

CHAPTER SEVEN: Wojtyła's Book about Vatican II

Introduction: Modernity and the Heart of the Council

While John of the Cross stands at the beginning of Wojtyła's theological and philosophical thought, Vatican II is the central event around which his thought came to revolve more and more. For this reason it is important to identify what Wojtyła sees as the nucleus of the Conciliar event.¹ The nucleus determines the whole.

According to Buttiglione, Wojtyła sees the heart of the Conciliar event in the document on religious freedom, *Dignitatis humanae*. "The heart of the conciliar event is the *acknowledgment of freedom of conscience* as a natural and inalienable right of the human person."² *Person and Act*, which was written during the Council, should be seen in light of the Council's heart: it is a large-scale attempt to provide the philosophical underpinnings of *Dignitatis humanae* by uniting two strands of philosophy, the philosophy of being (esp. St. Thomas) and the philosophy of consciousness (esp. Descartes, Kant and Scheler).

It is evident...that the question of freedom of conscience is not at all a limited or special question, even one endowed with a very high importance. What is at stake here is the whole relationship between Christianity and modernity and between the philosophy of being and the philosophy of consciousness...The integration of the philosophy of being and the philosophy of consciousness into a complete anthropology of the person seems to be...the only way to recognize in depth the novelty of the conciliar teaching and at the same time its solid anchor hold in the tradition (which is not the same as traditionalism).³

By bringing these two strands of philosophy together, Wojtyła produces a new synthesis in which modern elements and traditional elements are harmoniously fused...At the same time, the contrast between modernity and Christianity disappears.⁴

It is true that Wojtyła was keenly interested in religious freedom. Nazi and Soviet totalitarianism attempted to deprive his people of such freedom with

¹ Buttiglione, *Wojtyła*, 177.

² Buttiglione, *Wojtyła*, 178. For a discussion of *Dignitatis humanae* in John Paul II, see Herminó Rico, *John Paul II and the Legacy of Dignitatis Humanae* (Washington DC: Georgetown University Press, 2002).

³ Buttiglione, *Wojtyła*, 180 and 182.

⁴ Buttiglione, *Wojtyła*, 184.

overwhelming violence. Five of his twenty-three contributions to the Council deal with this subject. In his Papal writings he is an enthusiastic supporter of *Dignitatis humanae*. This reading is primarily philosophical. It is also primarily liberal (in the continental European sense of the word), that is, a conservative (in the US American sense of the word). Buttiglione would be the first one to point out that the properly *theological* level of Wojtyła's understanding of the Council is the truly decisive one and freedom, despite its exaltation by Descartes, Kant, and the American founding, is not the final end of human life—communion with the Triune God is.

Chronology is important here, both the chronology of Wojtyła's life and the chronology of Modernity itself. Wojtyła immersed himself in the poetry and theology of John of the Cross before he came to know the philosophers of consciousness.⁵ As for the chronology of Modernity itself, John of the Cross was born in 1544, half a century before Descartes (1596). His works already contain in a sustained and systematic manner “the modern turn toward the personal, the experiential and the psychological” from within the intellectual and spiritual resources of the Catholic tradition on a Trinitarian basis and without the Cartesian-Kantian exaltation of freedom as the highest.⁶

It is a turn that differs in its essential nature from the later turn toward the subject that came to characterize the philosophy of consciousness. John of the Cross was a disciple of St. Thomas, as Wojtyła argues, following his thesis director Garrigou-Lagrange. There is particular continuity between St. John of the Cross's account of Christian experience and St. Thomas's account of the gifts of the Holy Spirit.⁷ John of the Cross's turn toward the subject is not a consequence of allegiance to the Baconian-Cartesian program of power over nature and the adoption of a mechanical universe which this program necessarily implies. It is not an example of what Schmitz calls “the modern sense of subject as subjectivity.” The *Doctor Mysticus* does not need “the self-defense by which consciousness fends off a world either hostile to its inhabitation or at least without companionate room for it.” In him, consciousness does not “subvert the integrity of that world by its imperious demands.” He does not give “to the human subject an absolute status precisely in its character *qua* consciousness” in which “consciousness not only sets its own terms but the terms for reality itself.”⁸ These are accurate descriptions of Descartes, Kant and Scheler, but not of St. John of the Cross or Wojtyła.

In his turn toward the subject, Wojtyła draws on a Carmelite source that sprang up authentically from within the normative Catholic Tradition. He reads Vatican II in light of this authentically Catholic attention to the lived experience of personal interiority and subjectivity unfolded by John of the Cross.⁹

⁵ See above, pp. ###.###.

⁶ Balthasar, *Herrlichkeit*, 2.2.466.

⁷ See above, p. ###.

⁸ Schmitz, *Center of the Drama*, 135-6.

⁹ See above, p. ###.

“Part One: The Basic Significance of Conciliar Initiation”

Chapter 1. “The Need for an Enrichment of Faith”

Wojtyła sets himself the task of outlining the implementation of Vatican II in a manner that corresponds to the actual intention of the Council. The original guiding question of Vatican II, he argues, was “*Ecclesia, quid dicis de te ipsa?*” Church, what do you say about yourself?¹⁰ “The People of God”—this is the Council’s answer, Wojtyła claims.¹¹ It was “an ecclesiological Council, which was concerned especially with the truth concerning the Church.”¹² Note the primacy of the common good that is implicit in this understanding of the Council.

The way both the question and the answer, “People of God,” must be understood, he adds, is pastoral. How can the Church *grow in her awareness and life* as the People of God? Although the question is in the first place a question about the Church as a *social* organism, the growth of the Church’s awareness or consciousness must take place in the life of the individual *persons* who are members of it. It must take place in their lived experience. For this reason, the key question, “Church, what do you say about yourself?” is closely linked to the question, “What does it *mean* to be a believer, a Catholic and a member of the Church?” in the context of today’s world.¹³ The word “mean” pinpoints the aspect of personal awareness, interiority and subjectivity.¹⁴

Being a member of the Church means having faith, Wojtyła answers. For this reason, “the implementation of the Council consists first and foremost in enriching that faith.” In this context, the term “enrichment” does not primarily signify adding explicit formulations of truths, but receiving and realizing faith more richly in consciously lived experience.¹⁵ The overall goal of *Sources of Renewal* is to outline this enrichment of faith intended by the Council.

The book is divided into three Parts. Part One explains the concept of “enrichment of faith” with the help of two further concepts, formation of the believer’s *consciousness*, the cognitive aspect of a mature faith, and formation of the believer’s *attitude*, the existential or moral aspect of a mature faith, that is, the believer’s active relationship with God.¹⁶ These two concepts are then taken up one by one in the other two parts of the book: formation of the believ-

¹⁰ Wojtyła, *Sources of Renewal*, 420.

¹¹ This thesis is unfolded at great length in the chapter, “The Consciousness of the Church as the People of God; see Wojtyła, *Sources of Renewal*, 112-54.

¹² Wojtyła, *Sources of Renewal*, 39.

¹³ Wojtyła, *Sources of Renewal*, 17 and 420.

¹⁴ See above p. ###.

¹⁵ Wojtyła, *Sources of Renewal*, 420.

¹⁶ See Wojtyła, *Sources of Renewal*, 205.

er's *consciousness* in Part Two and formation of the believer's *attitude* or *living relationship with God* in Part Three.

There are many references to *Dignitatis humanae* and its teaching about the freedom of religion in *Sources of Renewal*, two of which stand out as more extensive and thematic: one of them in Part One and the other at the very end of Part Three. A clear grasp of these two discussions in context will be of great help in seeing how religious freedom is related to the heart of the Conciliar event and to the question whether "the contrast between modernity and Christianity disappears."

Chapter 2. "Faith as God's Gift, and also as Man's Conscious Attitude"

As a supernatural gift to the human person, faith has its origin in God. It is "the fruit of a unique *encounter*"¹⁷ with God as he reveals himself. Benedict XVI writes in continuity with his predecessor, "Being Christian is not the result of an ethical choice or a lofty idea, but the *encounter* with an event, a person, which gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction."¹⁸ Wojtyła quotes the Constitution on Divine Revelation *Dei verbum* to document this understanding of faith.

"The obedience of faith" (Rom 13:26; cf. Rom 1:5; 2; Cor 10:5-6) is to be given to God who reveals, an obedience by which man commits his whole self (*se totum*) freely to God, "offering the full submission of intellect and will to God who reveals" (*Dei verbum* 5).¹⁹

This response to God who reveals himself, Wojtyła adds, is an act of "self-abandonment" to God. The notion of "self-gift" is not far away. In this self-abandonment, one not only accepts the truth of particular propositions, but one becomes aware of one's own "vocation" and the "meaning of [one's] existence." The enrichment of faith concerns precisely this self-abandonment to God. As such a self-abandonment, faith "relates to man's whole personal structure and spiritual dynamism."²⁰ *Totus tuus*.

In order to highlight the person's participation in the enrichment of faith by such complete self-abandonment, Wojtyła quotes the Council's Declaration on Religious Freedom, *Dignitatis humanae*. Here we find the first extensive discussion of *Dignitatis humanae*. The Declaration, he claims, shows above all that the encounter with God is a personal encounter that takes place in the interior depth of the person.

Man's participation in this encounter with God, in which faith consists, is a fully *personal* one. The Declaration on Religious Freedom points this out, while developing the ideas of the *Constitution on Divine Revelation* concerning the subject of faith, that is, man *as the subject of an encounter* with God who reveals himself. These ideas point to *the human depth* which distinguishes man *as a person* and which is implied by faith; they thus concern *the dimension of the human person* which, in *conscious* faith, is manifested in all its fullness. It is

¹⁷ Wojtyła, *Sources of Renewal*, 19, emphasis added.

¹⁸ Benedict XVI, *Dens caritas est*, 1.

¹⁹ The quote in this text: Vatican I, Dogmatic Constitution on Faith, *Dei filius*, ch. 3.

²⁰ Wojtyła, *Sources of Renewal*, 20.

from this point of view *of the personal subject* that the possibility and need for an enrichment of faith must also be considered...²¹

One can easily recognize in this reading of *Dignitatis humanae* Wojtyła's characteristic emphasis, beginning with his dissertation on John of the Cross, on the lived experience of the person, on interiority and subjectivity. Significantly, he does not place the *right* to religious freedom in the foreground, but the full personal *responsibility* of faith as a free self-abandonment in obedience to God who reveals. He sees the Declaration as a call for a more "conscious Catholicism" that must be developed "with greater courage and also greater responsibility."²²

It is in this light that Wojtyła then proceeds to discuss the *right* to religious freedom. It is a right that springs from the duty to seek the truth and from the consequent duty to abandon oneself in the obedience of faith to God's revelation. "Everybody has the duty and consequently the right to seek the truth in religious matters."²³ This right can be considered "*ad extra*, in relation to secular authorities" and "*ad intra*, that is, in relation to believers and to the Church." When it is considered *ad intra*, it is above all a call for the enrichment of faith, for a more fully conscious and responsible self-abandonment in obedience to God. It is clear that Wojtyła is here drawing on key theses of his *Person and Act*.²⁴

Let us compare Wojtyła with Kant to test the claim that in Wojtyła's understanding of the freedom of religion "the contrast between modernity and Christianity disappears." Kant is not the only representative of Modernity, but he can certainly be considered a legitimate and powerful one. According to Kant, rights and freedoms are rooted in the personal dignity of man as an autonomous moral agent. Human dignity consists in the autonomous power of the person to legislate for himself and all rational beings in accord with the universal form of the imperative "do this," without regard to any good or evil encountered in experience.²⁵ According to Wojtyła, the right to the freedom of religion is also connected with the dignity of the person, but a dignity understood as rooted in the obligation of seeking the truth and the consequent obligation of abandoning oneself consciously and responsibly in the obedience of faith to God who reveals. These two ways of viewing religious freedom correspond to two opposite types of personalism: the Trinitarian personalism of gift, which Wojtyła saw first in John of the Cross; and the Anti-Trinitarian personalism of autonomy developed by Kant at the very peak of his philosophy of consciousness.

Let us attempt to view Wojtyła from Kant's perspective. To affirm human dignity in Wojtyła's sense is to deny human dignity altogether. What Wojtyła affirms is for Kant an extreme form of heteronomy, of sonship in relation to

²¹ Wojtyła, *Sources of Renewal*, 22, emphasis added.

²² Wojtyła, *Sources of Renewal*, 22.

²³ Vatican II, *Dignitatis humanae*, 3.

²⁴ See above, pp. ###.###.

²⁵ See above, pp. ###.###.

the Father. The contrast between Modernity (at least as represented by Kant) and Christianity remains. It is only fair and just to respect Kant's clear position and express the same judgment from the other side. Kant's understanding of human dignity as autonomy is, from John Paul II's perspective, a denial of the true basis of human dignity. A right to the freedom of religion based on Kantian autonomy does not, in fact, exist.

Yet, Kant is not the only legitimate representative of Modernity. John of the Cross is equally legitimate, although he would most likely be dismissed by Kant as a simple continuation of medieval Christianity. If John of the Cross is a legitimate representative of Modernity, as Balthasar takes him to be, the contrast between Modernity and Christianity does indeed disappear. Modernity is not monolithic, but it contains radically opposite proposals.

Chapter 3. "Faith and Dialogue"

At the beginning of Chapter III, Wojtyła returns to what he takes to be the main question of Vatican II, "What does it *mean* to be a believing member of the Church?" He shows that since it means having faith and striving for the enrichment of faith, it also means a respectful dialogue with those whose views differ from that faith, including atheists. Again he quotes *Dignitatis humanae*.

The search for truth...must be carried out in a manner that is appropriate to the dignity of the person and his social nature, namely, by free inquiry with the help of teaching and instruction, communication and dialogue.²⁶

In the perspective from which Wojtyła discusses it in Chapter III, dialogue primarily serves the enrichment of faith in the believer. "Here...it is shown what a 'dialogue' can and should mean as a way of enriching faith. It creates a mature faith which keeps extreme contrasts," for example, the contrast between Christian faith and atheism, "before its eyes and requires of itself the fullest consistency," that is, faithfulness to the truth.²⁷

Chapter 4. "The Consciousness of the Church as the Main Foundation of Conciliar Initiation"

"Church, what do you say about yourself?"²⁸ This key question is addressed to the Church as a subject, not only as an object of faith. It is addressed to the Church as a subject inasmuch as it is composed of individual personal subjects who together give the response of faith to the word of God.

This common response of faith, which is "the mind of the Church," is tied to two dialogues, the vertical dialogue with God and the horizontal dialogue with human beings. These two dialogues are intimately related to each other "inasmuch as the spiritual link and the possibility of dialogue are instituted by

²⁶ Vatican II, *Dignitatis humanae*, 3

²⁷ Wojtyła, *Sources of Renewal*, 33.

²⁸ Wojtyła, *Sources of Renewal*, 36.

a ray of that ‘light which enlightens every man’ [John 1:9].”²⁹ The Church is a sign and safeguard of this light of the Word, of the transcendent dimension of every human person. For this reason, dialogue in the horizontal dimension “is not a departure from the vertical dimension, as it is sometimes thought to be: it is an effort which accompanies the profession and witness of the whole Church and every Catholic...”³⁰ Both dialogues, which in their unity constitute “the dialogue of salvation” (Paul VI), are essential aspects of the Church’s consciousness of herself.

The Church, which is in this way a subject of faith, is also an object of faith. In the Creed, the profession of faith in the Church comes after the profession of the mysteries of the Trinity and Incarnation and must continually be integrated with these mysteries.³¹

In the consciousness of the Church, integration also concerns the Magisterium of the past and of the present. Wojtyła proposes a hermeneutics of continuity.

Integration...expresses itself...in such a way that on the one hand we can rediscover and, as it were, re-read the Magisterium of the last Council in the whole previous Magisterium of the Church, while on the other we can rediscover and re-read the whole preceding Magisterium in that of the last Council.³²

Part One of *Sources of Renewal* can be summed up as follows.

Chapter 1: The Council answers its own question, “Church what do you say about yourself?” understood in a pastoral manner as the question, “What does it *mean* to be a member of the Church?” by calling for an enrichment of faith. Enrichment means receiving the faith in the depth of one’s lived experience of personal interiority.

Chapter 2: Faith is a supernatural gift, but it implies human cooperation. What the Council calls for is a conscious, responsible and courageous Catholicism. The Council calls for this responsibility and courage particularly in *Dignitatis humanae*.

Chapter 3: Dialogue with those whose convictions differ from the Catholic faith promotes this enrichment of faith, provided the dialogue is truthful and faithful: truthful in not glossing over the opposition between different points of view; and faithful in holding on to the truth.

Chapter 4: The Church is the *subject* of this enrichment of faith. Its subjective consciousness of itself unfolds in two closely connected dialogues, vertical and horizontal, which together constitute the dialogue of salvation. The Church is also an *object* of faith. Integration is the key element of enrichment in relation to the object of faith, integration both in seeing the Church in the context of all the mysteries of faith and in reading the Council in the light of the Tradition and vice versa.

²⁹ Wojtyła, *Sources of Renewal*, 36.

³⁰ Wojtyła, *Sources of Renewal*, 37.

³¹ See Wojtyła, *Sources of Renewal*, 37-38.

³² Wojtyła, *Sources of Renewal*, 40.

“Part Two: Formation of the Believer’s Consciousness”

The formation of the believer’s *consciousness* proposed by the Council, according to *Sources of Renewal*, can be divided into five steps. They correspond to the five chapters of Part Two:

1. The Consciousness of Creation
2. The Revelation of the Trinity and the Consciousness of Salvation
3. Christ and the Consciousness of Redemption
4. The Consciousness of the Church as the People of God
5. The Historical and Eschatological Consciousness of the Church.

One can see a clear order of argument in these five steps. Chapter 1 attends to the order of creation by unfolding the first article of the Creed, which expresses faith in the creator; the other four chapters turn to the order of redemption and salvation. Chapter 2 lays down the theological principle of the order of salvation and redemption, namely, God’s own Trinitarian life made accessible as definitive salvation to human beings. Chapter 3 speaks about the manner in which God shares this life with us, namely, through Christ, the redeemer. Chapters 4 and 5 draw the consequences for the Church’s self-understanding in her essential nature (Chapter 4) and her life in history (Chapter 5). Chapter II is thus the crucial theological step in terms of which the others must be understood.

Chapter 1. “The Consciousness of Creation”

“Church, what do you say about yourself?” In a fundamental way, the Church’s consciousness of itself is conditioned by faith in creation. “In what way does Vatican II enrich our faith in this respect?”³³ It does so by reaffirming faith in creation, including the capacity of reason to arrive by its own powers at a knowledge of God from creation. It does so more extensively in *Gaudium et spes*, by reflecting about the presence of the Church in the world. One of the key issues in this context is the proper understanding of the “autonomy” of creation.³⁴

On account of the work of creation, the consciousness of the Church is in a sense also consciousness of the world, and conversely awareness of the world, being permeated by the truth concerning creation and the Creator, becomes awareness of the Church at its very foundation, on which we shall continue to build.

It seems, indeed, that the enrichment of faith that is the gift of Vatican II does not so much proceed from awareness of the creation to the truths subsequently proclaimed in the Creed, but rather begins with those truths and proceeds to awareness of the creation, which it thus provides with a richer context of faith.³⁵

The Council, as Wojtyła reads it, does not regard awareness of creation only as a philosophical truth, only as a preamble of the faith. It leads the Church

³³ Wojtyła, *Sources of Renewal*, 45.

³⁴ See Wojtyła, *Sources of Renewal*, 49-51.

³⁵ Wojtyła, *Sources of Renewal*, 52.

to see this truth in light of the whole creed, that is, primarily in light of the Trinity and the communication of Trinitarian life by Christ.

Chapter 2. "Revelation of the Trinity and Awareness of Salvation"

The Council connects the Church's consciousness of herself with consciousness of the inner life of God as the Trinity. Salvation that is, the definitive good for human beings, consists in attaining a share in divine life.

Through the Son, the Word of God made flesh, they [that is, human beings] have access in the Holy Spirit to the Father and become sharers in the divine nature, that is in the Godhead itself. The work of salvation signifies a particular union with God, or rather a communion which is mysterious and at the same time profoundly real.³⁶

The consciousness of the Church is closely bound up with consciousness of this salvation which, in turn, flows from faith in the Trinity. "Awareness of salvation is...the true response to the mystery of the most holy Trinity. This truth of faith...constitutes, we may say, the acme of the Church's consciousness."³⁷ The emphasis on the Trinity in Wojtyła's understanding of the Church's self-awareness should be noted. If the main question of the Council is, "Church, what do you say about yourself?" understood in a pastoral manner as equivalent to the question, "What does it *mean* to be a member of the Church?"—if its main question is thus the question of the enrichment of faith, of a fuller reception of faith in the interiority and subjectivity of the person—the Council's answer to that question is that the acme, the highpoint, of the Church's consciousness consists in a particular awareness of the Trinity and thus of salvation. "God wishes to save man by means of Himself, offering him a share in his own divine being."³⁸

Vatican II expresses this Trinitarian self-awareness of the Church in the "definition" of the Church given at the very beginning of *Lumen gentium*. "The Church, in Christ, is as a sacrament, a sign and instrument, that is, of union with God and of the unity of the whole human race."³⁹ This definition, Wojtyła adds immediately after quoting it, is "the starting-point of the principal road towards the enrichment of faith." The Church is a sacrament of union inasmuch as the missions of the Son and the Holy Spirit allow human beings to share in the union of divine persons.

At this point in the argument, Wojtyła asks a fundamental question: "Why are the missions of the divine persons addressed to him [man], and why do these in particular constitute the profoundest divine mystery of the Church?"⁴⁰ The centrality of this question can hardly be over-estimated. There is nothing deeper and more form-giving for the whole of Christian life, and therefore for the whole of theology, than this: "the profoundest divine mystery of the

³⁶ Wojtyła, *Sources of Renewal*, 54.

³⁷ Wojtyła, *Sources of Renewal*, 55.

³⁸ Wojtyła, *Sources of Renewal*, 58.

³⁹ Wojtyła, *Sources of Renewal*, 59.

⁴⁰ Wojtyła, *Sources of Renewal*, 60.

Church.” The question, therefore, goes to the very heart of the Council’s teaching.

Vatican II, Wojtyła claims, answers this question with “a new emphasis” in *Gaudium et spes* 24:3. The Church compares the revealed truth concerning God and the revealed truth concerning man and finds in this comparison her own mission and consciousness. The comparison brings to light a link between the exemplar in which the fullness of life is found and our imitation or participation in this exemplar.

Indeed, the Lord Jesus, when he prays to the Father, “that all may be one...as we are one” (John 17:21-22) and thus offers vistas closed to human reason, indicates a certain likeness between the union of the divine Persons and the union of God’s sons in Truth and Love. This likeness shows that man, who is the only creature on earth God willed for itself, cannot fully find himself except through a sincere gift of self (cf. Luke 17:33).

Wojtyła brings out the new emphasis on the Trinitarian exemplar of communion contained in *Gaudium et spes* 24:3 as follows.

Man’s resemblance to God finds its basis, as it were, in the mystery of the most holy Trinity. Man resembles God not only because of the spiritual nature of his immortal soul but also by reason of his social nature, if by this we understand the fact that he “cannot fully realize himself except in an act of pure self-giving.” In this way, “union in Truth and Love” is the ultimate expression of the community of individuals. This union merits the name of communion (*communio*), which signifies more than community (*communitas*). The Latin word *communio* denotes a relationship between persons that is proper to them alone; and it indicates the good that they do to one another, giving and receiving within that mutual relationship.⁴¹

Here lies the heart of the Council. Here lies the true starting-point of the road towards the enrichment of faith. The communion of persons in the Trinity is the source in which Christian life participates; it is therefore also the exemplar which Christian life imitates. This is, above all, what a mature faith must increasingly become aware of. The core of the enrichment of faith is expressed in *Gaudium et spes* 24:3.

In concluding the chapter, Wojtyła points out that the Council’s new emphasis on Trinitarian exemplarity is deeply rooted in the Tradition.

Against this broad background we may perhaps more easily grasp the meaning of the sentence [a quote from St. Cyprian] in which Vatican II summed up its view of the vital link between the Church and the Trinity. “The Church is a people brought into unity from the unity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit” (*Lumen gentium* 4). This thought was expressed by Fathers of the Church such as St. Cyprian, St. Augustine and St. John Damascene, and is now endorsed and corroborated by the Council. In the light of our analysis, we can see more clearly how to understand the “unification” of the People of God through the Trinitarian unity of God himself.⁴²

This emphasis on the Trinitarian understanding of Vatican II’s teaching on the “People of God” is confirmed by the retreat Cardinal Wojtyła preached for Paul VI in 1976, two years before his own election as Pope. At a highpoint of the retreat, the beginning of the seventh talk, he says,

⁴¹ Wojtyła, *Sources of Renewal*, 61.

⁴² Wojtyła, *Sources of Renewal*, 64-5

Let us turn our thoughts to God who is gift and the source of all giving. The Fathers of the second Vatican Council were convinced that the complex reality of the Church cannot be adequately expressed in societal terms alone, even when the society constituted by the Church is called the “People of God”. In order properly to describe this reality and appreciate its underlying significance it is necessary to return to the dimension of mystery, that is to the dimension of the most Holy Trinity. That is why the Constitution *Lumen Gentium* starts with an introductory account of the divine economy of salvation, which ultimately is a Trinitarian economy (cf. *Lumen Gentium*, nn. 2-4)...Love, an uncreated gift, is part of the inner mystery of God and is the very nucleus of theology.⁴³

The understanding of the inner mystery of God as “Love, an uncreated gift” is only implicit in the Trinitarian theology of Vatican II. It can be unfolded from the claim in *Gaudium et spes* 24:3 that the likeness between the union of divine persons and the union of human persons shows that man can only find himself through a sincere gift of self. Gift must, therefore, be found in the Trinity itself as the exemplar of gift.⁴⁴

Chapter 3. “Christ and the Consciousness of Redemption”

If the highpoint of the Church’s consciousness of itself is its awareness of the Trinity as the exemplar of communion and the source of salvation, the “pivot” around which this consciousness turns is Christ, the Redeemer. Christ is the way on which faith is enriched.⁴⁵

The Council expresses the Church’s consciousness of redemption in two complementary ways in its two principal documents.

1. *Gaudium et spes* discusses redemption as a reality constantly directed TO THE WORLD.
2. *Lumen gentium* discusses redemption as a reality permanently at work IN THE CHURCH.

Wojtyła dedicates a section of Chapter III to each of these perspectives.

The section on *Gaudium et spes* places a special emphasis on 22:1, in particular on the final sentence. “Christ, the final Adam, in the very revelation of the mystery of the Father and his love, fully shows man to man himself and makes his highest calling clear.”

Here Vatican II offers a great contribution to the enrichment of faith from the point of view of consciousness of redemption. This central Christian reality is presented to man in such a way that, following the expression of *Gaudium et spes*, we can perceive a specific kind of anthropocentrism emerging through the Christocentrism which the Constitution reflects so clearly...We seem here to have reached a key point of the Council’s thought. The revelation of the mystery of the Father and his love in Jesus Christ reveals man to man, and gives the ultimate answer to the question, “What is man?” This answer cannot be separated from the problem of man’s vocation: man accepts his identity by accepting that vocation and making it a reality.⁴⁶

⁴³ Wojtyła, *Sign of Contradiction*, 53 and 55.

⁴⁴ See above, pp. ###.###.

⁴⁵ See Wojtyła, *Sources of Renewal*, 66-7.

⁴⁶ Wojtyła, *Sources of Renewal*, 75.

If *Gaudium et spes* 24:3 points to the core of the enrichment of faith, 22:1 unfolds this core in an anthropological direction. The enrichment of faith proposed by Vatican II is anthropocentric, centered on man, because it is centered on Christ (“Christ, the final Adam, shows man to himself”) because it is centered on the Trinity (“by the revelation of the Father and his love”). Kant also took an anthropocentric turn, completing the beginning of this turn in Descartes, by reducing the three pillars of religion and morality (the freedom of the will, the immortality of the soul, and the existence of God) to mere data of human consciousness in practical reason. The anthropocentric direction of Vatican II, as Wojtyła reads it, is the opposite. Because the absolute center of all meaning lies objectively in the inner life of the Trinity, because this inner life is made accessible in Christ, God made man, the Redeemer of man, man stands at the center of the Council’s attention.

In the section on *Lumen gentium*, Wojtyła follows the Council in placing a special emphasis on the concept “People of God.”⁴⁷ He is careful, however, to guard this concept against any one-sided reduction to sociological categories. He considers two other concepts particularly important for avoiding this reduction: bride of Christ and body of Christ. “The two analogies complement each other and are in a sense intertwined. They both indicate the supreme degree of union between Christ and the Church...”⁴⁸ Both analogies are important for the Church’s self-consciousness as a consciousness of redemption. About “body of Christ” in particular, Wojtyła writes,

Meditating in the spirit of Vatican II on redemption as a reality continuously present in the Church and maintaining it in being, we must also have in mind the link between the Mystical Body of Christ and the People of God. The Church is at the same time both one and the other. In *Lumen gentium* the picture of the Church as the People of God is perhaps the more prominent. But in the Council’s teaching as a whole we find sufficient reason to affirm that the People of God is also the Mystical Body of Christ and to throw light on this identity. It is the reality of redemption that helps us to do so. The consciousness of redemption is logically prior to the consciousness of the People of God: this will appear more clearly when we come to talk of the latter.⁴⁹

The Chapter concludes with a section on Mary in the mystery of Christ and the Church.

Chapter 4. “The Consciousness of the Church as the People of God”

At the beginning of Chapter IV, Wojtyła returns to Cyprian’s definition of the Church as “a people brought into unity from the unity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit” (*Lumen gentium* 4) and calls it “the keystone of the whole construction of *Lumen gentium*.”⁵⁰ He then points out that the communal and the personal element are “profoundly intertwined” in the consciousness of the Church as the People of God.

⁴⁷ Compare Kant’s understanding of “the people of God” above, p. ###.

⁴⁸ Wojtyła, *Sources of Renewal*, 88.

⁴⁹ Wojtyła, *Sources of Renewal*, 91.

⁵⁰ Wojtyła, *Sources of Renewal*, 112.

In the teaching of Vatican II we must therefore perceive the clear connection between the reality of the People of God and man's vocation as a person, which is at the same time a vocation to communal life. For, "man, who is the only creature on earth God willed for himself, cannot fully find himself except through a sincere gift of self" (*Gaudium et spes* 24:3). This statement indicates the nature of man's person and the uniqueness of his relationship to God.⁵¹

Gaudium et spes 24:3 appears once again at a key point of Wojtyła's reading of Vatican II. It explains how, in the enrichment of faith proposed by Vatican II, the communal and the personal element are intertwined.

On the basis laid in these opening paragraphs, Wojtyła proceeds in four sections to unfold the self-awareness of the Church as the People of God:

7. the individual person's vocation in the community;

8. the consciousness of the Church as People of God ad intra and ad extra;

9. communio as the link that unites the Church as People of God;

10. koinonia and diakonia (communion and service): the hierarchical order of the Church.

Section 1 argues that the basis of the self-awareness of the Church as the People of God is the dignity of the person, understood as consequent upon man's rational nature and upon the vocation of each person to a life of communion with God, a vocation addressed to man by virtue of the redemption achieved by Christ.

The reality of redemption thus constitutes the Church, as we tried to show in the previous Chapter. This reality unites individuals in a community in such a way that "members render one another mutual service in the measure of the different gifts bestowed on each" (*Gaudium et spes* 32)...The Church is more than a community (*communitas*)—it possesses the nature of a communion (*communio*) in which, by means of mutual services, in different ways and in various relationships, that "sincere giving of himself" takes place in which "man fully finds himself" (*Gaudium et spes* 24:3). Thus conceived, the *communio* constitutes their common and reciprocal membership in the Mystical Body of Christ...The reality of the Mystical Body indicates and announces to all men, each of whom is called to his own proper dignity, the discovery and fulfillment of themselves

⁵¹ Wojtyła, *Sources of Renewal*, 114.

by means of the sincere gift of self to others. Since this gift is made to a multitude, it imparts a character of “communion” to it.⁵²

Wojtyła sees the concept of “*communio*” as the key to the Church’s self-awareness as the People of God. Genuine *communio* implies a gift of self to the community; it implies service for the sake of the common good. Of course, this recourse to *Gaudium et spes* 24:3 implies the Trinitarian exemplar: the likeness between the union of divine persons and the union of human persons. And so Wojtyła adds,

As faith advances, it [that is the self-awareness of the Church as the people of God] will always have in view, as its ultimate reality, the *communio personarum* of God himself in the Trinity of persons. As *Gaudium et spes* 24:3 suggests, it is Jesus who has shown us that there is “a certain likeness between the union of the divine Persons and the union of God’s sons in Truth and Love.”⁵³

In section 3, which discusses *communio* as the link uniting the Church as the People of God, Wojtyła returns to the concept of “*communio*” in order to define it in more detail.

If we want to follow the main thread of the Council’s thought, all that it says concerning the hierarchy, the laity and the religious orders in the Church should be re-read in the light of the reality of *communio* for the community of the People of God. “For the members of the People of God are called upon to share their goods, and the words of the apostle apply also to each of the Churches, ‘according to the gift that each has received, administer it to one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God’ (1 Pet. 5:10)” (*Lumen gentium* 13).

Thus we have the *communio ecclesiarum* [communion of churches] and the *communio munerum* [the communion of gifts, tasks or offices] and, through these, the *communio personarum* [communion of persons]. Such is the image of the Church presented by the Council. The type of union and unity that is proper to the community of the Church as People of God essentially determines the nature of that community. The Church as People of God, by reason of its most basic premises and its communal nature, is oriented towards the likeness there ought to be between “the union of the sons of God in Truth and Love” [*Gaudium et spes* 24:3] and the essentially divine unity of the divine persons, in *communione Sanctissimae Trinitatis*.⁵⁴

The point could not be clearer or more lapidary. “Church, what do you say about yourself?” Increased awareness of the mystery of Trinitarian communion in accord with *Gaudium et spes* 24:3—this is what allows a correct growth of the believer’s consciousness of the Church as the People of God.

The Council devotes much attention to *making the faithful conscious of communio* as the link binding together the community of the People of God. Thus it appears that the internal development and renewal of the Church in the spirit of Vatican II depends to a very great extent on the authentic deepening of faith in the Church as a community whose essential bond is that of *communio*.⁵⁵

⁵² Wojtyła, *Sources of Renewal*, 120, translation altered.

⁵³ Wojtyła, *Sources of Renewal*, 121.

⁵⁴ Wojtyła, *Sources of Renewal*, 137-8, translation altered. See Scola, *L’esperienza elementare*, 51 with footnotes.

⁵⁵ Wojtyła, *Sources of Renewal*, 144, emphasis added.

“Part Three: Formation of the Believer’s Attitude”

At the beginning of Part Three, Wojtyła returns to *Dei Verbum* 5, which he had quoted in Part One to focus on the enrichment of faith proposed by Vatican II.

The obedience of faith is to be given to God who reveals, an obedience by which man commits his whole self (*se totum...committit*) freely to God, offering the full submission of intellect and will to God who reveals.⁵⁶

The phrase “commits his whole self” or “commits himself as a whole (*se totum...committit*)” is, of course, suggestive for Wojtyła. It echoes the spirituality of self-gift characteristic of St. John of the Cross. Wojtyła underlines this self-commitment as “the most vital and vivifying point” in the enrichment of faith intended by Vatican II.

[Faith]...cannot consist merely of knowledge or the content of consciousness. Essential to faith is an attitude of self-commitment to God—a continual readiness to perform the fundamental ‘action’ which corresponds to the reality of revelation, and all other acts which spring from it and to which it gives their proper character. In speaking of the attitude of self-commitment to God, Vatican II touches on the most vital and vivifying point relating to the whole process of the enrichment of faith.⁵⁷

It is not difficult to see in this reading of *Dei Verbum* 5 Wojtyła’s familiar emphasis on faith as a means of union with God in agreement with John of the Cross, and on love as a total gift of self, *totus tuus* (*Gaudium et spes* 24:3). Twenty-eight years later, in the year 2000, Pope John Paul II expressed the same understanding of the nucleus of the Conciliar event.

With the Council, *the Church first had an experience of faith*, as she abandoned herself to God without reserve, as one who trusts and is certain of being loved. It is precisely this act of abandonment to God which stands out from an objective examination of the Acts. Anyone who wished to approach the Council without considering this interpretive key *would be unable to penetrate its depths*. Only from the perspective of faith can we see the Council event as a gift whose still hidden wealth we must know how to mine.⁵⁸

Note John Paul II’s What Wojtyła calls the “attitude” of the believer lies precisely in this self-gift to God.

The word [“attitude”] is usually applied analogically and denotes various relationships which are endorsed as a whole by the individual consciousness. In simple terms we may say that an attitude is an active relationship but is not yet action. It follows upon cognition and increased awareness, but is something new and different from these. It involves “taking up a position” and being ready to act in accordance with it. In a sense it represents what Thomist psychology would call *habitus* and even *habitus operativus*, but the two are not identical.⁵⁹

The main difference between “attitude” and the Thomistic “*habitus*,” such as the virtues, is that “*habitus*,” as a permanent disposition toward action, need

⁵⁶ Vatican II, *Dei verbum*, 5.

⁵⁷ Wojtyła, *Sources of Renewal*, 206.

⁵⁸ John Paul II, Address to the Conference Studying the Implementation of Vatican II, February 27, 2000.

⁵⁹ Wojtyła, *Sources of Renewal*, 205. The remaining difference seems to be that Wojtyła’s “attitude” is *conscious* while a *habitus* need not be.

not be conscious, while attitude implies consciousness, that is, actual acts of knowing and loving. Scheler's concept of "ethos" and Kant's "*Gesinnung*" and "*Denkungsart*" are quite similar to Wojtyła's concept of "attitude,"⁶⁰ but one can also hear an echo of John of the Cross and his understanding of a living faith that provides a deep source for Christian experience.⁶¹ To illustrate this definition of "attitude," one can define the conjugal attitude of husband and wife as their conscious belonging to each other in love. It is a position taken up by both and endorsed by both as the permanent fruit of their "taking" each other ("I take you...to be my husband/wife") and therefore giving themselves in the marriage vow and its consummation in sexual union. This conscious position of the two in relation to each other is expressed in the particular acts of daily life that spring from it. It is indeed "the most vital and vivifying point" in a marriage from which alone an enrichment of married life can proceed. In a similar way, the enrichment of faith proposed by Vatican II flows from "the most vital and vivifying point" that is the permanent fruit of the believer's "obedience of faith in which he freely commits himself as a whole to God" (*Dei Verbum*, 5).

Part Three is divided into six chapters:

1. The attitude of Mission and Testimony
2. The attitude of Participation in the Threefold Saving Power or Office of Christ
3. The Attitude of Human Identity and Christian Responsibility
4. The Ecumenical Attitude
5. The Attitude of the Apostolate
6. The Attitude Required for Building up the Church as *Communio*.

There is a helpful passage in which Wojtyła indicates the unifying bond that links all six chapters, namely, the total gift of self to God in faith, according to *Dei Verbum*, 5.

In the Constitution on Divine Revelation (*Dei Verbum*) the Council indicates the basic character of the attitude with which man expresses his response to God's self-revelation, namely a 'free commitment of his entire self' (DV 5). *This we shall therefore take as fundamental to the rest of our study.* Although we shall not attempt to analyze it in detail, it will always be present to our minds in our consideration of particular attitudes to be discovered in the teaching of Vatican II, even if it is expressed and realized in different ways. The process of the enrichment of faith, which is part of the Council's plan and towards which the implementation of the Council should be directed, is in the last analysis comprised in the development and strengthening of that attitude.⁶²

According to this statement, the whole of Part Three with all its six chapters, including the concluding section on *Dignitatis humanae* and its teaching on religious freedom, must be understood in terms of the one "most vital and vivifying point relating to the whole process of the enrichment of faith,"

⁶⁰ See above, p. ###, and below, p. ###.

⁶¹ See above, p. ###.###.

⁶² Wojtyła, *Sources of Renewal*, 205.

namely, the complete self-commitment of the believer to God.⁶³ One can understand the structure and flow of the argument on this basis.

Chapter 1. "The Attitude of Mission and Testimony"

The argument begins with the mission of the divine persons. God reveals himself, saves the world and constitutes his People by sending his Son and Spirit. "Thus in the Council's teaching, awareness of salvation is closely linked with the revelation of the Most Holy Trinity, as we have already seen."⁶⁴ Since the missions of the Son and the Spirit are the origin of the Church as the People of God, they impart to that People a Trinitarian form.

The Church originated and continues to originate from that divine mission: this gives a 'missionary' character to its whole existence, and at the same time basically determines the attitude of every Christian...⁶⁵

The movement of the argument is clear. The saving act in which God constitutes the Church as the People of God is the sending of the Son and the Holy Spirit. When these saving missions constitute the Church, they impart to her their own Trinitarian form, namely, mission. "As you have sent me into the world, so also have I sent them into the world" (John 17:18). "As the Father has sent me, so also am I sending you (plural)" (John 20:21). Since the Church has a Trinitarian form, the individual person must also have that same form as his or her fundamental "attitude." Immediately, at the very beginning of the argument of Part Three of *Sources of Renewal*, we find ourselves deeply inside the Trinitarian teaching on which Wojtyła reflected already in his doctoral dissertation on John of the Cross. By giving himself as a whole to the self-revealing God in the obedience of faith (*Dei Verbum* 5), the believer grasps his own identity as a person who has come to share in the person of the Son in relation to the Father. Mission is thus not in the first place an attitude of moral commitment in response to a moral duty, but a way of being, rooted in the person of Jesus as the Son of God.

This [mission] does not initially imply a function or institution, but defines the nature of the Church and indicates its close link with the mystery of the divine Trinity through the mission of the Persons: the Son who comes to us from the Father in the Holy Spirit and the Spirit who proceeds from the Father and the Son. In this sense and on the basis of this reality, we can and should define the attitude of every human being in the Church.⁶⁶

The priority of the Church over the individual person is important to Wojtyła. He emphasizes it several times. The believer "takes part in the 'state of mission' in which all the Church continually finds itself; and each individual is a unique, unrepeatable embodiment of the salvific 'state'."⁶⁷

⁶³ Wojtyła, *Sources of Renewal*, 206.

⁶⁴ Wojtyła, *Sources of Renewal*, 206.

⁶⁵ Wojtyła, *Sources of Renewal*, 206.

⁶⁶ Wojtyła, *Sources of Renewal*, 207.

⁶⁷ Wojtyła, *Sources of Renewal*, 207.

Mission, Wojtyła goes on to argue, is closely linked to witness or testimony. The mission of the Son corresponds to his testimony to the Father. Again we are at a central point of Johannine theology. In his trial before Pilate, Jesus says, “For this was I begotten (or born) and for this have I come into the world, that I might bear witness to the truth” (John 18:37). Since he is born or begotten as the Father’s Word, Jesus is in person the witness to the Father. Witnessing to the Father is not a task he assumes as imposed on him from the outside or chosen freely by him from among several possibilities. It is an activity that is identical with his person as the eternal Word. Those who participate in the life of Jesus participate by necessity also in his being as the one who bears witness to the Father.⁶⁸ In the remainder of Chapter One Wojtyła re-reads many passages of Vatican II on mission and witness as pointers toward an enrichment of faith through these Trinitarian attitudes.

Chapter 2. “The Attitude of Priest, Prophet and King”

The mission of Jesus and its saving power expresses itself in three *munera*. “*Munera*” can be translated as powers, gifts, offerings, tasks, duties or offices. Those who believe in Jesus participate in these three *munera*. Wojtyła ties them closely to mission and testimony.

The Christian bears witness to Christ not “from outside” but on the basis of participation, in him, in his mission. In this way the reality of faith takes shape, as does the Christian testimony in which it is expressed. Faith, in all the wealth of its personal and communal characteristics, is essentially and basically a participation in the testimony of Christ. This is the testimony of God himself, to which Christ has given expression and human dimensions by his triple power as priest, prophet and king.⁶⁹

The attitude of participation in Christ’s PRIESTLY POWER, that is, his power of relating all things in this world to the Father, Wojtyła argues, is the most fundamental of the three. It is the source of the attitudes of participation in Jesus’ *munera* as prophet and as king. Within the one Eucharistic sacrifice, the Church offers itself and the world to the Father. It can do so, because it shares in Jesus’ priestly power to relate himself and all things as the Son to the Father. Wojtyła appeals to *Gaudium et spes* 24:3 to explain this point.

This attitude in which man, through and with Christ—“together with the sacrifice of the Lord’s body”—offers himself and the world to the Father expresses in a particularly intimate but fundamental way the existential essence of faith. For it is in faith, as the Council teaches, that man, responding to God’s self-revelation, “commits his entire self to God.” This commitment, contained in the very essence of faith, is realized most fully in the attitude which derives from sharing in the priesthood of Christ. This attitude, in fact, seems to endow the acts of Christian faith with their fullest existential dimension.

There is thus good reason to consider participation in the priesthood of Christ and the attitude that derives therefrom, before turning to the prophetic and kingly aspects. While all these aspects indicate the orientation of the Conciliar enrichment of faith in respect of the attitudes of every Christian, it is participation in the priesthood of Christ which denotes *the simplest and the most complete attitude*. This contains within itself the au-

⁶⁸ See Wojtyła, *Sources of Renewal*, 207-8.

⁶⁹ Wojtyła, *Sources of Renewal*, 219.

thetic Christian relationship with God and the mystery of creation and redemption, seen in the way in which the consciousness of these mysteries is presupposed and also deepened by the Council. This attitude also expresses the vocation of the person in its existential nucleus—a vocation referred to by *Gaudium et spes* 24:3 in the words to which we must constantly return, from various points of view and in different contexts: “This likeness shows that man, who is the only creature on earth God willed for itself, cannot fully find himself except through a sincere gift of self.” When man gives himself to God in this way, he rediscovers himself most fully...It can in a sense be said that the doctrine concerning Christ’s priesthood and man’s share in it is *at the very centre of the teaching of Vatican II and contains in a certain manner all* that the Council wished to say about the Church, mankind and the world.⁷⁰

The power of Wojtyła’s overall argument is particularly clear in this text. He allows the reader to grasp what he sees as the center of the Council’s thought that contains *everything* the Council has to say. If one is looking for the heart of the Conciliar event, *here it is*. That center, in full agreement with *Redemptor hominis* and John of the Cross, is the personal life of the Son of God in relation to the Father, understood as a complete gift of self, opened up for human beings to participate in. The Son himself is the origin of the life of faith in us, enabling us to give ourselves to God and thereby to find ourselves. The life of faith in its entire extent with all its necessary enrichment is a participation in this fountain of life, a fountain opened in the Eucharist.⁷¹

Every liturgical celebration, because it is an action of Christ the Priest and of his Body, which is the Church, is a sacred action surpassing all others. No other action of the Church can equal its efficacy by the same title and to the same degree. The liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; it is also the fount from which all her power flows.⁷²

Wojtyła sees the two other *munera* as springing from this source, distinguished according to “truth” and “goodness,” that is, the theoretical and the practical order.

The PROPHETIC *MUNUS* is rooted in the person and mission of Jesus as the one who expresses the Father’s *truth* in human language.

The Church, as the People of God, participates in that mission, and the fact that it does so is of enormous importance for the enrichment of faith, not only as regards content but also as regards attitude...First and foremost here comes responsibility towards the word of God entrusted to the Church.⁷³

The *sensus fidei* of the whole People of God belongs here, as does the Magisterium together with the gift of infallibility, and obedience to it by the whole Church.⁷⁴

The whole of Christian morality, Wojtyła claims, has a close link to the ROYAL *MUNUS* of Christ. The attitude of participation in the kingship of Jesus allows human beings to conquer evil and rule over themselves.

⁷⁰ Wojtyła, *Sources of Renewal*, 224-5, emphasis added, translation of GS 24:3 altered.

⁷¹ See Wojtyła, *Sources of Renewal*, 231-43.

⁷² Vatican II, *Sacrosanctum concilium*, 7 and 10, quoted in Wojtyła, *Sources of Renewal*, 232-3.

⁷³ Wojtyła, *Sources of Renewal*, 244.

⁷⁴ Wojtyła, *Sources of Renewal*, 245-59.

Every Christian who conquers sin by imitating Christ achieves the royal self-dominion that is proper to human beings; by so doing he shares in the *munus regale* of Christ and helps to bring about Christ's kingdom.⁷⁵

To summarize the argument of Chapters I and II, the most vital and vivifying point from which an implementation of Vatican II must proceed is the total self-commitment of the believer to God. This self-commitment has the form of mission and testimony and unfolds itself in the three *munera* of Christ. The grace of adoptive sonship, of becoming sons in the Son, stands at the very root of all these attitudes.

Christ and the Christian encounter each other intimately in the priestly, prophetic and kingly mission, and it is this participation which forms the essential characteristics of the Christian. The features in which the Christian resembles Christ are interior ones, but also "missionary," since it is thanks to them that the mission of Christ lives on in mankind and in human individuals. These features constitute the reality of the People of God in and through every man and woman. They do not constitute this reality in its profoundest ontological depth, however, since this is effected solely by the grace of "adoption as sons of God." This grace is the most essential, interior and mysterious feature of resemblance to the incarnate Son of God, but after it come the features which reflect the mission of Christ.⁷⁶

Chapter 3. "The Attitude of Human Identity and Christian Responsibility"

Wojtyła begins Chapter III with a critical discussion of the Marxist argument (which is akin to Kant's) that religion leads to an alienation of human beings from themselves.

These divine realities in their essence do not lead man away from himself: they rather enable him to enter into himself more profoundly, to discover the whole truth of his own humanity and personality, which is the opposite of "alienation."⁷⁷

The attitude of human identity consists in this discovery of the whole truth of our humanity through entering into Christ. Again *Gaudium et spes* 24:3 seems to be in Wojtyła's mind: the human person discovers itself through the sincere gift of self.

Closely connected to this attitude of human identity is the attitude of solidarity with all human beings and of responsibility for human life.⁷⁸ The affirmation of all that is genuinely human is the path on which the attitude of human identity sets the Christian. The source of these attitudes is still one and the same: the grace of adoptive sonship.

Here we encounter another relatively brief discussion of *Dignitatis humanae*. The attitudes of human identity, solidarity and responsibility imply that one respects other persons in the exercise of their proper responsibility.

The Council's teaching establishes the fundamental postulate of responsibility for every human being. This postulate, which applies to every human being and especially to every Christian, emphasizes the dignity and vocation of the human person. This is seen

⁷⁵ Wojtyła, *Sources of Renewal*, 263.

⁷⁶ Wojtyła, *Sources of Renewal*, 270.

⁷⁷ Wojtyła, *Sources of Renewal*, 273.

⁷⁸ See Wojtyła, *Sources of Renewal*, 274-309.

particularly in the conception of man's relationship with God that is presented by the *Constitution on Divine Revelation* and the *Declaration on Religious Freedom*...⁷⁹

The context in which the teaching of *Dignitatis humanae* on religious freedom is viewed in this text is clear. It is viewed in tandem with the teaching on divine revelation and faith as articulated in *Dei Verbum*, inasmuch as respecting the religious freedom of the person is an aspect of the attitudes of human identity, solidarity and responsibility. The perspective on *Dignitatis humanae* is Trinitarian.

Chapter 4. "The Ecumenical Attitude"

Vatican II's teaching on this attitude is rooted, Wojtyła claims, in its teaching on the People of God, more specifically in its teaching on the attitudes of human identity, solidarity and responsibility. A love for all that is human, heightened by awareness of the saving power of the one sent by the Father, stands behind the ecumenical attitude. In this context we find yet another brief discussion of *Dignitatis humanae*, documented by five quotes from the document itself.

Thus the ecumenical attitude is rooted in faith in the fatherhood of God embracing the universe and in the redemption of Christ, which is offered to all men without exception. The true ecumenical attitude is an expression of that faith: it springs from it and testifies to its enrichment. At the same time it is the expression of a profound love for man and respect for his inner freedom—that "responsible freedom" which corresponds to an inward conviction concerning truth, "especially in the religious sphere," as the Council states in its Declaration on Religious Freedom. "The Vatican Council declares that the human person has a right to religious freedom...The Council further declares that the right to religious freedom is based on the very dignity of the human person as known through the revealed word of God and by reason itself."⁸⁰

The dignity of the person is a dignity apprehended in the attitude of ecumenism, which is itself rooted in the attitudes of human identity and solidarity and, ultimately, in the person and life of the Son of God. The dignity of the human person can be known both "through the revealed word of God and by reason itself," as *Dignitatis humanae* says in the text just quoted. In the context of Chapter IV, Wojtyła views it in the perspective of the revealed word of God as a dignity consequent upon the call to communion with God.

Chapter 5. "The Apostolic Attitude"

Wojtyła returns to the points he made in Chapter I about mission and unfolds them in more detail.

If, in accordance with the teaching of Vatican II, we agree that faith, as man's response to the God who reveals himself, is expressed as readiness to accept and assume the salvific mission, then in so doing we point to the apostolic attitude and the very root of apostolicity in the life of the Christian as it is formed by faith.⁸¹

⁷⁹ Wojtyła, *Sources of Renewal*, 293.

⁸⁰ Wojtyła, *Sources of Renewal*, 313, quoting *Dignitatis humanae*, 2.

⁸¹ Wojtyła, *Sources of Renewal*, 330.

The chapter goes into much detail in discussing the apostolic character of the Church as a whole and, within that encompassing apostolicity, the apostolic office of bishops in relation to the apostolate of the laity. The governing perspective throughout is that of enriching the faith by growth in the attitude of mission as a participation in the mission of Jesus.⁸²

Chapter 6. "Building up the Church as a Community"

Wojtyla's discussion of building up the Church is the highpoint of the whole book. If the guiding question of Vatican II is, "Church, what do you say about yourself?" and the answer is, "People of God," understood in the pastoral perspective of increasing the Church's consciousness of herself and her share in the life of Jesus through the entire set of attitudes implied in a complete self-commitment to God (mission, testimony, participation in the three *munera*, human identity, solidarity, Christian responsibility, ecumenism and apostolicity), then the natural point of arrival will be building up the Church as *communio*. Here lies the goal of all attitudes. The personal life of the Christian, which is rooted in the consciousness and attitudes of a mature faith, flows from the Church and returns to it for the sake of building it up.

Wojtyla's point of departure is what he calls the "Eucharistic first principle."

No Christian community is built up which does not grow from and hinge on the celebration of the most holy Eucharist. From this, all education for community spirit must begin.⁸³

John Paul II was to unfold this claim thirty one years later in the encyclical *Ecclesia de eucharistia*. The attitudes required for building up the Church in accord with the Eucharist are fruits of "the most vital and vivifying point" of Christian life, a living faith in which one commits one's entire self to God, returning Christ's gift of self in the Eucharist. Wojtyla elaborates these attitudes in much detail, with particular attention to the relations between bishop and priests as well as between clergy and laity.⁸⁴

He then adds "two supplementary aspects of this theme,"⁸⁵ namely, the Church's missionary character and religious freedom. The *first supplementary aspect*, "mission," had been discussed already in Chapters One and Five, but Wojtyla considers it important enough to return to it once again, this time with particular attention to the role it plays in building up the Church. Building up the Church is a continuation of the Incarnation, which has a missionary character rooted in the sending of the Son from the Father. Mission is not an accidental appendage to the Church's life, but part of the Trinitarian form of her life.⁸⁶

⁸² See Wojtyla, *Sources of Renewal*, 330-66.

⁸³ Vatican II, *Presbyterorum ordinis*, 6; Wojtyla, *Sources of Renewal*, 369.

⁸⁴ See Wojtyla, *Sources of Renewal*, 374-97.

⁸⁵ Wojtyla, *Sources of Renewal*, 397.

⁸⁶ See Wojtyla, *Sources of Renewal*, 408.

The *second supplementary aspect* of the attitudes required for building up the Church as a community is the attitude bound up with religious freedom. The right to religious freedom, Wojtyła observes at the beginning of his argument, is a right not only of individuals, but also of communities.⁸⁷ In particular, it is as a right of the Church. An essential part of building up the community of the Church with a missionary impulse is the attitude of freedom in proclaiming the Gospel.

Clearly we are concerned here with every aspect of public life which affects the building up of the community and encourages it to develop a sense of its own mission. All we said so far about the building-up of the Church as a community presupposes this freedom.⁸⁸ This community, whether on a world-wide scale or locally, needs religious freedom in order to carry out its proper mission.⁸⁹

Here, then, is the context of the second major discussion of *Dignitatis humanae* and its teaching on religious freedom. Religious freedom comes into view as a right belonging to the Church that arises from the missionary mandate given to it by Christ himself as a reflection of his relation to the Father. More specifically, it comes into view as necessarily implied in the missionary attitude of Christians that completes the set of attitudes required for building up the Church as a community.

This second major discussion of *Dignitatis humanae* counterbalances the first, which was concerned with individual freedom.⁹⁰ No doubt, the text of *Dignitatis humanae* itself mainly understands the right to religious freedom as a right of individual persons on the basis of their personal human dignity. This focus on the right of the individual is clear in the document's first two paragraphs. A discussion of the freedom of the Church is found obliquely in paragraph 4 and more formally toward the end of the document, in paragraph 13.

Paragraph 2: This Vatican Council declares that *the human person has a right to religious freedom*. This freedom means that all men are to be immune from coercion on the part of individuals or of social groups and of any human power, in such wise that no one is to be forced to act in a manner contrary to his own beliefs, whether privately or publicly, whether alone or in association with others, within due limits. The Council further declares that *the right to religious freedom has its foundation in the very dignity of the human person*, as this dignity is known through the revealed Word of God and by reason itself. This right of the human person to religious freedom is to be recognized in the constitutional law whereby society is governed, and thus it is to become a civil right.⁹¹

Paragraph 4: The freedom or immunity from coercion in matters religious, which is the endowment of persons as individuals, is also to be recognized as their right when they act in community. Religious communities are a requirement of the social nature both of man and of religion itself. Provided the just demands of public order are observed, *religious communities rightfully claim freedom* in order that they may govern themselves according to their own norms...⁹²

⁸⁷ See Wojtyła, *Sources of Renewal*, 408-9.

⁸⁸ Wojtyła, *Sources of Renewal*, 411.

⁸⁹ Wojtyła, *Sources of Renewal*, 415.

⁹⁰ See above, pp. ###.###.

⁹¹ Emphasis added.

⁹² Emphasis added.

Paragraph 13: Among the things that concern the good of the Church...this certainly is preeminent, namely, that *the Church should enjoy that full measure of freedom which her care for the salvation of men requires.* This is a sacred freedom, because the only-begotten Son endowed with it the Church which he purchased with his blood. Indeed, it is so much the property of the Church that to act against it is to act against the will of God. The freedom of the Church is the fundamental principle in what concerns the relations between the Church and governments and the whole civil order.⁹³

Wojtyla certainly does not disagree with the teaching of paragraph 2, but explicitly affirms it.⁹⁴ Those who reject the teaching of paragraph 2 as a heretical novelty “because error has no rights”⁹⁵ cannot appeal to Wojtyla. Yet, it remains a fact that at the very end of his argument about the implementation of Vatican II, at the highpoint of the argument, the freedom he focuses on is the freedom of the Church, not that of the individual; it is the freedom of the Church as implied in the missionary mandate given to her by Christ, not as implied in individual human dignity as a philosophical principle of the sort formulated by Kant.

The Order of the Argument in Part Three

We are now in a position to grasp the order of the argument in Part Three, which is more complex than that of Part Two. In explaining the enrichment of faith proposed by the Council, Wojtyla focuses on the attitude demanded of a Christian, that is, on the conscious position a Christian is to take up in relation to God, to himself, to the Church and to the world. The first expression of this attitude is faith as an act in which believers commit themselves as a whole to God by the obedience of faith.

The deepest root of the attitude of Christians is the grace of adopted sonship that is given as a participation in divine life through the gift of the Holy Spirit. “You did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption, by which we cry, ‘Abba! Father!’ (Rom 8:15). “Because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, ‘Abba! Father!’” (Gal 4:6). In Chapters 1 to 2 Wojtyla presents this deepest root. In Chapter 3 he shows that this root unfolds in the participation of Christians in the three *munera* of Christ, priest, prophet and King. In Chapters 4 and 5 he shows that the exercise of these three *munera* require two complementary attitudes, the ecumenical and the apostolic attitude. In the concluding Chapter 6 he points to the common goal of all attitudes, building up the Church.

Chapter 1: Mission and Testimony as the Basis of the Enrichment of Faith: The first way in which this grace of sonship expresses itself is the attitude of mission and testimony in accord with the identity of the Son of God as the Word of

⁹³ Emphasis added.

⁹⁴ See Wojtyla, *Sources of Renewal*, 313-4.

⁹⁵ See Marcel Lefebvre, *They Have Uncrowned Him: From Liberalism to Apostasy: The Conciliar Tragedy* (Angelus Press: Kansas City, 1988) 172; see also William Most, “Archbishop Lefebvre and the Declaration on Religious Liberty,” <http://www.ewtn.com/library/scriptur/lefebvre.txt>.

God sent into the world. Mission and testimony are not simply moral demands, but expressions of the very being of a Christian.

Chapter 2: Analysis of the Attitude of Participation: The participation of Christians in the being of the Son by the power of the Spirit implies a participation in the three *munera* (gifts, offices, missions, tasks, duties) of Christ: priest, prophet and king. The most fundamental of these is the *munus* of priest, which consists in relating all things to God. This fundamental *munus* finds expression in the theoretical order as the *munus* of prophet and in the practical order as the *munus* of king.

Chapter 3: The Attitude of Human Identity and Christian Responsibility: In the grace of adoptive sonship exercised in the three *munera* of Christ, Christians do not alienate themselves from themselves (as the Marxist critique of religion would have it), but they grasp their own deepest identity in solidarity with all other human beings and responsibility for human life.

Chapter 4: The Ecumenical Attitude: The grace of adopted sonship, which is consciously grasped in the attitude of human identity and responsibility, expresses itself in a pair of mutually complementary attitudes. The first member of the pair is the ecumenical attitude, in which Christians affirm the dignity of every human being and affirm all that is good and true in the positions of those who are not Catholics.

Chapter 5: The Apostolic Attitude: The second member of the pair is the apostolic attitude. Affirming the dignity and freedom of all human beings as well as the good that lies in their positions does not imply indifference, but is necessarily connected with the apostolate. The apostolate is rooted in Jesus' identity as the Son and Word of God sent into the world.

Chapter 6: Building up the Church as a Community: The final chapter points to the goal of all attitudes, namely, building up the Church as a true *communio* of persons that participates in the Trinitarian communion of Persons. Among the requirements for achieving this goal, Wojtyła mentions two attitudes, both of them rooted in the missionary mandate given by Christ to the Church. One of them is the Church's missionary spirit, which is the direct object of this mandate; the other, in accord with the Council's Declaration on Religious Freedom, is the Church's right to freedom in carrying out the missionary mandate.

Overview of Sources of Renewal

Viewed as a whole, Wojtyła's *Sources of Renewal* displays the two emphases characteristic of his thought, the subjectivity or interiority of the person and the communion of persons through the gift of self as a participation in the Trinity (*Gaudium et spes* 24:3). He shows that these two emphases were also dominant concerns of Vatican II.

The Council, according to Wojtyła, answers its own fundamental question, "Church, what do you say about yourself?" understood in a pastoral way as

the question “What does it *mean* to be a member of the Church?” by proposing the *enrichment* of faith, understood as a fuller appropriation and anchoring of faith in personal subjectivity and interiority. Enrichment has two main aspects, one of them more theoretical, the other more practical or existential.

The first consists in the Church’s *consciousness* of itself, which Wojtyła articulates as a consciousness of creation (Chapter 1), of salvation by participation in the Trinity (Chapter 2), and of redemption in Christ (Chapter 3), all of which are presupposed in the Church’s consciousness of itself as the People of God, as the mystical body and bride of Christ, united by the bond of *communio* created by the gift of self (Chapter 4) in pilgrimage through history to the wedding of the Lamb (Chapter 5).

The second consists in the Church’s *attitude*, the root of which lies in the grace of adoptive sonship. This grace expresses itself, first of all, in the obedience of faith, that is, in the complete self-commitment or self-gift of the person to God who reveals. Wojtyła articulates this fundamental attitude as a participation in the mission of the Son (Chapter 1), unfolded in the three *muner* of Christ as priest, prophet and King (Chapter 2), through which one grasps one’s own human identity and responsibility (Chapter 3) in a spirit that is both ecumenical (Chapter 4) and apostolic (Chapter 5) for the sake of building up the Church (Chapter 6).

Gaudium et spes 24:3 appears at many of the key points and transitions of Wojtyła’s argument. It expresses the heart of the renewal proposed by Vatican II, namely, deeper participation in the communion of persons in the Trinity made accessible to human beings in the communion of persons of the Church. This communion implies the dignity of the human person, the only creature on earth that God willed for its own sake, and it is realized as a participation in Trinitarian communion through the sincere gift of self.

Wojtyła discusses *Dignitatis humanae* at two important points of his argument. In Chapter 2 of Part One he appeals to it to explain that faith is not only a gift of God, but requires the conscious and free participation of the person in the act of faith. In the second major discussion, at the very end of his argument, he appeals to it in support of the Church’s freedom to carry out the missionary mandate given to it by Christ.

In the comparison of the first of these discussions with Kant’s view, it became apparent that, from the perspective of Kant, the dignity of the person, as Wojtyła understands it in his reading of Vatican II, should not be called dignity at all. It should be called the direct opposite of dignity, namely, heteronomy, because at its very apex it involves the obedience of faith to God’s revelation in an act total self-abandonment and self-commitment.⁹⁶ Wojtyła’s second major discussion of religious freedom is not in the least likely to put Kant’s objections to rest. On the contrary, by rooting the Church’s right to the freedom of religion in the missionary mandate given to it by Christ, the Church acknowledges that the very essence of its life, speaking from Kant’s

⁹⁶ See above, pp. ###.### and ###.###.

point of view, is heteronomy. The same point applies to the attitude that informs Christian life. When Wojtyła claims that “the most vital and vivifying point” of Conciliar renewal lies in the self-abandonment of the person to God, and when he claims further, that this self-abandonment is a participation in the sonship of the Son in relation to the Father, he seals the heteronomy of Christian life in the most conclusive manner possible. Sonship under a benevolent father is “the greatest *despotism* imaginable.”⁹⁷

Let us return to the claim that, for Wojtyła, “The heart of the conciliar event is the acknowledgment of freedom of conscience as a natural and inalienable right of the human person.”⁹⁸ In *Person and Act*, according to this reading, Wojtyła provides the philosophical foundation for the heart of the Council by integrating the philosophy of being and the philosophy of consciousness into a complete anthropology “in which modern elements and traditional elements are harmoniously fused...At the same time, the contrast between modernity and Christianity disappears.”⁹⁹ As suggested above, this reading is too philosophical and too liberal (in the European sense), that is, too conservative (in the US American sense). Buttiglione would probably be the first to agree that in *Sources of Renewal* Wojtyła points to Trinitarian communion as the true heart of the Council. Individual autonomy and freedom, despite its idolatrous exaltation by Kant, is not the final end of human life—communion with the Triune God is. Wojtyła’s description of dialogue should be recalled here. “[Dialogue] creates a mature faith which keeps extreme contrasts before its eyes and requires of itself the fullest consistency.”¹⁰⁰ Kant’s Anti-Trinitarian personalism of autonomy stands in extreme contrast with the Trinitarian personalism of self-gift.

While one cannot deny that Kant is an authentic representative of the philosophy of consciousness, perhaps the most authentic and certainly the most systematic, one can and must deny that his philosophy of consciousness together with its twin brother, the Baconian-Cartesian program of technological progress, is the only authentic representative of Modernity. “I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Matt 28:20). In this light one can re-read Wojtyła’s words about John of the Cross.

In it [that is, the dissertation on John of the Cross], I devoted special attention to an analytical discussion of the central affirmation of the *Doctor Mysticus*: Faith is the only proximate and proportionate means for communion with God.

The *Doctor Mysticus*...through his example and doctrine, helps Christians to make their faith strong with the very basic qualities of an adult faith which the Second Vatican Council asks of us. This faith is to be personal, free and convinced, embraced with one’s entire being, an ecclesial faith, confessed and celebrated in communion with the Church, a praying and adoring faith, matured through the experience of communion with God.

The presence of God and of Christ, a renewing purification under the guidance of the Spirit, and the living of an informed and adult faith—is this not in reality the heart

⁹⁷ See above, pp. ###.###.

⁹⁸ Buttiglione, *Wojtyła*, 178.

⁹⁹ Buttiglione, *Wojtyła*, 184.

¹⁰⁰ Wojtyła, *Sources of Renewal*, 33.

of the teaching of St. John of the Cross and his message for the Church and for men and women of today?...Only faith enables us to experience the salvific presence of God in Christ in the very center of life and of history. Faith alone reveals to us the meaning of the human condition and our supreme dignity as sons and daughters of God who are called to communion with Him.¹⁰¹

¹⁰¹ John Paul II, *Maestro en la fe* (1990), 2, 7 and 3.