

## Why Modern Science Needs John Paul the Great

By

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### QUOTATIONS:

1. The man of today...lives increasingly in fear. He is afraid that what he produces...can radically turn against himself; he is afraid that it can become the means and instrument for an unimaginable self-destruction, compared with which all the cataclysms and catastrophes of history known to us seem to fade away.<sup>1</sup>
2. In the field of scientific research, a positivistic mentality took hold which not only abandoned the Christian vision of the world, but more especially rejected every appeal to a metaphysical or moral vision. It follows that certain scientists, lacking any ethical point of reference, are in danger of putting at the center of their concerns something other than the human person and the entirety of the person's life. Further still, some of these, sensing the opportunities of technological progress, seem to succumb not only to a market-based logic, but also to the temptation of a quasi-divine power over nature and even over the human being.<sup>2</sup>
3. It is difficult to formulate a systematic theory on how to relate to people, yet I was greatly helped in this by the study of personalism during the years I devoted to philosophy. Every human being is an individual person and therefore I cannot program a priori a certain type of relationship that could be applied to everyone, but I must, so to speak, learn it anew in every case...It is very important for a Bishop to have a rapport with his people and to know how to relate to them well. In my own case, significantly, I never felt that I was meeting an excessive number of people. Nonetheless, I was always concerned to safeguard the personal quality of each relationship. Every person is a chapter to himself. I always acted with this conviction, but I realize that it is something you can't learn. It is simply there, because it comes from within.<sup>3</sup>
4. It is typical of rationalism to make a radical contrast in man between spirit and body, between body and spirit. But man is a person in the unity of his body and his spirit. The body can never be reduced to mere matter: it is a *spiritualized body*, just as man's spirit is so closely united to the body that he can be described as an *embodied spirit*.<sup>4</sup>
5. The human person: With his openness to truth and beauty, his sense of moral goodness, his freedom and the voice of his conscience, with his longings for the infinite and for happiness, man questions himself about God's existence. In all this he discerns signs of his spiritual soul. The soul, the "seed of eternity we bear in ourselves, irreducible to the merely material," [GS 18§1 and 14§2] can have its origin only in God.<sup>5</sup>
6. In Sacred Scripture the term "soul" often refers to human life or to the entire human person.[ Cf. Mt 16:25-26; Jn 15:13; Acts 2:41] But "soul" also refers to the innermost aspect of man, that which is of greatest value in him, [Cf.

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<sup>1</sup> John Paul II, *Redemptor Hominis* (RH), 1979, par., 15.

<sup>2</sup> John Paul II, *Fides et Ratio* (FD), 1998, par., 46.

<sup>3</sup> John Paul II, *Rise Let Us Be On Our Way*, (New York: Warner Books, 2004), 65-66.

<sup>4</sup> JPII, *Letter to Families* (LF), 1994, par. 19.

<sup>5</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC), par., 33.

Mt 10:28; 26:38; Jn 12:27; 2 Macc 6:30] that by which he is most especially in God's image: "soul" signifies the spiritual principle in man.<sup>6</sup>

7. Christian philosophers can develop a reflection which will be both comprehensive and appealing to those who do not yet grasp the full truth which divine Revelation declares.<sup>7</sup>
8. The rooting of the teaching proclaimed by the Church in the whole tradition and in divine revelation itself is always open to the questions raised by people and also uses the instruments most in keeping with modern science and today's culture. It seems that in this area the intense development of philosophical anthropology (in particular the anthropology that stands at the basis of ethics) meets very closely with the questions raised by *Humanae Vitae* regarding theology and especially theological ethics.<sup>8</sup>
9. [A]fter my priestly ordination I was sent to Rome to complete my studies...These studies resulted in my doctorate on Saint John of the Cross and then the dissertation on Max Scheler which qualified me for University teaching: specifically I wrote on the contribution which Scheler's phenomenological type of ethical system can make to the development of moral theology. This research benefited me greatly. My previous Aristotelian-Thomistic formation was enriched by the phenomenological method, and this made it possible for me to undertake a number of creative studies. I am thinking above all of my book *The Acting Person*. In this way I took part in the contemporary movement of philosophical personalism, and my studies were able to bear fruit in my pastoral work. I have often noticed how many of the ideas developed in these studies have helped me in my meetings with individuals and with great numbers of the faithful during my apostolic visits. My formation within the cultural horizon of personalism also gave me a deeper awareness of how each individual is a unique person. I think that this awareness is very important for every priest.<sup>9</sup>
10. Being struck and overcome by the beauty of Christ is a more real, more profound knowledge than mere rational deduction. Of course, we must not underrate the importance of theological reflection, of exact and precise theological thought; it remains absolutely necessary. But to move from here to disdain or to reject the impact produced by the response of the heart in the encounter with beauty as a true form of knowledge would impoverish us and dry up our faith and our theology. We must rediscover this form of knowledge; it is a pressing need of our time.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> CCC, par., 363.

<sup>7</sup> FD, 104.

<sup>8</sup> John Paul II, *Theology of the Body* (TOB), transl. Michael Waldstein, (Boston: Pauline Books and Media, 2006), par. 133.3. See also TOB 3.1: "Chapter 2 of Genesis constitutes in some way the oldest description and record of man's self-understanding and, together with chapter 3, it is the first witness of human consciousness...we find there "in nucleo" almost all the elements of the analysis of man to which modern, and above all contemporary philosophical anthropology is sensitive. One could say that Genesis 2 presents the creation of man especially in the aspect of his subjectivity."

<sup>9</sup> Pope John Paul II, *Gift and Mystery*, (New York: Image Books, 1999), 93-94.

<sup>10</sup> Pope Benedict XVI, "The Feeling of Things, the Contemplation of Beauty," in *The Essential Pope Benedict XVI, His Central Writings and Speeches*, edited by John F. Thornton and Susan B. Varenne, introduction by D. Vincent Twomey, SVD (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2007), 49.