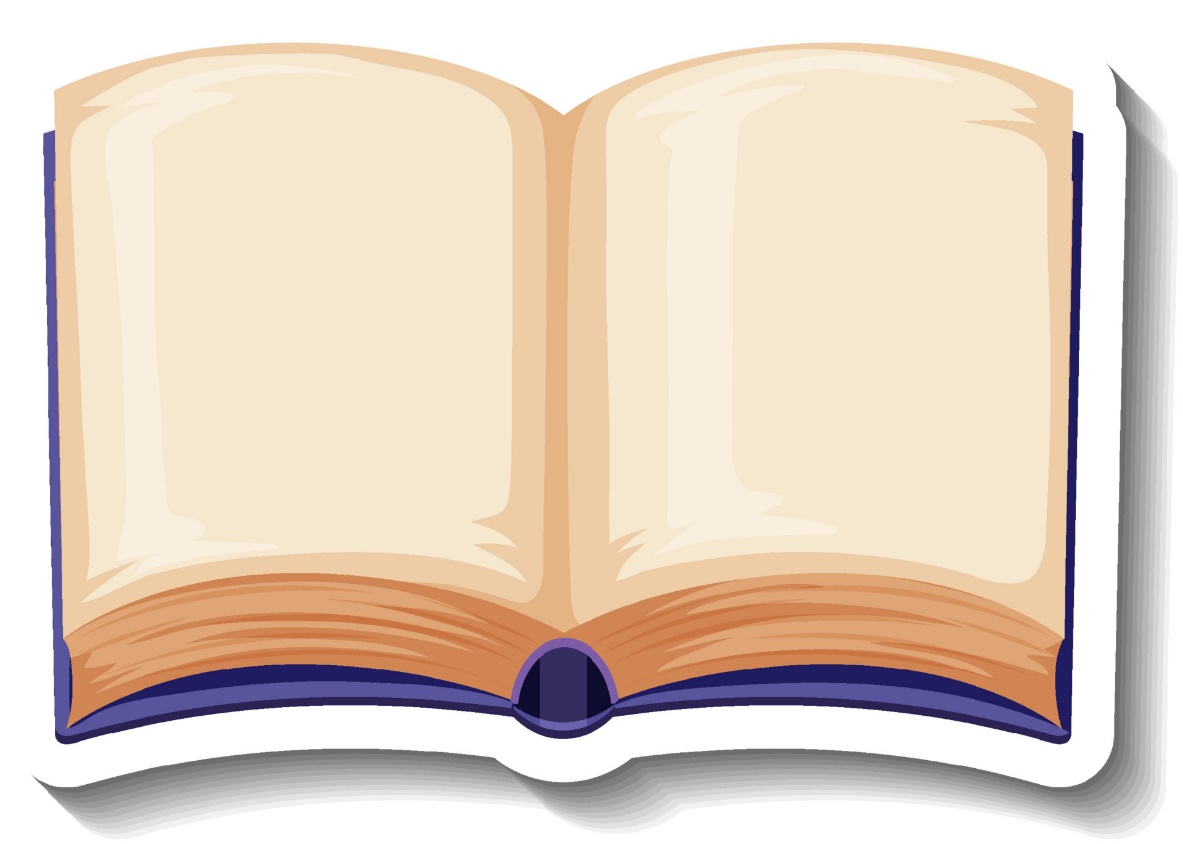
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**CHAPTER 11 WORK AND LEISURE**

* Subjective and objective dimension of work
* Transformation of the world
* Recreational dimension of man
* Meaning of festivity

**Introduction**

“Work is a fundamental right and a good for mankind,[[30]](#footnote-30) a useful good, worthy of man because it is an appropriate way for him to give expression to and enhance his human dignity. The Church teaches the value of work not only because it is always something that belongs to the person but also because of its nature as something necessary. Work is needed to form and maintain a family, to have a right to property, to contribute to the common good of the human family. In considering the moral implications that the question of work has for social life, the Church cannot fail to indicate unemployment as a “real social disaster”, above all with regard to the younger generations.”[[31]](#footnote-31)



The Book of Genesis points out that man was created “in the image of God” (Gen. 1:27) and that he was told to “be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it”. (Gen. 1:28) Though work was not explicitly mentioned in Genesis, these words do indicate some activity through which man should exercise dominion over the earth. A fundamental dimension of man’s existence on earth is to work on all creation that is subject to him. Man thus confers new forms of existence on the natural creation of God. He continues the work of creation. This he is able to do because he possesses the image of God in himself, namely, his rational nature.

Work is the means by which man satisfies his necessities. It is primarily a bodily activity performed with human instruments to satisfy human needs. Work has the following ends:

1. Man obtains his needs through work. By needs, we refer not only to biological ones, but also cultural, educational, family, etc. Anything that man tries to achieve in carrying out his life project is transformed into a necessity.
2. Human work transforms the environment in which man lives. Work improves the world provided he works ethically, taking into account the effects his work might have on nature.
3. Man perfects himself through work, through the acquisition of habits, knowledge, strengthening him, etc.

**The Subjective and Objective dimensions of work**

Human work has a twofold significance: objective and subjective.

**The Objective Meaning of Work**

In the objective sense, it is the sum of activities, resources, instruments and technologies used by men and women to produce goods and services. Work in the objective sense is the changeable aspect of human activity, which constantly varies due to the technological, cultural, social and political conditions of any given time and place.

**The Subjective Meaning of Work**

In the subjective sense, work is about the person who performs the work. Work is important as it produces things and provides for our needs, however it is all valuable for another fundamental reason. Work corresponds to the personal vocation of each human being: “as the ‘image of God' he is a person, that is to say, a subjective being capable of acting in a planned and rational way, capable of deciding about himself, and with a tendency to self-realization. As a person, man is therefore the subject of work”.

Work in the subjective sense represents its stable dimension, since it does not depend on what people produce or on the type of activity they undertake, but only and exclusively on their dignity as human beings. This distinction is critical both for understanding what the ultimate foundation of the value and dignity of work is, and with regard to the difficulties of organizing economic and social systems that respect human rights.

This subjectivity gives work its particular dignity, which does not allow that it be considered a simple commodity or an impersonal element in the processes of productivity. Work is an essential expression of the person, it is an “actus personae”. Any form of materialism or economic tenet that tries to reduce the worker to a mere instrument of production, a simple labour force with an exclusively material value, would end up hopelessly distorting the essence of work and stripping it of its most noble and basic human finality. The human person is the measure of the dignity of work: “In fact there is no doubt that human work has an ethical value of its own, which clearly and directly remains linked to the fact that the one who carries it out is a person.”[[32]](#footnote-32)

**‘” Work is for man”, and not man “for work.”’[[33]](#footnote-33)**

The subjective dimension of work takes precedence over the objective dimension. Human work not only proceeds from the person, but it is also essentially ordered to and has its final goal in the human person. Independently of its objective content, work must be oriented to the subject who performs it, because the end of work, any work whatsoever, always remains man.

**Marxism: A materialistic view that reduces the human person to homo faber.**

Karl Marx’s view of man was exclusively that of man as worker, homo faber (man is essentially a worker). This can be seen in his philosophy. For Marx, man’s individuality does not exist. Man forms part of the collectivity “man”, which develops through praxis (action) and the consequent dialectical materialism. What is typical to man is action, especially work. When man works, the product of his work ends up outside of himself and he is therefore alienated, i.e., he loses himself. Man is nothing outside of work.

However, man is much more than this. When he works, he does not alienate himself because even though the product of his work may end up outside of him, work is also an immanent activity that perfects a person from within. The Marxist view of man is purely materialistic. Man is nothing more than a victim of forces beyond his control, dictated by the historical progression of matter.

**Transformation of the world**

One of the ends of work is the transformation of the world. Unlike animals, man needs to greatly modify the environment in order to fulfill even his basic necessities of nourishment, growth, and reproduction. For example, he has to work the soil in order for it to produce the food he needs. In most cases it is not enough to simply rely on what grows in the wild. To live on earth, he has to build a house and see to it that there is an adequate supply of food and water. Moreover, man can also manufacture other goods from nature which not only satisfy his basic needs, but which also improve his situation in life (like other instruments to help him increase his natural powers), or goods that simply reflect that he has culture (works of art). All this is a consequence of his possessing a rational nature. He can use his intellect and will to open up many possibilities for himself and the persons around him.[[34]](#footnote-34)

**Women and the right to work**  
 “**The feminine genius is needed in all expressions in the life of society, therefore the presence of women in the workplace must also be guaranteed. The first indispensable step in this direction is the concrete possibility of access to professional formation. The recognition and defence of women's rights in the context of work generally depend on the organization of work, which must take into account the dignity and vocation of women, whose “true advancement ... requires that labour should be structured in such a way that women do not have to pay for their advancement by abandoning what is specific to them.”( John Paul II, Encyclical Letter Laborem Exercens, 19: AAS 73 (1981), 628 This issue is the measure of the quality of society and its effective defence of women's right to work.”( Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, 295.)**

**Recreational Dimension of Man and the Meaning of Festivity**

Work is a serious and necessary human undertaking. As we have seen, man needs to work to achieve his fulfillment as a person and to provide for other persons around him. This brings us now to the notion of rest and entertainment.

Rest is an essential component of leisure which, in turn, is a necessary consequence of work. Through work, man achieves goods. When he does so, he is happy and looks forward to what follows after, namely, a period of leisure from regular activity. However, leisure should be understood in the classical sense, that is, a period of time when man can contemplate realities that do not imply utility, and thus enrich him further as a person. It is the moment when he can simply appreciate things, enjoy lighter activities, engage in forms of entertainment. Leisure is a period of re-creation: man renews himself physically and spiritually.

These activities accompany leisure and enrich the time spent. Entertainment should not be sought as an end in itself. Since its effect is to seek things outside of man which cannot be found in himself, one ends up engaging in external activism without any interior depth. Thus, one leads an empty and frivolous life, devoid of meaning since his inner life is not developed.

Great books that explore this topic further include:

1. Leisure: The basis of culture by Josef Pieper
2. Happiness and Contemplation by Josef Pieper

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**SUPPLEMENTARY READINGS ON WORK & REST**

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* **F. J. López Díaz, F.J., Ruiz Montoya, C., Work and Rest, 16.7.2009. http://www.opusdei.org/en-au/article/work-and-rest/**

**Encyclical LABOREM EXERCENS, on Human Work, Pope John Paul II, 14.9.1981 (nn. 5-6)**

1. ***Work in the Objective Sense: Technology***

This universality and, at the same time, this multiplicity of the process of "subduing the earth" throw light upon human work, because man's dominion over the earth is achieved in and by means of work. There thus emerges the meaning of work in an objective sense, which finds expression in the various epochs of culture and civilization. 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. Thus agriculture constitutes through human work a primary field of economic activity and an indispensable factor of production. 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. This is also in a sense true in the sphere of what are called service industries, and also in the sphere of research, pure or applied.

In industry and agriculture man's work has today in many cases ceased to be mainly manual, for the toil of human hands and muscles is aided by more and more highly perfected machinery. Not only in industry but also in agriculture we are witnessing the transformations made possible by the gradual development of science and technology. Historically speaking, this, taken as a whole, has caused great changes in civilization, from the beginning of the "industrial era" to the successive phases of development through new technologies, such as the electronics and the microprocessor technology in recent years.

While it may seem that in the industrial process it is the machine that "works" and man merely supervises it, making it function and keeping it going in various ways, it is also true that for this very reason industrial development provides grounds for reproposing in new ways the question of human work. Both the original industrialization that gave rise to what is called the worker question and the subsequent industrial and post-industrial changes show in an eloquent manner that, even in the age of ever more mechanized "work", the proper subject of work continues to be man.

The development of industry and of the various sectors connected with it, even the most modern electronics technology, especially in the fields of miniaturization, communications and telecommunications and so forth, shows how vast is the role of technology, that ally of work that human thought has produced, in the interaction between the subject and object of work (in the widest sense of the word). Understood in this case not as a capacity or aptitude for work, but rather as a whole set of instruments which man uses in his work, technology is undoubtedly man's ally. It facilitates his work, perfects, accelerates and augments it. It leads to an increase in the quantity of things produced by work, and in many cases improves their quality. However, it is also a fact that, in some instances, technology can cease to be man's ally and become almost his enemy, as when the mechanization of work "supplants" him, taking away all personal satisfaction and the incentive to creativity and responsibility, when it deprives many workers of their previous employment, or when, through exalting the machine, it reduces man to the status of its slave.

If the biblical words "subdue the earth" addressed to man from the very beginning are understood in the context of the whole modern age, industrial and post-industrial, then they undoubtedly include also a relationship with technology, with the world of machinery which is the fruit of the work of the human intellect and a historical confirmation of man's dominion over nature.

The recent stage of human history, especially that of certain societies, brings a correct affirmation of technology as a basic coefficient of economic progress; but, at the same time, this affirmation has been accompanied by and continues to be accompanied by the raising of essential questions concerning human work in relationship to its subject, which is man. These questions are particularly charged with content and tension of an ethical and an ethical and social character. They therefore constitute a continual challenge for institutions of many kinds, for States and governments, for systems and international organizations; they also constitute a challenge for the Church.

1. **Work in the Subjective Sense: Man as the Subject of Work**

In order to continue our analysis of work, an analysis linked with the word of the Bible telling man that he is to subdue the earth, we must concentrate our attention on work in the subjective sense, much more than we did on the objective significance, barely touching upon the vast range of problems known intimately and in detail to scholars in various fields and also, according to their specializations, to those who work. If the words of the Book of Genesis to which we refer in this analysis of ours speak of work in the objective sense in an indirect way, they also speak only indirectly of the subject of work; but what they say is very eloquent and is full of great significance.

Man has to subdue the earth and dominate it, because as the "image of God" he is a person, that is to say, a subjective being capable of acting in a planned and rational way, capable of deciding about himself, and with a tendency to self-realization. As a person, man is therefore the subject of work. As a person he works, he performs various actions belonging to the work process; independently of their objective content, these actions must all serve to realize his humanity, to fulfil the calling to be a person that is his by reason of his very humanity. The principal truths concerning this theme were recently recalled by the Second Vatican Council in the Constitution Gaudium et Spes, especially in Chapter One, which is devoted to man's calling.

And so this "dominion" spoken of in the biblical text being meditated upon here refers not only to the objective dimension of work but at the same time introduces us to an understanding of its subjective dimension. Understood as a process whereby man and the human race subdue the earth, work corresponds to this basic biblical concept only when throughout the process man manifests himself and confirms himself as the one who "dominates". This dominion, in a certain sense, refers to the subjective dimension even more than to the objective one: this dimension conditions the very ethical nature of work. In fact there is no doubt that human work has an ethical value of its own, which clearly and directly remain linked to the fact that the one who carries it out is a person, a conscious and free subject, that is to say a subject that decides about himself.

This truth, which in a sense constitutes the fundamental and perennial heart of Christian teaching on human work, has had and continues to have primary significance for the formulation of the important social problems characterizing whole ages.

The ancient world introduced its own typical differentiation of people into classes according to the type of work done. Work which demanded from the worker the exercise of physical strength, the work of muscles and hands, was considered unworthy of free men, and was therefore given to slaves. By broadening certain aspects that already belonged to the Old Testament, Christianity brought about a fundamental change of ideas in this field, taking the whole content of the Gospel message as its point of departure, especially the fact that the one who, while being God, became like us in all things (cf. Heb 2:17; Phil 2:5-8) devoted most of the years of his life on earth to manual work at the carpenter's bench. This circumstance constitutes in itself the most eloquent "Gospel of work", showing that the basis for determining the value of human work is not primarily the kind of work being done but the fact that the one who is doing it is a person. The sources of the dignity of work are to be sought primarily in the subjective dimension, not in the objective one.

Such a concept practically does away with the very basis of the ancient differentiation of people into classes according to the kind of work done. This does not mean that, from the objective point of view, human work cannot and must not be rated and qualified in any way. It only means that the primary basis of tbe value of work is man himself, who is its subject. This leads immediately to a very important conclusion of an ethical nature: however true it may be that man is destined for work and called to it, in the first place work is "for man" and not man "for work". Through this conclusion one rightly comes to recognize the pre-eminence of the subjective meaning of work over the objective one. Given this way of understanding things, and presupposing that different sorts of work that people do can have greater or lesser objective value, let us try nevertheless to show that each sort is judged above all by the measure of the dignity of the subject of work, that is to say the person, the individual who carries it out. On the other hand: independently of the work that every man does and presupposing that this work constitutes a purpose-at times a very demanding one-of his activity, this purpose does not possess a definitive meaning in itself. In fact, in the final analysis it is always man who is the purpose of the work, whatever work it is that is done by man-even if the common scale of values rates it as the merest "service", as the most monotonous even the most alienating work.

**Work and Rest**

F. J. López Díaz – C. Ruiz Montoya, 16.7.2009.   
<http://www.opusdei.org/en-au/article/work-and-rest/>

God wants us to work hard to help build up his creation, but also to rest. We offer an article that draws on the teachings of John Paul II and St. Josemaria on this topic.

"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."[1]

These words of John Paul II refer to the Creation account, the first "gospel of work."[2] The sacred author, after describing how over the course of six days God gave existence to the heavens, to the earth and all that was in it, concludes: And on the seventh day God finished his work which he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all his work which he had done in creation.[3]

From then on men and women are called to perfect this divine work through their own work,[4] not forgetting that they too are creatures, the fruit of God's love and called to a definitive union with him. Resting on the seventh day, hallowed by God, takes on a deep human significance. As well as a need, it is the appropriate time to acknowledge God as the author and Lord of all creation, and an anticipation of the definitive rest and joy of the Resurrection. The family, a spiritual space, is a school for learning how to rest while thinking of others.

A life that is lived under the constant pressure of work, without time to consider the source from which all things come and to which all things tend as their final goal, could lead people "to forget that God is the Creator upon whom everything depends"[5] and to whom everything is directed. Doing everything for the glory of God, unity of life, means living with a solid foundation and a supernatural meaning and goal. It means resting on our divine filiation as we work and converting our rest into a service to God and others.

"In the Work, everything is a means of holiness: work and rest; life of piety and the joys of living together; happiness and pain. In a word, every moment in our life contains a possibility for sanctification: in all things we ought to love and fulfil God's will."[6]

**Place of work and rest**

Work is a gift of God and creation itself is already a call.[7] The fact that God calls a free creature into existence out of love implies a vocation that asks for a reply.

Work is the place of encounter between God's creative freedom and human freedom, the place for our response, and therefore for prayer and contemplation, expressed in deeds. When a person sees God's hand in all created realities, especially in others and in himself, he strives to do everything with the perfection willed by God, seeking in this way his own fulfillment.

The divine invitation to work comes from the heart of a Father who wishes to count on the cooperation of his children. Our response has to be a humble and child-like response, undertaken out of love, not an autonomous initiative that seeks our own glory.

St. Josemaría used a graphic image that can be applied to our work. A little boy goes to help a group of fishermen as they haul in a net. He grabbed hold of the net "with his tiny hands and began to tug away with evident clumsiness. The tough, unsophisticated fishermen must have felt their hearts soften, for they allowed the child to join in, without chasing him away, even though he was more of a hindrance than a help."[8]

God knows his creatures well. While inviting us to collaborate with him, he knows that our nature is fragile and vulnerable. The divine calling to work includes the need to rest. As we see in the creation account, "the alternation between work and rest, built into human nature, is willed by God himself."[9]

Knowing that we belong to God and not to ourselves, we have the responsibility to look after our health, in order to be able to give all the glory to God.

This need is due in the first place to our physical limitations. If we were to overestimate our own strength or misunderstand the true meaning of a spirit of sacrifice, we could cause damage to our own health that is not willed by God and that could end up limiting our ability to serve him.

There are times, certainly, when our Lord may ask us for more of an effort or place us in situations that require a heroic detachment even from our health in order to carry out his will. Don Álvaro, who rose from his sick bed with a very high fever to go looking for money when Villa Tevere was being built, is an example of this unconditional love.

At the same time, however, and for the same reason, in order to serve God, we need time to relax, as our Father indicated on numerous occasions: "I think it is appropriate to remind you about the need for rest. If sickness comes, we receive it joyfully as coming from the hand of God. But we cannot provoke it by our own imprudence. We are human and we need to restore our strength."[10]

It would be a pity if, despite the opportunity to rest, our strength were to be undermined because we failed to make use of this opportunity. Knowing that we belong to God and not to ourselves, we have the responsibility to look after our health, in order to be able to give all the glory to God.

Rest is also a spiritual need, "something sacred, because it is man's way of withdrawing from the sometimes excessively demanding cycle of earthly tasks in order to renew his awareness that everything is the work of God."[11]

Time spent away from the demands of work, with its deadlines, goals, risks and uncertainties, facilitates the serenity required to get a broader perspective on life.

Discerning when to disconnect ourselves periodically from these demands can sometimes require an act of abandonment in our Lord. It also helps us to see our job in the right perspective, "convinced that the triumphs of the human race are a sign of God's greatness and the flowering of his own mysterious design."[12]

We work out of fidelity, out of love, so that God can use our self-giving as he wishes, never attributing any results to ourselves: So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth.[13] Taking a break from our usual work helps us to value the disproportion between our personal contribution and the fruits of holiness and apostolate it produces.

If we are objective, with the objectivity that comes from faith and from being close to our Lord, we will see that even the effort we put into our work is a gift of God, who sustains, guides and encourages us. Professional work, whether in the laboratory, factory, workshop, field or family home, is the hinge of our holiness and the framework for our existence. But it should never absorb other aspects of our life that are equally important.

"If after six days of work…people look for time to relax and to pay more attention to other aspects of their lives, this corresponds to an authentic need which is in full harmony with the vision of the Gospel message."[14]

Time spent with family and friends, or to improve one's formation and culture, or to talk more calmly with our Lord, are wonderful opportunities to seek holiness, where "daily concerns and tasks can find their proper perspective: the material things about which we worry give way to spiritual values; in a moment of encounter and less pressured exchange, we see the true face of the people with whom we live."[15]

Leisure thus also responds to the need to be vigilant, to slow down sufficiently to correct our direction so as to place God at the center and discover him in those around us. Workshops, a walk with one's family, times of prayer, get-togethers, retreats, are all examples of activities which, in their own way, meet this need to be vigilant.

They also have the essential elements of meaningful rest: restoring bodily and spiritual strength through a change of activity (because to rest does not mean to be idle), which helps us set aside daily concerns and put them in their proper place.

This is particularly important in spheres where excessive competitiveness motivated by the quest for success tends to absorb so much time and energy that it is hard to meet other obligations. God's way of working is the model for our own work. If God "rested and was refreshed" on the seventh day, we too should rest and ensure that those around us, especially those in need, "are refreshed."[16]

"Sunday rest then becomes 'prophetic,' affirming not only the absolute primacy of God, but also the primacy and dignity of the person with respect to the demands of social and economic life and anticipating in a certain sense the 'new heavens' and the 'new earth,' in which liberation from slavery to needs will be final and complete. In short, the Lord's Day thus becomes in the truest sense the day of man as well."[17]

**Foretaste of the Resurrection**

In Christ, with the fullness of Revelation, work and rest are ennobled, inserted into the plan of salvation. As a foretaste of the Resurrection, rest illuminates the weariness of work and reveals it as union with the Cross of Christ. "'My Father is working still' (Jn 5:17)...He works with creative power by sustaining in existence the world that he called into being from nothing, and he works with salfivic power in the hearts of those whom from the beginning he has destined for 'rest' (Heb 4:1.9-16) in union with himself in his 'Father's house' (Jn 14:2)."[18.

Just as Christ's Cross and Resurrection are inseparably united, although one occurs after the other in time, so too should work and rest constitute a living unity in our own life. Therefore, above any temporal events or change of occupation as we take a break from our work, we rest in our Lord, we find repose in our divine filiation.

This new perspective places rest alongside work as a filial task, even though it does not rid work of the effort and tiredness it involves. But what is eliminated is the tiredness that stems from working out of pride and self-affirmation, or solely for human motives. God doesn't want this kind of tiredness: It is in vain that you rise up early and go late to rest, eating the bread of anxious toil.[19] "Rest, my children, in your divine filiation. God is a Father, full of tenderness and infinite love. Call him Father often, and tell him, when you are alone with him, that you love him, that you love him greatly, that you feel the pride and strength of being his children."[20]

The strength of being God's children leads us to work with more sacrifice and abnegation, embracing the daily Cross with the strength of the Holy Spirit, so as to fulfill God's will faithfully. It enables us "to work without rest," because the tiredness produced by work becomes redemptive. It is worthwhile, then, expending all our energies in our work, not only for the material reward we can expect, but because we are bringing the world to Christ. When we work with this goal, we experience the supernatural reward of peace and joy: Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a little, I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.[21] And our work yields apostolic fruit: Well done, good servant! Because you have been faithful in a very little, you shall have authority over ten cities.[22]

Therefore, work "cannot consist in the mere exercise of human strength in external action; it must leave room for man to prepare himself, by becoming more and more what in the will of God he ought to be, for the 'rest' that the Lord reserves for his servants and friends."[23]

In the account of the Transfiguration, we are told that six days after announcing his passion and death, Jesus took with him Peter and James and John his brother and led them up a high mountain apart. And he was transfigured before them.[24] St. Thomas, in commenting on this passage, relates the seventh day when God rested from his work of creation to the seventh day (six days after announcing…) when our Lord revealed himself to his disciples to give them an anticipation of his glorious Resurrection, so that they would raise their sights and not settle for purely earthly goals.[25] The three disciples, overcome by the contemplation of the glory to which they have been called, express the joy of resting in the Lord and with the Lord: Lord, it is well that we are here; if you wish, I will make three booths here,[26] Peter exclaims, anticipating the joy and peace of heaven.

This moment would not yet last forever. Nevertheless, the light and peace of Tabor will be the source of strength to continue on the path that passes through the Cross and leads to the Resurrection. We too find rest in our filial abandonment, the peace and serenity of knowing that behind the tiredness, difficulties and concerns that life here on earth brings, we have an eternal and all-powerful Father who upholds us.

Working with a vision of eternity prevents useless worries and sterile anxieties. Working with a vision of eternity prevents useless worries and sterile anxieties and infuses every task with the desire to see the face of Christ definitively. Sanctifying rest, and especially Sunday, which is the paradigm of Christian rest and a celebration of our Lord's Resurrection, helps us to discover the sense of eternity and to renew our hope.

"Sunday symbolises that truly singular day which will follow the present time, the day without end which will know neither evening nor morning, the imperishable age which will never grow old; Sunday is the ceaseless foretelling of life without end which renews the hope of Christians and encourages them on their way."[27.

**Sanctifying Rest and Relaxation**

The first Christians lived their faith in a pagan and hedonistic environment. From the beginning, they realized that following Christ was incompatible with forms of rest or relaxation that corrupt and dehumanize people. St. Augustine, referring to this type of entertainment, said in a homily: "Refuse to go; assert control over the concupiscence of your heart and be strong and persevering."[28]

We shouldn't be surprised to see once again today, in "neo-pagan" environments around us, blatant expressions of this spiritual poverty. "Therefore, among the forms of culture and entertainment which society offers, the faithful should choose those which are most in keeping with a life lived in obedience to the precepts of the Gospel."[29]

It is not a question of shutting ourselves up in a hermetically sealed environment. Each of us, with initiative and daring, and with genuine love for souls, needs to strive to transmit the Christian meaning and joy of rest to the society around us. As Don Alvaro reminded us, each of us is called to strive to foster "a Christian tone in social life, in entertainment, in the way free time is spent."[30]

Jesus, Mary and Joseph show us that family life can allow time for rest and celebration: Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the Passover.[31] The family, a spiritual space, is a school for learning how to rest while thinking of others. Therefore it is important to plan holidays well, to spend leisure time with one's children, in order to get to know them well and converse with them and play with the younger ones.… We need to learn how to make family life pleasant, and not fall back on the easy option of leaving the younger children in front of the television or surfing the Internet. We need to learn how to make family life pleasant, and not fall back on the easy option of leaving the younger children in front of the television or surfing the Internet.

Today it is more important than ever to select interesting programs on television and watch them with the children, to teach them temperance in the use of the computer, so that they learn to use it above all as work tool and always with a specific goal in mind. St. Luke's Gospel also shows us how the boy Jesus, moved by the Holy Spirit, took advantage of the Passover journey to Jerusalem to bring light to those around him: and all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers.[32]

The need to rest is not an interruption in our apostolic efforts. On the contrary, it opens new possibilities, new occasions to deepen in our friendship and to get to know people and environments where we can bring the light of Christ.

The Second Vatican Council encouraged all Christians to take on the challenging effort "to animate the cultural expressions and group activities characteristic of our times with a human and a Christian spirit."[33]

The Church needs people with a lay mentality to help implement this aspect of the new evangelisation. "It is urgent that we strive to re-Christianise popular celebrations and customs. It is urgent that public amusements should no longer be left to face the dilemma of being either 'soppy' or pagan. Ask God to provide laborers for this much-needed work, which could be called the 'entertainment apostolate'."[34]

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**Endnotes**

[1] John Paul II, Encyclical Laborem Exercens (14 September 1981), 25

[2] Ibid.

[3] Gen 2:1-3

[4] Cf. Catechism of the Catholic Church, 307

[5] John Paul II, Apostolic Letter Dies Domini (31 May 1998), 65

[6] Alone with God, 29

[7] Cf. Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2566

[8] Friends of God, 14

[9] John Paul II, Apostolic Letter Dies Domini (31 May 1998), 65

[10] St. Josemaria, Letter 15 October 1948, 14

[11] John Paul II, Apostolic Letter Dies Domini (31 May 1998), 65

[12] John Paul II, Encyclical Laborem Exercens (14 September 1981), 25

[13] 1 Cor 3:7

[14] John Paul II, Apostolic Letter, Dies Domini (31 May 1998), 67

[15] Ibid.

[16] Cf. Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2172

[17] John Paul II, Apostolic Letter, Dies Domini (31 May 1998), 68

[18] John Paul II, Encyclical Laborem exercens (14 September 1981), 25

[19] Psalm 127 [126]:2

[20] Alone with God, 221

[21] Mt 25:21 and 23

[22] Lk. 19:17

[23] John Paul II, Encyclical Laborem exercens (14 September 1981), 25

[24] Mt 17:1-4

[25] Cf. St. Thomas, In Matth. Ev., XXVII, 1

[26] Mt 17:4

[27] John Paul II, Apostolic Letter, Dies Domini (31 May 1998), 26

[28] St. Augustine, Sermo 88, 17

[29] John Paul II, Apostolic Letter, Dies Domini (31 May 1998), 68

[30] Don Alvaro del Portillo, Family Letters (I),386

[31] Lk 2:41

[32] Lk 2:47

[33] Second Vatican Council, Pastoral Constitution Gaudium et spes, 61

[34] The Way, 975

1. **Vision**: The proper object of vision is *color*, and there is something in say a green object that makes it appear green rather than red (given a healthy set of eyes). We do not see light *per se*, because the range of light is greater than the colors we can see. The object of sight then is color.

   **Hearing**: The object of this sense is *tone* or *noise*, and the difference in tone is a result of differing degrees of vibration in airwaves. The human ear is capable of very fine distinctions in pitch, intensity and quality in ways that sometimes surpasses the eye.

   **Smell**: The object of this sense is *odor*. This is poorly developed in humans compared to the rest of the animal kingdom. It is interesting to note that much of what is regarded as taste is odor, as is known by the lack of taste when one holds their nose.

   **Tactual**: The proper object of this sense is the tactile, and this comes in different types.. The skin can inform us of things that are hot, cold, smooth hard, etc. Some research has shown that sensations or say temperature are the result of not merely the contact itself but a change in contact, e.g., something will feel colder if the hand has been previously warmed.

   **Taste**: The proper object of this sense is *flavor* and usually categorized as bitter, sweet, sour, and salt.

   **Vestibular**: Our sense of equilibrium has much to do with our body position in relation to gravity. The inner ear is not merely for hearing but contains liquids and tiny hair cells that inform us of starting and stopping, turning, and balance.

   **Organic**: Sensations of aching within organs, i.e., a stomachache, a headache, nausea, etc. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Human beings have the same basic powers as do all living things, e.g., they grow and take in nourishment. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. *Elicited appetites* are tendencies contingent upon knowledge or awareness, whether implicit or explicit. Elicited appetite can be vague, you know you want X but X is just a vague fuzzy notion, yet it is still evoked by some knowledge.

   Elicited is opposed to *Natural appetites* and they are what things simply do or tend towards; rocks have a tendency or appetite to fall to the ground when dropped, the eye has an appetite to see, a fire has an appetite to rise. These are simply the natural tendencies of things because they are not invoked by any kind of knowledge.

   The above division is completed by what we call **Commanded acts;** these are actsof the will are voluntary *acts that are executed by some power other than the will*. To raise my arm or to choose to think about something are examples of a commanded acts. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. See Psychological freedom, below. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Hence Aristotle calls these kinds of goods “instrumental” goods because they should help us to aim at the ultimate good (the highest good, God.) Disorder happens when we treat instrumental goods, such as material goods as the ultimate good. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Sullivan, D. An Introduction to Philosophy, (TAN: 1957), pp. 172-3. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. CSDC 211. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. CSDC 212. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. CSDC 213. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. CSDC 214. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Cf. CCC, 1911. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Despite the social differences that exist among men, unity and love go beyond them. Societies and communities are formed for a practical purpose, they exist for pragmatic reasons. However, love values the person for what he is. Love seeks union with the beloved and puts aside any factors that can bring about disunity. It seeks to give oneself, to sacrifice for the other, to desire what is best for the other. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Interestingly, this is a main point of difference between Plato and Aristotle and their respective political philosophies. Plato says that the person is for society, but Aristotle says that society is for the person.   
    For more information on this difference, see Aquinas’ Commentary on Aristotle’s Politics, Chapter 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. CSDC 151. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. CCC 1906; Gaudium et Spes, 26. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. CCC 1907. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. CCC 1908. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. CCC 1909. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. CCC 1910. At the same time, everyone is responsible for promoting the common good. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. CCC 1911. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. CSDC 170. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. CCC1886. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. CSDC 71. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. CSDC 69. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. CSDC 7. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. CSDC 162. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. CDSC 125. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. http://www.buzzle.com/editorials/7-22-2006-103206.asp [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. http://morvensblog.wordpress.com/2012/04/23/ubuntu-a-lesson-from-the-children/ [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution Gaudium et Spes, 26: AAS 58 (1966), 1046- 1047; John Paul II, Encyclical Letter Laborem Exercens, 9, 18: AAS 73 (1981), 598-600, 622-625; John Paul II, Address to the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences (25 April 1997), 3: L'Osservatore Romano, English edition, 14 May 1997, p. 5; John Paul II, Message for the 1999 World Day of Peace, 8: AAS 91 (1999), 382- 383. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, 287. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. John Paul II, Encyclical Letter Laborem Exercens, 6: AAS 73 (1981), 590. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Laborem Exercens, 6. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. In order to modify the natural world, man makes use of instruments or, as it is termed in our modern times, technology. Technology is an artificial product of man working on the natural world. A computer does not exist in nature. It is made up of different elements that have been manufactured from natural materials based on natural processes. Likewise, technology helps man work much better, easier, and faster, and aids in the development of even newer and better technology. It acts as an extension of man’s natural powers. For example, the brain’s natural powers are enhanced by the use of a computer: one does not have to remember so much data and recall can be made easier and faster. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)