

THE "OFFICIAL" ETHICS OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH
- a journey from ante(i)modernity to postmodernity -

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment for the degree of Doctor
of Philosophy in Religious Studies at the University of Ottawa

John Morris Healy

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SUMMARY OF
THE 'OFFICIAL' ETHICS OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH:
A journey from ante(i)modernity to postmodernity

INTRODUCTION

The goals of this thesis are twofold. First, an attempt is made to establish the moral doctrine of the Catholic Church and to place this doctrine within the general history of ethics as this history has developed in the West. This done, it will be possible to move onto our second objective, which is to assess the sociological status of the Catholic Church within the context of actual contemporary existence. To achieve the first goal it has been necessary to examine those texts of the contemporary MAGISTERIUM that pertain to ethical teaching. As a preparation for this analysis, we have looked at two texts from the Second Vatican council, texts which seemed to offer two different paths of ethical reflection. That is, these texts seemed either to offer an open door for reform in moral teaching in the Catholic Church, or to underwrite the traditional approach. Our analysis of Pope John Paul II's VERITATIS SPLENDOR indicates that the MAGISTERIUM has opted for the second path and has, in fact, re-allied itself with the traditional ethical approach of the Church as represented, unambiguously, by Pope Pius XII. With this task accomplished, it became necessary to analyze both the modern situation (Kant and the British Utilitarians) and the postmodern situation (that ethical judgements are contextually conditioned) in regard to ethics. Ernst Troeltsch's The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches was

then used as a paradigm to note that the Church, by virtue of its ethical theory, is fast approaching sect status and losing its mainstream credibility. Prior to this historical and sociological reflection, however, it was necessary to review the reception that VERITATIS SPLENDOR received in Canada in both the religious and secular contexts in order to establish a framework within which to place the Church's thought and her sociological status. We will briefly indicate why we embraced these positions.

1. The 'official' ethical doctrine of the Catholic Church

We have attempted to outline the 'official' ethics of the Catholic Church by an analysis of the following documents: LUMEN GENTIUM and GUADIUM ET SPES from the Second Vatican Council; VERITATIS SPLENDOR of Pope John Paul II; Pope Paul VI's HUMANAE VITAE; and Pius XII's HUMANI GENERIS. These texts establish the firm basis in the 'natural law' upon which the Church founds her official ethical teaching.

2. Canadian reaction to 'VERITATIS SPLENDOR'

In this stage of the project we canvassed the various media reactions to the VERITATIS SPLENDOR as well as looking at Pope John Paul II's own reaction in his EVANGELIUM VITAE. In addition, a limited survey was conducted and an analysis done of the Human Life International convention held in Montreal in the summer of 1995. The above discussion indicated that the Pope's moral teaching is not seen as relevant to the times.

3. The Catholic Church's status in intellectual history and contemporary society

Our last chapter attempts to place the Church both as a system of thought and as an institution within history. This attempt includes a review of both modern and postmodern ethical thought as well as a use of the paradigm supplied by Ernst Troeltsch.

Conclusion

We conclude that the Church benefits from postmodern plurality and is, in fact, becoming a sect.

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INTRODUCTION

The present project represents a dual undertaking. In the first instance there is the effort to present, as objectively as possible, the 'official' ethical teaching of the Catholic Church. There is the further effort to place this ethical teaching within the context of the various ethical systems that have emerged in the West. These systems may be viewed as belonging to one of three eras: the classical-metaphysical, the modern, or the postmodern. By metaphysical we mean to imply a conviction on the part of the thinker that 'substance' as expounded initially by the Greeks (especially Plato and Aristotle) and later by the Scholastics in the Latin Middle Ages, does, in fact, exist. Following from this, modernity, in our view, would be characterized by a rejection of substance and an acceptance of what is called the 'scientific' or 'empirical/experimental' method of intellectual procedure.¹ The term 'postmodern' is not so easily defined, however. In general we use it to refer to those systems of thought that see all knowledge (including so-called 'scientific' knowledge) as exemplified by language and so seen as a symbol system in which cultural influences are foregrounded as the basis of any epistemological considerations. The signification of these three eras will be expanded in the body of our discussion. We will contend, within this context, that the Church has been both consistent in her

¹ One could further characterize this opposition as being between a belief in the 'immaterial' and a belief that all reality is 'material,' at least as it is 'known' by the human mind.

teaching (she has remained nonmodern and committed, through her belief in 'natural law', to a 'metaphysical' position); and by virtue of this consistency she has earned a place for herself within the postmodern plurality that has resulted from the current repudiation of modernity's synthesis (scientific knowledge) as definitive.

We will then examine the Catholic Church's position within this postmodern situation. It will be argued that the Catholic Church is fast losing her status as a 'Church' and is becoming what Ernst Troeltsch has called a 'Sect' in that she seems to fulfil Troeltsch's two criteria for the latter. This is simply to say that the Catholic Church has lost touch with the mainstream of Western culture² by her rejection of modernism and that in terms of her ethical teaching has stiffened, rather than softened, her understanding of the 'natural law.' This stance increasingly makes her a community of the 'few' who have contempt for the world (modern) and who see themselves as observing a purer way. That is, she has become a community of those who take what we will argue is a 'fundamentalist' view of the 'natural law' as an expression of God's will on earth.

We have been drawn to this study for two specific reasons. In the first place, with the issuing by Pope John Paul II of the

². We are restricting our statements to the Catholic Church as it is in the West. Certainly the situation of the Church in many Third World countries is much stronger than in the Western ones. But many of these countries have yet to reach a truly modern stage of development, and being in many respects still medieval are responsive to the Church and the cultural development she exemplifies.

encyclical VERITATIS SPLENDOR it is possible to have a self-confessed definitive text regarding the ethics of the Catholic Church. The project is therefore possible. Secondly, coming as we do from a Catholic background that we consider beneficial in many ways but also problematic in the face of what we perceive to be a postmodern situation that requires rational recognition and understanding, it seemed proper to undertake such a study in as objective a manner as possible. Our goal, then, is exposition, not speculation or advocacy.

In terms of method we have adopted the pathway opened by Ernst Troeltsch in his magisterial work The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches and have accepted his categories as our points of reference. Much of our work is by necessity historical, and we have endeavoured to remain as true as possible to each era that we have examined. As a consequence our methodology has been to use only those texts that represent the 'official' thought of our subject. This is quite easy with regard to the teachings of the Catholic Church but less so in terms of modernity and postmodernity. For Catholic sources we have utilized the Latin text¹ as issued by the Vatican, while in our use of other pertinent texts we have tried to work from those sources which represent the generally accepted doctrines attributed to both modernity and postmodernity. Further, as already noted, we have accepted the theoretical, historical categories of seeing Western thought as

¹ Except in the case of EVANGELIUM VITAE, the Latin text of which was not yet available at the time of this writing.

having passed through a classical-metaphysical and modern period and of having entered into the contemporary period - which is commonly, if somewhat confusedly, termed postmodern. Yet despite the admitted ambiguity of this last designation we feel it to be a useful one and that it does, in its existential application, take on a most helpful meaning in both expounding and placing culturally the ethical systems of the West in general and that of the Catholic Church in particular.

ABBREVIATIONS

PAPAL DOCUMENTS

CEC - CATECHISMUS ECCLESIAE CATHOLICAE

EV - EVANGELIUM VITAE

GS - GAUDIUM ET SPES

HG - HUMANI GENERIS

LG - LUMEN GENTIUM

NA - NOSTRA AETATE

RN - RERUM NOVARUM

SE - SYLLABUS ERRORUM (Pius IX)

UR - UNITATIS REDINTEGRATIO

VS - VERITATIS SPLENDOR

NEWSPAPERS AND JOURNALS

A - ACTUALITE

C - CHOISIR

CCR - THE CANADIAN CATHOLIC REVIEW

CF - CANADIAN FORUM

CH - CALGARY HERALD

CMSH - CANADIAN MESSENGER OF THE SACRED
HEART

CNT - CATHOLIC NEW TIMES

CO - COMPASS

D - LE DEVOIR

EC - L'EGLISE CANADIENNE

EM - L'EGLISE DE MONTREAL

FL - FRONT LINE RESEARCHER

G - THE MONTREAL GAZETTE

HCH - HALIFAX CHRONICAL HERALD
I - L'INFORMATEUR CATHOLIQUE
MCT - MONTREAL CATHOLIC TIMES
NCR - NATIONAL CATHOLIC REPORTER

NF - THE NEW FREEMAN

P - LA PRESSE

PM - PRAIRIE MESSENGER

S - LE SOLEIL

TS - TORONTO STAR

V - LA VIE

VS - VANCOUVER SUN

WCR - WESTERN CATHOLIC REPORTER

WFP - THE WINNIPEG FREE PRESS

PRIMARY SOURCES

CPR1 - Immanuel Kant. CRITIQUE OF PURE REASON.

CPR2 - Immanuel Kant. CRITIQUE OF PRACTICAL REASON.

FMM - Immanuel Kant. FOUNDATIONS OF THE METAPHYSICS OF MORALS.

IPML and U - Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill. THE UTILITARIANS.

L - John Stuart Mill. ON LIBERTY.

ST - Saint Thomas Aquinas. SUMMA THEOLOGICA.

T - Ernst Troeltsch. THE SOCIAL TEACHING OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCHES. First Volume.

CHAPTER ONE

The Official Ethics of the Catholic Church

Introduction

The present age has spawned a vast debate concerning the possibility of ascertaining an objective notion of good and evil, or, in more ethical terms, right and wrong. Various groups, from fundamentalist Muslims to freethinking Westerners, have provided answers to this question that range from an inflexible belief in the absolute justice of their position to an attitude that sees ethics, like all human knowledge, as in fact relative — with the consequence that notions of right and wrong, are, at most, culturally determined and, at worst, attempts at political or personal imperialism.

In the present instance we are concerned with the Catholic Church's reaction to this question. It will be argued, through the analysis of certain key texts, that the Catholic Church has in the last fifty years gone through a crisis of attitude in regard to the question and overcome the crisis, ending as she started, committed to a belief in objective right and wrong and basing this conviction not as the majority of fundamentalist groups have done upon God's revealed word, but rather — through a process of philosophic reflection — by reenforcing her traditional belief in a notion of natural law. It may be noted that there was a questioning of the inflexibility of this natural-law position with the moral discussions which grew out of Vatican II; and thus we will begin

our examination of Catholic ethics with a look at the two documents of this Council which dealt with morality in the modern world, LUMEN GENTIUM and GAUDIUM ET SPES.

After an analysis of these documents we will examine John Paul II's work on the problem of objective morality, VERITATIS SPLENDOR. It will be found that whatever doors were opened in terms of moral thinking in the Catholic Church by the Second Vatican Council, they have been closed by John Paul. We will contend, through an analysis of Pope Pius XII's HUMANI GENERIS, that John Paul II has not only halted what may be called the 'liberalism' of Vatican II but has brought the thinking of the Catholic Church back in line with the teaching of Pius XII.

The expectations spawned by Vatican Two

The Second Vatican Council was monumental in the expectations it created, both within and without the Church. However, it is also true that what actually resulted from the Council was, to say the least, not what was expected. Nevertheless, within the context of this caveat a profound alteration of attitude occurred in the area of the relations of the Catholic Church with other religious groups. Similarly, in terms of the Catholic Church's recognition of religious freedom (DH,2) and in her switch from the confrontational policy of the Counter Reformation to the dialogue-oriented approach of Vatican II (NA, 5 and UR, 1), the Church has indeed undergone a profound change. Yet in the other area that was approached by the Council, namely the Church's relationship to the modern world, while there was, with the issuing of GAUDIUM ET SPES

and its companion document, LUMEN GENTIUM, a hope that the Church would further alter its position and incorporate the moral evolution that had taken place in the modern world, later developments were to disappoint this hope. We will now make the effort to show, by a perusal of the documents in question, that the Council did to some extent open the door for moral reform and that this door, after the Council ended, was closed by the Papacy.

Interpreting the signs of the times: A reading of GAUDIUM ET SPES

The CONSTITUTIO PASTORALIS DE ECCLESIA IN MUNDO HUIUS TEMPORIS begins under the epigram "Concerning the intimate bond between the Church and all mankind"¹ and then attempts to show the meaning of this 'intimate' relationship of the Church with the 'human family'. In effect, this means that the Constitution attempts to 'update' Catholic teaching concerning those changes that have occurred in the modern world by an interpretation of the signs of the times. (GS, 4) In relation to our present discussion the Constitution's treatment of moral questions is of paramount interest. True to its commitment to 'understanding' modern man, the document begins by analyzing the condition this modern man finds himself in. (We have retained the gender-biased language of the document.) The Council Fathers commence their analysis by noting that "today, the human race is passing through a new stage of its history. Profound and

¹ "De intima coniunctione Ecclesiae cum tota familia gentium" (GS, 1)

rapid changes are spreading by degrees around the whole world."² They continue, "As happens in any crisis growth, this transformation has brought serious difficulties in its wake."³ These changes, as the Fathers observe, involve every aspect of human life and entail political, economical, social and moral problems. (GS, 7)

In dealing with moral problems (or the problem of morality) the document takes what may be termed an 'anthropological' approach. That is, the document outlines a theory as to the make-up of the human being and then elucidates a moral regime for such a being which flows from its nature. The Fathers begin their anthropology by noting that, "According to the almost unanimous opinion of believers and unbelievers alike, all things should be related to man as their centre and crown."⁴ Of course, this general notion as to man's place in nature does not guarantee a universal answer to the question "But what is man?"⁵ The Church, understanding the 'anceps et anxius' of this issue, feels that it can offer a solution in that "The Church . . . endowed with light from God . . . can offer solutions to them [the problems of change]

² "Hodie genus humanum in nova historiae suae aetate versatur in qua profundae et celeres mutationes ad universum orbem gradatim extenduntur." (GS, 4)

³ "Ut in quavis accretionis crisis contingit, haec transformatio non leves secumfert difficultates." (GS, 4)

⁴ "Secundum credentium et non credentium fere concordem sententiam, omnia quae in terra sunt ad hominem, tamquam ad centrum suum et culmen, ordinanda sunt." (GS, 12)

⁵ "Quid est autem homo?" (GS, 12)

so that man's true situation can be portrayed and his defects explained while at the same time his dignity and destiny are justly acknowledged."⁶ Thus the Church can assure man that "man . . . 'created to the image of God' is capable of knowing and loving his Creator, and was appointed by Him as master of all earthly creatures that he might subdue them and use them to God's glory."⁷ Man, then, is made in the image of God and is, as such, a person. But there is more. Man was created both male and female, and thus "by his innermost nature man is a social being."⁸ So man is a social being who is a person and has a nature. Before looking into the exact meaning of this nature, the document refers to the effects of original sin on man and notes that within the context of the history of salvation "sin has diminished man, blocking his path to fulfillment."⁹

We now turn to the make-up of man.¹⁰ As one would expect,

⁶ "Ecclesia . . . a Deo revelante instructa eisdem responsum afferre potest, quo vera hominis condicio delineetur, explanentur eius infirmitates, simulque eius dignitas et vocatio recte agnosci possint." (GS, 12)

⁷ "'ad imaginem dei' creatum esse, capacem suum Creatorem cognoscendi et amandi, ab eo tamquam dominum super omnes creaturas terrenas constitutum, ut eas regeret, eisque uteretur, glorificans Deum." (GS, 12)

⁸ "homo etenim ex intima sua natura ens sociale est." (GS, 12)

⁹ "Peccatum . . . minuit ipsum hominem, a plenitudine consequenda eum repellens." (GS, 13)

¹⁰ Note here that the document is following the 'typical' method of Scholasticism, reason elucidating faith. What may be seen as 'philosophical' in the sense of 'ancilla theologiae,' which is characteristic in general of Council documents.

given the Scholastic nature of the debate, "Though made up of body and soul, man is one. Through his bodily composition he gathers to himself the elements of his material world. Thus they reach their crown through him and through him raise their voice in free praise of the Creator."¹¹ Man must therefore not despise his body since it, like all reality except God, is a creation of God and thus good. True, man must always be mindful of his tendency to sin, yet he is a corporeal reality, and as such is good. (GS, 14) But man, as we have seen, is more than a body, being also soul. We will now examine the implications of this.

The fact of the matter is that "man is not wrong when he regards himself as superior to bodily concerns . . . when man recognizes in himself a spiritual and immortal soul, he is not being mocked by a deceptive fantasy springing from mere physical or social influences. On the contrary he is getting to the depths of the very truth of the matter."¹² Man is, then, a being who has a soul which gives him an intellectual capability. We are now getting to the heart of the moral problem. Man is a thinking being who because of that capability is free and can thus participate in a moral universe of his own making.

¹¹ "Corpore et anima unus, homo per ipsam suam corporalem condicionem, elementa mundi materialis in se colligit, ita ut, per ipsum, fastigium suum attingant et ad liberam Creatoris laudem vocem attollant." (GS, 14)

¹² "Homo vero non fallitur, cum se rebus corporalibus superiorem agnoscit . . . animam spiritualem et immortalem in seipso agnoscens, non fallaci figmento illuditur, a physicis tantum et socialibus condicionibus fluente, sed e contra ipsam profundam rei veritatem attingit." (GS, 14)

Having proposed that man is a being who has an intellect, the document now examines the implications of man existing as an intellectual being. As the Council Fathers put it: "The intellectual nature of the human person is perfected by wisdom and needs to be. For wisdom gently attracts the mind of man to a quest and a love for what is true and good. Steeped in wisdom, man passes through visible realities to those which are unseen."¹³ That is to say, man is a thinking being who is in touch with spiritual realities. This is, of course, the essential capability for man to be a moral being. In the next section of the document, the Council Fathers discuss the meaning of moral decision-making in terms of the moral conscience. Now the rubric under which the following discussion should be conducted is a statement made by the text in section 14 which reads: "Man judges rightly . . . for he shares in the light of the divine mind."¹⁴ That is, while man does judge the right and wrong of acts, he does so from the vantage point, as it were, of God. The question then becomes, How does man know God's mind? and this question leads to a discussion of the so-called natural law. We offer these points as context for the discussion of the present document, which intimates more than elucidates this position regarding the natural law. When the texts of John Paul II and Pius are treated, this doctrine of the natural law as the will

¹³ "Humanae tandem personae intellectualis natura per sapientiam perficitur et perficienda est, quae mentem hominis ad vera bonaque inquirenda ac diligenda suaviter attrahit, et qua imbutus homo per visibilia ad invisibilia adducitur." (GS, 15)

¹⁴ "Recte iudicat homo, divinae mentis lumen participans" (GS, 15)

of God will become explicit. Let us now turn to the Council Fathers' thoughts on moral conscience.

As we have seen, "[man] wounded by sin . . . experiences rebellious stirrings in his body. But the very dignity of man . . . forbids him to serve the evil inclinations of his heart."¹⁵ So man has a moral duty to follow the dignity conferred on him as a human person, and it is conscience that teaches the imperatives flowing from this dignity. (GS, 16) However, "In the depths of his conscience, man detects a law which he does not impose upon himself but which holds him to obedience";¹⁶ and it is this objective law which is "always summoning him to love good and avoid evil; the voice of conscience can when necessary speak to his heart more specifically."¹⁷ It is this law that is "the most secret core and sanctuary of man. There he is alone with God."¹⁸ So it is that while "in fidelity to conscience, Christians are joined with the rest of men in the search for truth, and for the genuine solution to the numerous problems which arise in the life of individuals and from

¹⁵ "[Homo] Peccato tamen vulneratus, corporis rebelliones experitur. Ipsa itigur dignitas hominis . . . neve illud pravis cordis sui inclinationibus inservire sinat." (GS, 14)

¹⁶ "In imo conscientiae legem homo detegit, quam ipse sibi non dat, sed cui oboedire debet" (GS, 16)

¹⁷ "semper ad bonum amandum et faciendum ac malum vitandum eum advocans, ubi oportet auribus cordis sonat." (GS, 16)

¹⁸ "secretissimus atque sacrarium hominis, in quo solus est cum Deo" (GS, 16)

social relationships."¹⁹ Nonetheless, as we have shown this law is not created by man but is a revelation of an objective reality he must obey. The content of this law will be developed below. We now turn to the place of freedom in the moral act.

The moral act must be a free choice of the acting subject. Now, in the light of the above, this means that conscience must choose what it feels is right and act accordingly in complete freedom. There is always the possibility that "conscience . . . errs from invincible ignorance,"²⁰ and still man remains "without losing . . . [his] dignity."²¹ However, true liberty is to freely choose the good in relation to the properly informed conscience or by following the natural law. That is, man must realize what he is and act accordingly. As the Council Fathers put it: "For God has willed that man be left "in the hand of his own counsel . . . Hence man's dignity demands that he act according to a knowing and free choice. Such a choice is personally motivated and prompted from within. It does not result from blind internal impulse nor from mere external pressure."²² Consequently, man is free to be

¹⁹ "Fidelitate erga conscientiam christiani cum ceteris hominibus coniunguntur ad veritatem inquirendam et tot problemata moralia, quae tam in vita singulorum quam in sociali consortione exsurgunt, in veritate solvenda". (GS, 16)

²⁰ "ex ignorantia invincibili conscientiam errare" (GS, 16)

²¹ "suam dignitatem amittat." (GS, 16)

²² "Voluit enim Deus hominem relinquere in manu consilii sui . . . Dignitas igitur hominis requirit ut secundum consciam et liberam electionem agat, personaliter scilicet ab intra motus et inductus, et non sub caeco impulsu interno vel sub mera externa coactione." (GS, 17)

himself in his capacity of being an intellectual entity who knows the light of God's mind.

Having outlined both the anthropology necessary for a discussion of the moral act and elucidated the moral act itself, we will now turn, with the Council Fathers, to a discussion of the content of the laws which dictate proper moral action.

With the parameters of their moral doctrine in place, the Council Fathers now direct their attention to those factors in the modern world that are of moral concern. But before directing our own gaze on these issues it will be helpful to look, with the Council Fathers, at the types of knowledge that man may use to arrive at moral decisions. Since man is endowed with intellect and since, with this intellect, he may arrive at the truth of reality, it follows that we may query: What types of knowledge are useful in rendering proper moral decisions? In other words, we are asking whether scientific knowledge can be helpful in the moral sphere. It has been noted that in the moral sphere, man may know the moral law written in his heart (Rom. 2:19); yet it still must be inquired as to how this law is known. In regard first to scientific knowledge, it is obvious that science (understood as empirical knowledge of reality) and technology (understood as manipulating this reality) are both helpful to man; as the document would have it: "For when, by the work of his hands or with the aid of technology, man develops the earth so that it can bear fruit and become a dwelling worthy of the whole human family, and when he consciously takes part in the life of social groups, he carries out the design of

God."²³ In other words, scientific knowledge used for the good of man is praiseworthy. Yet the limitations of this approach must be kept in mind; that is, "the methods of investigation [empirical] which these sciences use can be wrongly considered the supreme rule for discovering the whole truth."²⁴ Thus science is good, but limited, and must be controlled by those higher forms of knowledge found in the Gospel. (It goes without saying that it is the Gospel as read within the context of the Scholastic doctrine of the Church.) In short, moral knowledge, as we will see, is a matter that 'transcends' science as such. It follows that, even though the Council Fathers make this exhortation - "May the faithful . . . blend modern science and its theories and the understanding of the most recent discoveries with Christian morality and doctrine. Thus their religious practice and morality can keep pace with their scientific knowledge and with an ever-advancing technology. Thus too they will be able to test and interpret all things in a truly Christian spirit"²⁵ - such an exhortation must be kept within the boundaries

²³ "Cum enim homo opere manuum suarum vel ope technicarum artium terram excolit, ut fructum afferat et dignum universae familiae humanae habitaculum fiat, et cum conscie partes assumit in socialium coetuum vita, ipse exsequitur consilium Dei" (GS, 57)

²⁴ "quando methodus investigandi [methodus scientiae], qua disciplinae istae utuntur, immerito pro suprema totius veritatis inveniendae regula habetur." (GS, 57)

²⁵ "Fideles . . . Novarum scientiarum et doctrinarum necnon novissimorum inventorum notitias cum christianis moribus christianaque doctrinae institutione coniungant, ut religionis cultus animique probitas apud ipsos pari gressu procedant cum scientiarum cognitione et cotidie progredientibus technicorum artibus, et ideo ipsi valeant res omnes integro christiano sensu probare atque interpretari." (GS, 62)

drawn earlier concerning the nature of man and his moral mission. Presupposing the notion above of the type of knowledge that we are dealing with in moral decisions,²⁶ we will now turn to a discussion of those areas of modern life that the Council Fathers feel are essential for the Church to deal with in its moral discussions.

These areas are "marriage and the family, human culture, life in its economic, social, and political dimensions, the bonds between the family of nations, and peace."²⁷ These are traditional concerns, but it should be noted at the outset that the social aspects of these problems are given a new emphasis by the Council. In their treatment of these problems, the Council Fathers have taken into consideration John XXIII's notion of 'socialization' (GS, 25) and have stressed the primacy of charity in regard to all social matters. (GS, 27) The result, in terms of morality, is that more than an individual ethic is needed. In the words of the document: "Let everyone consider it his sacred obligation to count social necessities among the primary duties, and pay heed to them."²⁸ With this principle firmly in place, it becomes obvious that the Fathers wish the Catholic Church to do its duty, according

²⁶ It should be noted that the precise answer to the question of moral knowledge and its type will be explicitly handled by John Paul II in his encyclical VERITATIS SPLENDOR. (See below.)

²⁷ "matrimonium et familiam, culturam humanam, vitam oeconomicam-socialem ac politicam, coniunctionem familiae populorum et pacem." (GS, 46)

²⁸ "Sanctum sit omnibus necessitudines sociales inter praecipua hominis hodierni officia recensere easque observare." (GS, 30)

to the Gospel, in the world." This implies bringing into existence a just society within the context of the religious dimension. (GS, 40 through 45) Nevertheless, of the concerns listed by the Fathers,³⁰ it is, perhaps, their discussion of marriage and the family that best exemplifies both the promise of

²⁹ The exact discussion of social problems is, as is to be expected, rather abstract, in that the principles of peace and brotherhood are stressed along with exhortations for the just distribution of goods and the expected defense of private property. The Church of course, values her 'apolitical' stance, since she sees her mission as universal (transnational) and religious (bringing about the Kingdom of God by preparing the world for the Second Coming). For this reason (see text below) the question of birth control (due to its concreteness) rather than social teachings (by nature of the context, intangible) form the best area of discussion of the problem of morality and the modern world.

³⁰ It should be noted that the Council Fathers do allow for certain 'worldly' directions concerning politics. For example, they note that: "Communitas politica et Ecclesia in proprio campo ab invicem sunt independentes et autonomae." (GS, 76) In terms of precise political structures, the Church seems to allow for some state intervention in economic issues and to underwrite the general move in the world today towards what may loosely be called liberal/democratic states, as witness the following statements: "Incrementum nec soli cursui quasi mechanico activitatis oeconomicae singulorum nec soli potestati auctoritatis publicae relinquendum est. Quare erroris arguendae sunt, tum doctrinae quae specie falsae libertatis reformationibus necessariis obstant, quam illae quae iura fundamentalia personarum singularum et coetuum organizationi productionis collectivae postponunt." (GS, 65) "Modi vero concreti, quibus communitas politica propriam compagem et publicae auctoritatis temperationem ordinat, varii esse possunt secundum diversam populorum indolem et historiae progressum; semper autem ad hominem excultum, pacificum et erga omnes beneficum efformandum inservire debent, ad totius familiae humanae emolumentum." (GS, 74) And finally, "Cum humana natura plene congruit ut structurae politico-juridicae inveniantur, quae omnibus civibus semper melius ac sine ulla discriminatione possibilitatem effectivam praebeant libere et auctuose participandi tum in fundamentis iuridicis communitatis politicae statuendis, tum in rei publicae moderamine et in variorum institutorum campis et finibus determinandis, tum in moderatorum electione." (GS, 75)

the Council and the later frustration of this promise by the moral teaching that followed the teaching of the Council Fathers.

It is in their treatment of marriage and the family that the Council Fathers show, most obviously, both the possibilities inherent in their moral teaching - either for the Church to adapt to the modern world, or the potential to remain within tradition. By the Church's not giving a ruling on artificial birth control and by Pope Paul VI reserving this judgement to himself," one is confronted with two factors of moral decision-making for Catholics: the first, the notion of natural law, is hinted at in the present document and developed in the work of popes Paul VI and John Paul II, while the second, the supreme teaching authority of the Pope, is handled in LUMEN GENTIUM, which will be treated below.

The Fathers begin their discussion of marriage and the family by noting that: "The well-being of the individual person and of human and Christian society is intimately linked with the healthy condition of that community produced by marriage and family."²² So it is that marriage and the family are clearly good, indeed a sacrament leading to the sanctity of the individuals involved in this elemental society. (GS, 48) However, the Fathers introduce an

²² As is known from the present historical perspective, Paul VI in his HUMANAE VITAE ruled against artificial birth control, basing his argument for that ruling upon the natural law. John Paul II reinforces this same position and for the same reason in VERITATIS SPLENDOR. Indeed, John Paul II expounds natural law as the basis of his moral teaching.

²³ "Salus personae et societatis humanae ac christianae arcte cum fausta condicione communitatis coniungalis et familiaris conectitur." (GS, 47)

innovation into the traditional notion of marriage and the family by stressing the notion of conjugal love. It is in the context of the discussion of backgrounding conjugal love that the notion of natural law is hinted at and it is in this context also that one is confronted with the possibility of an evolution of moral thinking within the Church." In the following discussion one should note what can only be called the hesitation of the Fathers to be dogmatic on the question of contraception. But as we have noted, the magisterium of the Church, in the person of the Pope, not only answered the question but did so within the traditional moral teaching of the Church.

The Fathers underwrite the nobility of conjugal love by noting that both God and man "several times urge the betrothed and the married to nourish and develop their wedlock by pure conjugal love and undivided affection."³³ Now this conjugal love is "uniquely expressed and perfected through the marital act. The actions within marriage by which the couple are united intimately and chastely are noble and worthy ones. Expressed in a manner which is

³³ It should be noted that in this document the Fathers seem to assume a law which is natural and knowable, although they tend to speak of this law as a revelation from God in the hearts of man. However, when speaking of conjugal love and marriage in terms of their ends the document makes the following statement: "Matrimonium et amor coniugalis indole sua ad prolem procreandam et educandum ordinantur"; (GS 50) the official translation is rendered as follows: "Marriage and conjugal love are by their nature ordained toward the begetting and education of children." Now, even if one grants a possible ambiguity here, the intention (to follow Scholastic tradition) seems clear.

³⁴ "sponsi atque coniuges invitantur, ut casto amore sponsalia et indivisa dilectione coniugium nutriant atque foveant." (GS, 49)

truly human, these actions signify and promote that mutual self-giving by which spouses enrich each other with a joyful and a thankful will."³⁵ In other words, the practice of sexual intercourse within marriage, in a chaste and respectful way, is a good of marriage, and may even be said to be a necessary expression of conjugal love. That is, it is one of the ends of marriage.³⁶ Yet this celebration of sexuality in marriage is presented within two very precisely defined contexts. The first is that of chastity and proper use, or, in psychological terms, what would be called normality.³⁷ The second is the question of children. Thus the ends of marriage are twofold: the development of conjugal affection through sexual intercourse and the procreation of children.

Now in discussing "The fruitfulness of marriage"³⁸ the Council Fathers make the following somewhat startling statement (in the light of the above and in a contemporary non-Catholic context): "Hence, while not making the other purposes of matrimony of less account, the true practice of conjugal love, and the whole meaning

³⁵ "proprio matrimonii opere singulariter exprimitur et perficitur. Actus proinde, quibus coniuges intime et caste inter se uniuntur, honesti ac digni sunt et, modo vere humano exerciti, donationem mutuam significant et fovent, qua sese invicem laeto gratoque animo locupletant." (GS, 49)

³⁶ In the words of the Council fathers: "Indole autem sua naturali, ipsum institutum matrimonii amorque coniugalis ad procreationem et educationem prolis ordinatur iisque veluti suo fastigio coronantur." (GS, 48)

³⁷ In this regard the Council Fathers again seem to assume a traditional (Scholastic) understanding of sexual activity based upon a specific understanding of nature.

³⁸ "De matrimonii foecunditate" (GS, 50)

of family life which results from it, have this aim: that the couple be ready with stout hearts to cooperate with the love of the Creator and the Saviour, who through them will enlarge and enrich his own family day by day."³⁹ In practical terms, this means that 'responsible' decisions (GS, 51) will have to be made concerning the number of children brought into the world, and thus that it should not be forgotten that while "marriage to be sure is not instituted solely for procreation . . . [nonetheless] . . . marriage persists as a whole manner and communion of life"⁴⁰ and thus "the welfare of the children"⁴¹ is an equal factor in assessing the morality of the use of sex in marriage. Hence the Council Fathers entitle their discussion of the use of contraception in marriage "Harmonizing Conjugal Love with Respect for Human Life."⁴² We will end our discussion by looking at this article.

The Fathers readily admit that "certain modern conditions often keep couples from arranging their married lives harmoniously, and that they find themselves in circumstances where at least

³⁹ "Unde verus amoris coniugalis cultus totaque vitae familiaris ratio inde oriens, non posthabitis ceteris matrimonii finibus, eo tendunt ut coniuges forti animo dispositi sint ad cooperandum cum amore Creatoris atque Salvatoris, qui per eos Suam familiam in dies dilatat et ditat." (GS, 50)

⁴⁰ "Matrimonium vero, non est tantum ad procreationem institutum . . . [nonetheless] . . . matrimonium ut totius vitae consuetudo et communio perseverat" (GS, 50)

⁴¹ "bonum prolis exigunt" (GS, 50)

⁴² "De amore coniugali componendo cum observantia vitae humanae." (GS, 51)

temporarily the size of the families should not be increased."⁴³ However, the Fathers remind their readers that "a true contradiction cannot exist between the divine laws pertaining to the transmission of life and those pertaining to the fostering of authentic conjugal love."⁴⁴ Thus, "when there is a question of harmonizing conjugal love with responsible transmission of life, the moral aspect of any procedure does not depend solely on sincere intentions or on an evaluation of motives. It must be determined by objective standards."⁴⁵ The Fathers continue by observing that the morality of acts limiting births flows "[from] the nature of the human person and his acts"⁴⁶ and leave the matter to Pope Paul VI and his commission to render a final decision. By way of anticipation it is through regard for the human person and the nature of the moral act that Pope John Paul II's analysis in *VERITATIS SPLENDOR* treats this matter and, indeed, the whole question of 'objective' good and bad. Pope Paul VI's treatment is phrased in less personalistic terms, but both pontiffs arrive at the same conclusion, thereby showing that the key term here is

⁴³ "in vita coniugali harmonice ordinanda, saepe quibusdam hodiernis vitae condicionibus praepedire atque in circumstantiis versari posse in quibus numerus prolis, saltem ad tempus, augeri nequit" (GS, 51)

⁴⁴ "veram contradictionem inter divinas leges vitae transmittendae et germani amoris coniugalis fovendi adesse non posse." (GS, 51)

⁴⁵ "Moralis . . . indoles rationis agendi, ubi de componendo amore coniugali cum responsabili vitae transmissione agitur, non a sola sincera intentione et aestimatione motivorum pendet, sed obiectivis criteriis." (GS, 51)

⁴⁶ "ex personae eiusdemque actuum natura desumptis" (GS, 51)

'nature' understood as essence in the scholastic sense of that term.

At this point we may end our analysis of GAUDIUM ET SPES as it relates to the question of natural law and morality in the context of Catholic teaching. As we have hinted, there is a certain ambiguity in the text as to exactly what the state of Catholic morality vis-à-vis the world could be. We mean, there seems to be some promise of change and adaptation. For example, in political matters this promise is shown by the Church's acceptance of 'liberal' forms of government – an attitude she did not hold prior to Leo XIII¹⁷ – and she has also taken a stand in regard to the social nature of the Gospel. This is all to the good and shows a willingness on the part of the Magisterium to be part of the modern world. As we have seen, however, the Church in her treatment of birth control has remained wedded to a particular understanding of the term 'nature' which ties her philosophically to the Middle Ages and which, ultimately, makes her something other than modern. We will develop this notion when treating John Paul II's work, which will put as it were the cap on this relationship with medieval thought and which will halt the promise of Vatican II and take the Church back to the thought of Pope Pius XII. The validity of this contention will be demonstrated in an analysis of John Paul II's VERITATIS SPLENDOR and Pius XII's HUMANI GENERIS. But before going

¹⁷ For a negative view on 'liberalism' in general see, among other documents, Pius IX's SE, X, and on the falseness of separation of Church and State SE, VI, 55. For a notion of 'Catholic democracy' see Leo XIII, RN.

on to that portion of our project we will offer a few comments on Vatican II's companion document on the Church, LUMEN GENTIUM.

The Pope as authority: A Reading of LUMEN GENTIUM

In relation to our problem of morality, the Dogmatic Constitution of the Church, LUMEN GENTIUM, is of interest only inasmuch as it defines the teaching office of the Pope. That is, while affirming that all "who believe in Christ, who are reborn . . . not from the flesh but from . . . the Holy Spirit are firmly established as . . . the people of God,"⁴⁸ and noting that they share a common priesthood, the hierarchical nature of this priesthood is nevertheless reaffirmed.⁴⁹ This introduces the theme of the document that is pertinent to our project.

In Chapter Three of the document, entitled De Constitutione Hierarchica Ecclesiae et In Specie de Episcopatu, the Council Fathers express their intention of "following in the footsteps of the First Vatican Council"⁵⁰ and thus "with it teaches . . . He [Christ] placed blessed Peter over the other apostles, and instituted in him a permanent and visible source and foundation of unity of faith and

⁴⁸ "Credentes . . . in Christum . . . quae non secundum carnem sed in Spiritu ad unitatem coalesceret, essetque novus Populus Dei." (LG, 9)

⁴⁹ "Sacerdotium autem commune fidelium et sacerdotium ministeriale seu hierarchicum, licet essentia et non gradu tantum differant, ad invicem tamen ordinantur; unum enim et alterum suo peculiari modo de uno Christi sacerdotio participant." (LG, 10)

⁵⁰ "Concilii Vaticani primi vestigia premens" (LG, 18)

fellowship."⁵¹ To put the matter in simple terms, the document is interested not in questioning the supreme authority of the Pope as outlined by Vatican I. Rather it is concerned with simply reaffirming that Council's teaching, while at the same time expanding the role of the bishops within that framework.⁵² It is thus within this framework that we must understand the position of the bishops in relation to the Pope and the priest in relation to the bishop. It follows that: "Just as, by the Lord's will, St. Peter and the other apostles constituted one apostolic college, so in a similar way the Roman Pontiff as the successor of Peter, and the bishops as the successors of the apostles are joined together."⁵³ Nonetheless, "the college or body of bishops has no authority unless it is simultaneously conceived of in terms of its head, the Roman Pontiff, Peter's successor, and without any lessening of his power of primacy over all, pastors as well as the

⁵¹ "cum eo docet . . . beatum Petrum ceteris Apostolis praeponit in ipsoque instituit perpetuum ac visibile unitatis fidei et communionis principium et fundamentum" (LG, 18)

⁵² Even though "Episcopi Ecclesias particulares sibi commissas ut vicarii et legati Christi regunt . . . Haec potestas qua, nomine Christi personaliter funguntur, est propria, ordinaria et immediata, licet a suprema Ecclesiae auctoritate exercitium eiusdem ultimatim regatur et certis limitibus, intuitu utilitatis Ecclesiae vel fidelium, circumscribi possit." (LG, 27)

⁵³ "Sicut, statuente Domino, sanctus Petrus et ceteri Apostoli unum Collegium apostolicum constituunt, pari ratione Romanus Pontifex, successor Petri, et Episcopi, successores Apostolorum, inter se coniunguntur." (LG, 22)

general faithful."⁵⁴ Again, the message is clear. The Pope is in charge. Further, while bishops may of course teach in the Church they do so on the authority of the Pope, who teaches with "infallibility, with which the divine Redeemer willed His Church to be endowed in defining a doctrine of faith and morals extends as far as extends the deposit of divine revelation, which must be religiously guarded and faithfully expounded. This is the infallibility which the Roman Pontiff, the head of the college of bishops, enjoys in virtue of his office, when as the supreme shepherd and teacher of all the faithful, who confirms his brethren in their faith [see Luke 22:32], he proclaims by a definitive act some doctrine of faith or morals."⁵⁵ In other words, the Pope, as Pope, is the infallible head of the Church and the College of Bishops enjoys teaching authority only inasmuch as these are in communion with him.⁵⁶ This would seem to resolve the point in

⁵⁴ "Collegium . . . seu corpus Episcoporum auctoritatem non habet, nisi simul cum Pontifice Romano, successore Petri, ut capite eius intellegatur, huiusque integre manente potestate Primatus in omnes sive Pastores sive fideles." (LG, 22)

⁵⁵ "infallibilitas, qua Divinus Redemptor Ecclesiam suam in definienda doctrina de fide vel moribus instructam esse voluit, tantum patet quantum divinae Revelationis patet depositum, sancte custodiendum et fideliter exponendum. Qua quidem infallibilitate Romanus Pontifex, Collegii Episcoporum Caput, vi muneris sui gaudet, quando, ut supremus omnium christifidelium pastor et doctor, qui fratres suos fide confirmat (cf. Lc. 22/32), doctrinam de fide vel moribus definitivo actu proclamatur." (LG, 25)

⁵⁶ This doctrine is consistently held throughout the whole of Chapter Three, however, continuing on from where our text left off, the document makes it clear that the doctrine comes from the Pope as Pope and not from the College in communion with the Pope. In other words, there is no question of any type of 'democracy', no matter how limited, in the Church. As the document has it:

contention. The Pope, as Pope, is the teaching authority of the Church and the matter rests there.

Nature as God's will: a reading of Pope John Paul II's VERITATIS
SPLENDOR

The following discussion of morality by John Paul II is by his own admission⁵⁷ an answer to the serious moral questions which confront Catholics today. Now this is the same concern we have just examined in our discussions of GAUDIUM ET SPES and LUMEN GENTIUM, and there we saw a door perhaps opening upon what might be called 'moral development.' However, we also suggested that this opening door may be a mirage.⁵⁸ Turning to the work of John Paul II, we

"Quare definitiones eius ex sese, et non ex consensu Ecclesiae, irreformabiles merito dicuntur, quippe quae sub assistentia Spiritus Sancti, ipsi in beato Petro promissa, prolatae sint, ideoque nulla indigeant aliorum approbatione, nec ullam ad aliud iudicium appellationem patiantur. Tunc enim Romanus Pontifex non ut persona privata sententiam profert, sed ut universalis Ecclesiae magister supremus, in quo charisma infallibilitatis ipsius Ecclesiae singulariter inest, doctrinam fidei catholicae exponit vel tuetur." (LG, 25) It would seem, then, that the Pope is able to rule alone and to pronounce on faith and morals without consideration for bishops or faithful. Pope Paul VI's pronouncement on birth control is an example of this power, as is John Paul's VERITATIS SPLENDOR. Thus, in the very heart of Vatican II's thinking, the seeds were sown for the growth of the legacy of Pius XII, whose teachings we are arguing have prevailed in the contemporary Church.

⁵⁷ As John Paul puts it: "Hodie tamen necessarium videtur recogitare de universa institutione morali Ecclesiae, ut definite in luce ponantur quaedam catholicae doctrinae fundamentales veritates quae in periculo versantur deformationis vel negationis ob rerum adiuncta aetatis nostrae." (VS, 4)

⁵⁸ In LUMEN GENTIUM there seems to be no chance of a change, as such, unless the papacy, by its authority, were to bring this change about. However, the papacy is bound by the tradition within which it teaches (LG, 25) and the hinted existence of the natural law we saw in GAUDIUM ET SPES would seem to limit the

again are confronted by this ambiguity. He quotes the words of John XXIII at the opening of Vatican II, and we quote them here to place the discussion that follows within a context which, we will attempt to show, gives rise to a change of rhetoric but not of doctrine. In short, the Church, after Vatican II and VERITATIS SPLENDOR remains the Church of Pius XII. Thus, after dealing with John Paul II's work on ethics, we will turn to Pope Pius XII's moral Encyclical, HUMANI GENERIS.

We begin with the text from John XXIII quoted by John Paul II: "This certain and unchanging teaching [i.e., Christian doctrine in its completeness], to which the faithful owe obedience, needs to be more deeply understood and set forth in a way adapted to the needs of our time. Indeed, this deposit of the faith, the truths contained in our time-honoured teaching, is one thing; the manner in which these truths are set forth (with their meaning preserved intact) is something else."⁹⁹

Introduction

In an effort to show the validity of our contention regarding the 'traditionalism' of Pope John Paul II we commence by presenting, with a maximum of objectivity, an analysis of the encyclical

change. It is precisely this situation which is created and solidified in VERITATIS SPLENDOR.

⁹⁹ "Oportet ut haec doctrina certa et immutabilis, cui fidele obsequium est praestandum, ea ratione pervestigetur et exponatur, quam tempora postulant nostra. Est enim aliud ipsum depositum Fidei, seu veritates, quae veneranda doctrina nostra continentur, aliud modus, quo eadem enuntiantur, eodem tamen sensu eademque sententia." AAS 54 (1962) 792; see L'Osservatore Romano, 12 October 1962). (VS, note 100)

VERITATIS SPLENDOR which will reflect the Pope's thoughts on morality as precisely as possible. We will then examine Pope Pius XII's encyclical on morality to assess any differences between the two documents. That task completed, we will be in a position to take note of the Canadian reactions to John Paul II's pronouncement (see Chapter 2) and to compare the same to the modern and postmodern worlds' understandings of morality (see Chapter 3).

VERITATIS SPLENDOR follows the rhetorical format of an encyclical in that it is addressed specifically to the bishops in communion with the Roman Church and is presented as an authentic and authoritative statement⁶⁰ of the moral teaching of the Catholic Church. In other terms, it is presented as a religious document based ultimately upon Sacred Scripture. So we are first put in the light of God's teaching, light that is somehow reflected in the teaching of the present letter. (VS, epigram) That is, this teaching is no human teaching, but is a teaching of God which "shines forth in all the works of the Creator and, in a special way, in man."⁶¹ Viewed from this standpoint, it would seem that an appeal to authority is being made that cannot be rejected. Jesus, as the good Teacher, is the source and holder of the Truth which

⁶⁰ The question as to the binding power of an encyclical is of course disputed. However, it seems from the teaching of LUMEN GENTIUM and in light of the fact that Pope John Paul II bases his teaching upon right reason and revelation that there can be little doubt that he is teaching, if not ex cathedra, at least as representing the will of the Magisterium. This attitude of the binding nature of an encyclical is further strengthened by the teaching of Pope Pius XII.

⁶¹ "in omnibus Creatoris operibus effulget, praesertim vero in homine" (VS, epigram)

cannot be doubted – only received. This is the Word of God that we are being exposed to. It seems that all hinges on this connotation. That is, if one were to pose a question concerning the genre of literature which we are dealing with here, one would be tempted to say that it is the exposition of the truth as revealed in the Word of God through the teaching mediation of the Magisterium in the person of the Pope. A clear case of 'Roma dixit'. As the Pope prays with the psalmist: "Let the light of your face shine on us, O Lord."⁶²

We may now move on to the commencement of the encyclical proper. Again, the title of the Introduction sets⁶³ the tone of a document which teaches from authority by noting that Christ is the True Light (Truth) who enlightens everyone.⁶⁴ Thus we are dealing with the matter of the Pope's teaching (still to be disclosed) in the context of Christ as the Light of the World, or, in other terms, as the guarantor of correctness. While John Paul II does admit that man can know the truth (through unassisted reason), this knowledge is darkened by sin; and, even if the light of truth shines upon his mind, it is difficult for man to obey this truth.

⁶² "Leva in signum super nos lumen vultus tui, Domine." (ps. 1, 22)

⁶³ "Iesus Christus, Lux Vera Quae Illuminat Omnem Hominem." (VS, Intro)

⁶⁴ The Platonic implications here are obvious. Further, the metaphoric (allegorical) interpretation of Scripture seems evident. These two facts result in a particular reading of Scripture which is Scholastic, as one would expect. Hence our contention that John Paul II makes explicit what he inherited from Vatican II and Paul VI implicitly.

(VS, 1) As John Paul II notes, with beautiful understatement: "This is not always easy."⁴⁵ Therefore, man is in the interesting situation of being able to know the truth but at the same time of being hampered in obtaining this knowledge and, indeed, of acting upon it except through means that supersede reason. Further, this truth being sought (the truth of morality) is not one of science and technology but one of the meaning of life - knowledge man yearns for. (VS, 1) Here the Pope seems to be proposing a philosophical basis for his religious truth. This stance of the Pope gives rise to the recurring question of Faith and reason.⁴⁶ From our present perspective it seems that the Pope is proposing a philosophical rather than a religious category to further the development of his thought. In working out the implication of this proposal, it should be first observed that if one can distinguish science from morality then one is proposing the use of reason, at least in the framing of the question. This would seem to indicate a 'world view' that presupposes judgements about truth and reason based upon reason. For example, to say only religion can answer

⁴⁵ "Haec oboedientia non semper est facilis." (VS, 1)

⁴⁶ The Pope seems to pose the question of faith and reason in a rather different context. For him the existence of science and technology proves the existence of the search for the meaning of life, and while unaided reason is problematic because of sin, ultimately all levels of knowledge complement each other. In John Paul's own words: "Scientiae et artis technicae progressus, clara testificatio facultatum intellegentiae assiduitatisque hominum, non eximit humanum genus a supremis quaestionibus pertractandis, sed potius id concitat ut acerbissima atque suprema oppetat luctamina, quae animi sunt propria et conscientiae moralis." (VS, 1) This notion, quite naturally, parallels the teaching of GAUDIUM ET SPES.

the question is to take a philosophical position in this context. One is tempted to ask: Why use Scripture? Scripture, as Vatican II (in accordance with tradition) has taught, is the history of Salvation revealed by God to His people and spells out a moral code which is both sociological (the Old Testament) and idealistic (the New Testament); but this revelation does not specify human actions in any form that allows for practical application. This application is accomplished by reason reflecting, in the first instance, on Scripture – but Scripture itself tells man to search his heart for those universal laws of morality so necessary for an objective moral system. (See St. Paul and DR, 2) So Scripture is unnecessary in abstracto, but in the life situation man finds himself in (because of sin) it is necessary in order to enable reason to function properly. As we shall also see, however, this necessitates a specific meaning of reason and its coordinate, nature. We will now attempt to fulfil our proposal of understanding the Pope's thoughts, and leave the criticism until a later time.

John Paul II begins his letter with the beautiful biblical image of truth as the light shining from God. He sets the tone of the discussion to follow by noting that "the splendour of the truth shines forth in all works of the Creator and, in a special way, in man, created in the image and likeness of God (see Gen. 1:26)."⁶⁷ In short, truth comes from God to man, and in a manner recalling

⁶⁷ "Veritatis splendor in omnibus Creatoris operibus effulget, praesertim vero in homine facto ad imaginem et similitudinem Dei (c. Gn I, 26)." (VS, epigram)

Saint Augustine. The Pope observes that "Truth enlightens man's intelligence and shapes his freedom, leading him to know and love the Lord."⁶⁶ The following teachings, then, will be based upon the notion that God's truth is present in the world and man may know this truth and act according to it in a freedom that is shaped — that is defined and guaranteed by acting in accordance with this truth. This is, of course, normal scholastic and Thomistic doctrine.⁶⁷ What we are to expect, consequently, is a traditional treatise on morality (VS, 2; I, 53; N, 100) based on the understanding of reason as expressed in scholastic terms as the "ancilla theologiae". Now since the Pope takes this scholastic stance, one would assume that it is the philosophy enunciated by Scholasticism that is implied. This renders difficult the statement of John Paul II in his text that "certainly the Church's Magisterium does not intend to impose upon the faithful any particular theological system, still less a philosophical one."⁷⁰ That is, it seems that he is indeed recommending a certain philosophical (and theological), approach and this is made plainer in his later statement that "it is my intention to state the principles necessary for discerning what is contrary to sound

⁶⁶ "veritas illuminat intelligentiam hominisque libertatem informat qui hac ratione ad Dominum cognoscendum atque amandum adducitur." (VS, epigram)

⁶⁷ There are some Thomists who would disagree with this observation. Later we will have occasion to examine this contention.

⁷⁰ "Profecto Ecclesiae Magisterium fidelibus non peculiarem theologiam methodum neque, philosophicam imponere vult." (VS, 29)

doctrine"⁷¹ - which again would seem to imply a particular philosophical doctrine. Then there is his further observation concerning nature and freedom and the nature of the moral act, which he will explain in accordance with the teachings of Saint Thomas."⁷² (VS, 2) All in all he would seem to be not only recommending a scholastic approach but also endorsing as definitive the approach of Saint Thomas. We will now attempt to outline this treatise.

At the beginning one should note that, while the main thrust and backbone of the exposition is Scholastic (accepting the belief in substance and holding that language reflects reality and, thus, that logical argument is a true reflection of the way things 'are'), nonetheless the rhetoric used by the Pope is that of 'personalism'.⁷³ Again, however, one should be aware that "the

⁷¹ "principia edicere cupimus necessaria ad ea discernenda quae 'sanae doctrinae' sunt contraria" (VS, 30)

⁷² Of course, as John Paul notes: "ut sancte custodiat et fideliter exponat 'Dei Verbum', id declarare debet quasdam theologorum propensiones vel quasdam philosophicas asseverationes minime congruere cum veritate revelata." (VS, 29) This ties in with our observation regarding John Paul's way of posing the faith and reason problem inasmuch as he seems always to see reason controlled by the truth as revealed by God in His Word because it reflects it. Pius XII, as we shall see, develops this point in much fuller detail.

⁷³ While the 'person' of many 'personalistic philosophies' may not be the same as the Scholastic, normally (as in Kant, Descartes and Husserl, to select at random) this 'person' is transcendent and orientated to free and 'spiritual' activity. Within these terms, then, John Paul's use of 'person' in a 'personalist' sense would seem valid. Of course, his belief in substance puts him in a different context than that of modern philosophy, including modern personalism. Again the antimodern aspect of the Church's teachings comes to the fore.

spiritual and immortal soul is the principle of unity of the human being, whereby it exists as a whole – 'corpore et anima unus' – as a person,"⁷⁴ and we deal as a result with the familiar Scholastic notion that man is a body organized (informed) by an immortal soul and that the two constitute the whole person. This person, consequently, is a reasonable being capable of knowing and following the will of God revealed in Scripture and arrived at through proper reasoning. Thus is the Pope's desire to teach the tradition in new dress achieved.

In terms of actual teaching, the first two of the encyclical's chapters speak to the issue of morality. The final chapter deals with pastoral concerns flowing from the teaching; and since our concern here is with the moral teaching, we will bracket the Pontiff's pastoral thoughts. Chapter One of the letter deals with what might be called the theological approach, in that the Pope bases himself on Scripture to introduce and press his point. John Paul II then – in Chapter Two – attempts to found his Scriptural edifice upon reason. We will follow him in this project.

In introducing his subject, the Pope notes that "no one can escape from the fundamental questions: What must I do? How do I distinguish good from evil?"⁷⁵ He adds that "the answer is only possible thanks to the splendour of the truth which shines forth

⁷⁴ "Spiritualis et immortalis anima principium est unitatis hominis, id scilicet est per quod veluti unum existit – 'corpore et anima unus' – qua persona." (VS, 48)

⁷⁵ "Homo quilibet vitare non potest fundamentales interrogationes: Quid mihi faciendum? Quomodo bonum a falso internoscendum?" (VS, 2)

deep within the human spirit."⁷⁶ (VS, 2) And, thus, truth is of God revealed in Christ. (VS, 2) However, man is not alone, and "the Church's Pastors, in communion with the Successor of Peter . . . guide . . . them by authoritative teaching"⁷⁷; the following letter is therefore produced and sent out with the intention of "clearly setting forth certain aspects of doctrine which are of critical importance in facing what is certainly a genuine crisis"; and so "the specific purpose of the present encyclical is this: to set forth, with regard to the problems being discussed, the principles of a moral teaching based on Sacred Scripture and the living Apostolic Tradition."⁷⁸ John Paul II's words, then, are to be taken as definitive and binding since they come from God's words through the Apostolic Succession, and it follows that the reasoning used to elucidate and ground these teachings is likewise mandatory."

Chapter One: A Theological Position

John Paul commences his discussion of the principles of morality in homiletic fashion. That is, he gives us a meditation upon the story of the rich young man questioning Jesus as to what he must do

⁷⁶ "Responderi potest solum virtute splendoris veritatis, quae in interiore hominis spiritu lucet." (VS, 2)

⁷⁷ "Ecclesiae Pastores, cum Petri Successore coniuncti . . . eos comitantur . . . Magisterio suo" (VS, 3)

⁷⁸ "ut distincte designemus aspectus quosdam doctrinales qui decretorii sunt in vero illo obeundo discrimine," and so "Hoc est proprium argumentum harum Litterarum Encyclicarum, quibus exponere cupimus de agitatis quaestionibus rationes institutionis moralis Sacris Litteris et viva apostolica Traditione." (VS, 5)

⁷⁹ Pope Pius XII, HUMANI GENERIS, 20.

to have eternal life." The Pope uses the rendition in Matthew 19:16-22 of this incident and does not pursue the problem of the counsels to perfection traditionally seen as implied by Jesus' discourse that immediately precedes it, regarding marriage and celibacy." Nor does John Paul II follow up the succeeding discourse concerning the danger of riches. Thus he is approaching the story within the context of his problematic, which is the basis of morality.

One last caveat. The Pope does not seem bothered by the ambiguity concerning the ends of moral action we have noted above and which is implied in the question "What good must I do to be saved?"¹⁰ and the rather indirect answer of Jesus, who poses a further question: "Why do you ask me concerning what is good?"¹¹ That is, the young man is discussing eternal life and Jesus is talking about 'bonum,' which the context tells us is "serva mandata" (Matt. 19:17) Now the ambiguity we are dealing with is

¹⁰ The context of this question seems to be Scriptural and not philosophical in the sense that, within the context of Scholastic thinking, the soul is immortal by nature, while this does not appear to have been the case for the Jews of Jesus' time. In the development of his argument the Pope conflates the biblical "vita aeterna" with the 'good' of the philosopher. This fact has passed almost without comment in the work of Scholastics like Saint Thomas. Although he does distinguish the 'natural' from the 'supernatural' end of man, he seems to hold that the latter is absorbed by the former through grace.

¹¹ This is in keeping with the teaching of LUMEN GENTIUM and GAUDIUM ET SPES that all God's people are called to holiness regardless of their 'state' in life.

¹² "Magister, quid boni faciam, ut habeam vitam aeternam?" (Matt. 19:16)

¹³ "Quid me interrogas de bono?" (Matt. 19:17)

this: When discussing the 'good,' are we discussing a question of religious regulations (mandata as expressed in the decalogue) or discussing the 'good' in the philosophic sense of the end of life? The Good, for example, in the sense of Plato or Aristotle. The question we are dealing with here is whether the 'good' is a reward for keeping a series of rules (this seems to be the point Jesus is making) or a natural result of specific actions which are held to be in conformity with man's nature. That is, we are involved with what may be termed a 'maximalist' dedication to a moral life as opposed to a 'legalistic' one. Perhaps by neglecting to discuss the nature of the counsels to perfection⁴⁴ the Pope is 'leaving the matter up in the air,' or it may be that his 'personalist' bias explains this seeming confusion. Whatever the case, it will be helpful to keep this ambiguity in mind when dealing with John Paul II's thoughts on married life and the single life in the world.⁴⁵ In his treatment of them we find them taking on a value that is unique in the teaching of the Church. For the present, however, we shall follow the Pope as his meditation progresses.

John Paul II begins that meditation by recounting the story of the young man meeting Jesus, who is informed of the young man's wish to be 'perfect'. The question of the young man is: "What is

⁴⁴ On the notion that all, not just the religious, are called to 'holiness' and thus by implication 'perfection,' see LG, 40-41.

⁴⁵ For John Paul the married life is a life of chastity, as is the single life in the world. Thus both these states of life share in the religious life inasmuch as both must hold sexuality within the context of a chastity that requires natural use.

lacking to me?"⁶⁶ Now here is the crux of the ambiguity that we were referring to above. The young man is, presumably, assured by the word of Jesus that he is 'saved,' that he will gain eternal life. But he still feels he is lacking in something, and there seem therefore to be two ends of human life being dealt with here. First there is what we have referred to as the 'legalistic,' and secondly there is what we have termed the 'maximalist' path. At this point we may pose the question as whether or not there are two moralities at play here. That is, is the 'legalist' morality different from the 'maximalist'? The answer would seem to be in the negative, as we are told (VS, chap. II) that both are the result of knowing and following nature; but we are still left with the question, How can what is 'natural' be 'different from itself'? Whatever may be the solution to this problem, the Pope evades it⁶⁷ and continues with the narrative. The young man is told, "If you wish to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give it to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven; and come follow Me."⁶⁸ In

⁶⁶ "Quid adhuc mihi deest?" (Matt. 19:17)

⁶⁷ The distinction, based upon Troeltsch's work and developed below would seem to be a step in the direction of solving this puzzle. That is, what is 'legally' correct would be the 'relative natural law,' and the 'maximalist' would be that which gives perfection or is the 'strict law'. Further, in this context there is John Paul's general tendency not to distinguish Christian life in terms of the lay and the religious. He tends to see Catholic religious practice as always the 'maximum'. This is illustrated in his treatment of taking human life in EVANGELIUM VITAE, among many instances.

⁶⁸ "Si vis perfectus esse, vade, vende quae habes, et da pauperibus, et habebis thesaurum in caelo; et veni, sequere me." (Matt. 19:20)

other words, it appears that the young man is being called to a 'maximalist' practice of morality or, in philosophical terms, to follow his nature."⁹ Despite this tug of the narrative to a discussion of the counsels of perfection and the attendant ontological confusion referred to above, the Pope develops the story within the notion that perfection is open to all Christians who follow Christ's moral teachings. As we have noted, this of course represents a change in emphasis introduced by the Second Vatican Council. It is within this context that John Paul II develops his Scriptural-based theory of morality without in any way commenting upon the ambiguity we have noted. One last quibble before we turn to John Paul II's discussion.¹⁰ The Pope seems to be assuming that the notion of heaven and the 'end of life' are, obviously, the same - a point many would dispute. With these

⁹ This seemingly rather obscure quibble is important in the final assessment as to what is meant by the term nature, in general, and the 'nature' of man, in particular. That is, if all men share the same 'nature' they would seem bound by the same morality leading to the same end. But this does not, in the light of our text, seem to be the case. In fact it would seem to detach 'nature' from its universal, substantial aspect and move the discussion from ontology to psychology in the modern sense of those terms.

¹⁰ We should not forget that the notion of 'greater' and 'lesser' rewards is present in the traditional discussion of the end of life. However, the bias, even in the contemporary Church, seems to be in favour of the 'counsels'. See for example the placing of conjugal love within the context of chastity. (GS, 47-52)

reservations voiced, let us now look into John Paul II's moral theory.

The Pope, in his exegesis of this text, makes the obvious point that "If . . . we wish to go to the heart of the Gospel's moral teaching [this seems an unwarranted assumption on the part of the Pope] and grasp its profound and unchanging content, we must carefully inquire into the meaning of the question asked by the rich young man in the Gospel, and even more the meaning of Jesus' reply, allowing ourselves to be guided by him."¹¹ John Paul II begins his discourse with a discussion of the good.¹² To the question of What is the good? we note that the answer is a personal pronoun. This is because the good is a person, God. As John Paul II would have it: "Only God can answer the question about what is good, because He is the good itself."¹³ Thus the question concerning good is answered by turning to God and placing oneself within a religious context, specifically within the context of the

¹¹ "Si . . . volumus evangelicam doctrinam de moribus penitus perspicere et id quod inest in ea, altum et immutabile, comprehendere (this seems an unwarranted assumption on the part of the Pope) nobis est accurate divitis adolescentis sensus interrogationis inquirendus et, plus etiam responsionis, Iesus sensus, ab Eo ductis." (VS, 8)

¹² At this point the question of the 'good' is the 'good' as seen by religion. Thus the 'good' is God Himself, who is both the source of good acts and the end of these acts. Further, the relationship in both its aspects in regard to obedience and as end is a personal one of love. Hence the problem of the 'ontological' versus the 'psychological' referred to in the body of our text is overcome, at least rhetorically and psychologically.

¹³ "Deus unus respondere potest interrogationi de bono, quia Ipse est Bonum." (VS, 9)

Roman Catholic Church. Now this gives rise to the thought that the Church's notion of the end of life is, in fact, the ultimate end of life and this end of life's purpose is said to be "to live 'for the praise of God's glory.'"⁹⁴ Again, the point we mentioned concerning the good as service or obedience and the good as a result of following one's nature presents itself in a confused manner. The general thrust seems to be one of obedience to God since God alone is good and he makes his goodness known in his revelation of the Ten Commandments which, if followed by man, make man good. Nevertheless, there is in all this a notion of human nature fulfilling itself in that this law is internal as well as external. (VS, 10)⁹⁵ In order to accomplish this internalization, we must first transpose the Commandments into the context of love and then into their existence both in God and in man.⁹⁶ It must not be lost sight of that love means service and obedience in this context and that the authority (that is, the authority of the Church as granted by God) is the basis of morality. In the words

⁹⁴ "vitae suae finem ultimum habere in eo ut sit 'in laudem gloriae Dei.'" (c. Eph. I, 12) (VS, 10)

⁹⁵ There also seems to be a Stoic component assumed in this discussion, in that it is held that 'to do' the good is to attain 'the good' and express the truth of one's being. Thus being and acting are in fact the same. One assumes it is this relation that allows the Pope to see himself as a personalist concerned with the act of being human. Nevertheless, the background of 'essentialism' before which his argument develops gives his 'personalism' a specific meaning we have noted above.

⁹⁶ Since God is perfect goodness He is, quite naturally, bound by the same commands as man. That is, if man reflects God and his goodness, then at least by analogy their being is related as being the same.

of John Paul II, quoting St. Leo the Great: "For one who loves God it is enough to be pleasing to the One whom he loves: for no greater reward should be sought than that love itself; charity in fact is of God in such a way that God himself is charity."⁷ Morality is love of God and God is love who gives the gift of obedience as His seal upon the act which is good. Thus the answer to our difficulty concerning the good life becomes clear. The good life (in the religious sense) is to obey God (to love him who is love) and so by this love man becomes good and possesses his good (love is possession or adhering to the beloved object). Below we will see that man's nature is uniquely capable of this attainment of the good. In this sense we already have a hint of the Church's traditional teaching that moral laws are objective and unchangeable in themselves as they impart a quality from themselves as independent existences. (We are noting their essentiality.) In short, we are dealing with what would seem to be an essentialist ethic. So far it appears that morality is a series of rules handed down by God to the human race, whose job, as it were, is to obey.⁸ But as we have indicated, John Paul II, true to his personalist

⁷ "Diligenti Deum sufficit ei placere quem diligit: quia nulla maior expetenda est remuneratio, quam ipsa dilectio: sic enim caritas ex Deo est, ut Deus ipse sit caritas." (VS, 10)

⁸ Obedience must be seen in terms of love and possession, which the Pope has developed. It is important to note the rhetorical terms within which this doctrine is expressed inasmuch as language reflects reality. That is, there is no question of a 'nominalist' position here.

orientation," moves away from this external notion of law and places these laws squarely within the person himself. He does this by citing Saint Paul's notion that the law is written in the hearts of humans (see Rom. 2:19) and by noting that Saint Thomas calls this "the natural law" which "God gave . . . to man at creation."¹⁰⁰ We now have arrived at the union of the Scriptural and philosophical – the first directly revealed by God in his word and the second known by rational reflection. Further, the implementation of this knowledge leads to goodness, and this goodness is the proper good of man, who is sharing in the eternal life of God by participating on earth in His being (by being moral) and by being with God in heaven where, presumably, the moral life continues as loving and being loved by God. We are now in a position then to give content to the abstract terms of love as obedience, since reason may now deliberate upon the implications of the nature of man. It also follows from this that the New Law's promise of life in the Kingdom of God after death is to be distinguished from the Old Law's promise of a great nation and land. (VS, 13) In sum, the Biblical teaching of Jesus as moral arbitrator is founded on the very nature of the human, who by accepting the arbitration accepts his nature. However, since God

⁹⁹ The meaning of John Paul's personalism is starting to take shape. It appears to be based upon his perception of the deep personal relationship the moral person enjoys with God.

¹⁰⁰ "le[x] naturae" which "dedit Deus homini in creatione" (VS, 12)

alone is good, only He can accomplish the good – and thus human morality is a gift of God. (VS, 11)

John Paul II then reduces (here he follows Scripture) the whole law to love of God and love of neighbour. This makes obvious that the Commandments, as such, are calls to have respect for the dignity of God and the human person, and leads to a discussion of freedom. (VS, 12-15) It is necessary to put this discussion of freedom into context, as it can be easily misconstrued. First, the context is freedom from slavery to sin and not freedom from law or obedience. (VS, 11) Since this is the case, there is no contradiction between the teaching of the Church and the fact of being free. (VS, 19) One follows Christ and, in following Christ, one is free from sin and the 'flesh' and lives in the truth of his nature which is known in the knowledge of the natural law. Having come to that point, the Pope leaves off this line of thought and develops the implications of love in morality. Love, as we have seen, is obedience, and obedience is the internal following of the promptings of our very selves to follow our nature, which is to act in love. Love, as a consequence, is the very basis of our moral life. (VS, 24) John Paul II ends this first chapter with a note that the Church is the deposit of this truth and that it is the duty of this Church to teach in the name of Christ. We will now look at Chapter Two and Pope John Paul II's treatment of the natural law according to reason.

Chapter Two: A Rationalization of the Theological Position

We have seen that morality, based upon a reading of Scripture, is

both external (as revelation from God) and internal (written on the human heart). We proposed an explanation of the theological position regarding morality, and we will now, with Pope John Paul II, turn to a rational exposition of morality and its proper principles (he calls it, specifically, moral theology). (VS, 28-29)¹⁰¹ As the Pope puts it: "the principles necessary for discerning what is contrary to 'sane doctrine.'" ¹⁰² What the Pope is doing here is putting forth, in relation to modern theology and philosophy, the Church's stand on moral matters. We will imitate his procedure in that we will first expose the Pope's rational elucidation of the Church's position regarding the natural law and its relation to freedom and conscience. We will follow this with Pope John Paul II's critique of those positions he feels are untenable in the light of Christian teaching. From this criticism it becomes clear that the Pope, like all modern thinkers, sees a social dimension to his teaching (see GAUDIUM ET SPES above), which he feels, if put into effect, would have a therapeutic result upon

¹⁰¹ The Pope seems to include philosophy in this definition inasmuch as he states that "quae 'theologia moralis' vocatur, quaeque est scientia quaedam quae divinam revelationem accipit et eandem interrogat, unaque rationis humanae postulatis respondet." (VS, 29) That is, if we see philosophy as depending solely on reason and theology as reasoning upon revelation then our statement would seem correct. Of course, both theological and philosophical speculation is subject to the Magisterium reading Scripture, as the Pope would have it: "quasdam theologorum propensiones vel quasdam philosophicas asseverationes minime congruere cum veritate revelata." (Vs, 29) We have already noted this point in our discussion of LUMEN GENTIUM.

¹⁰² "principia edicere cupimus necessaria ad ea discernenda quae 'sanae doctinae' sunt contraria." (VS, 30)

society.¹⁰³ In this regard we will have occasion, at the end of our deliberations, to offer a definition of morality based upon the Pope's teachings.

John Paul II begins his rationalization¹⁰⁴ with a discussion of the problem of freedom. He affirms the centrality of freedom to human dignity and admits, with the Second Vatican Council, that freedom is the right of all. (VS, 31) However, he is quick to point out that certain currents of modern thought¹⁰⁵ have gone so

¹⁰³ It should be noted here that the Church offers a total world view, including both personal and social ethics, which is presented as a way to achieve the secular as well as religious goal of the proper society. It is the 'third way' between socialism and capitalism. This idea extends back in papal history to at least Leo XIII. The medieval papacy presented not the 'third way' but what may be called, with its implication of irony, the 'first way'. Both the modern and medieval papacies saw themselves as political guides and models. What has changed is the ability, not the will, to influence. (This would seem to be the main thrust of GAUDIUM ET SPES, and its social concern.)

¹⁰⁴ By the term 'rationalization' we mean to imply the scholastic notion of 'scientia' - that is to say, the type of 'science' being done here is rational in the Aristotlean sense. This type of knowledge is certain, being based on the conviction that language reflects logical laws which, in their turn, reflect being; and thus the moral precepts of the Pope (based as they are upon a true understanding of the nature of man) are to be accepted as rationally proven and beyond debate. It remains to be seen whether this notion is compatible with the notion (of Aristotle and Saint Thomas) that ethics as a work of practical reason does not possess absolute certainty. From the context of VERITATIS SPLENDOR it appears that the Pope sees Saint Thomas's notion of the natural law as an item of speculative reason. In other terms, the Pope ignores the distinction.

¹⁰⁵ These 'modern currents' may be summarized as follows:

1. The invalidity of the idea of natural law, as in the case of Kant.
2. The feeling of Nietzsche, among others, that moral laws restrict freedom.
3. The notion that freedom is an illusion, as held by many psychologists.
4. The sociological concept that values are purely

far as to "exalt freedom to such an extent that it becomes an absolute, which would then be the source of values."¹⁰⁶ This position would divorce freedom from truth, and as we have seen in our first section, such a stance would not agree with the external (divine origin) and the internal (rational basis) nature of the law. A crisis of truth would result, and again, to use the Pope's words: "Once the idea of a universal truth about the good, knowable by human reason, is lost, inevitably the notion of conscience also changes."¹⁰⁷ This makes for a situation where truth becomes as it were subjective, as "there is a tendency to grant to the individual conscience the prerogative of independently determining the criteria of good and evil and then acting accordingly."¹⁰⁸ The consequence is the first error of the crisis of truth, which "leads to a denial of the very idea of human nature."¹⁰⁹ Further, these thoughts give birth to the second difficulty arising on this first side of the modern problem as the Pope sees it. In his own words, "These different notions are at the origin of currents of thought which posit a radical opposition between moral law and conscience,

cultural products.

¹⁰⁶ "quibusdam . . . tantum extollitur libertas ut habeatur aliquid absoluti, bonorum fons et origo." (VS, 32)

¹⁰⁷ "Amisssa notione veritatis universalis de bono quod ab humana mente percipi potest, necessario de conscientia opinio est immutata." (VS, 32)

¹⁰⁸ "eo tenditur ut personae conscientiae privilegium tribuatur statuendi autonoma ratione normam boni malique, indeque agendi." (VS, 32)

¹⁰⁹ "notitiam naturae humanae negandam perducit." (VS, 32)

and between nature and freedom."¹¹⁰ The Pope then notes that some have pointed to a third aspect of the mentioned crisis, namely the conclusion drawn from the behavioural sciences that freedom is an illusion. And, finally, there is the fourth error, which holds that the very notion of cultural difference, so evident from scientific study, denies any validity to universal values. (VS, 33) In a word, there is an obvious tendency in modern thought to deny the relationship of truth and freedom, and as we have noted, there seems to be a belief that at bottom all moral values are personal and subjective. The Pope will now answer these breaches of sound doctrine.

John Paul begins his discussion of 'sound doctrine' by noting that some "have given rise to several currents of thoughts in ethics which centre upon 'an alleged conflict between freedom and law.'"¹¹¹ This is a dangerous notion because "these doctrines would grant to individuals or social groups the right 'to determine what is good and evil.'"¹¹² Now one may question why such a doctrine would be hateful to the Pope and harmful to the individual and society. (From a practical point of view one can imagine situations where evil individuals or groups - like the Nazis -

¹¹⁰ "Hae discrepantes notiones sunt principia illarum opinionum quae dissidentiam asseverant inter legem moralem et conscientiam, inter naturam et libertatem." (VS, 32)

¹¹¹ "habent cogitationis suae coniectam dissentionem inter libertatem et legem." (VS, 35)

¹¹² "Tales sunt doctrinae quae singulis hominibus vel socialibus coetibus facultatem tribuunt de bono et de malo decernendi." (VS, 35)

would create havoc.) Further, given the doctrine of original sin, it would seem that such a freedom would be always negative in the eyes of Christians."¹¹³ The Pope himself gives two theoretical positions as to why this notion is dangerous in its potential for evil. The first danger is based upon Scripture and notes that God commanded Adam in the Garden to refrain from eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The Pope holds that "God . . . knows perfectly what is good for man, and by virtue of his very love proposes this good to man in the Commandments."¹¹⁴ This is the familiar doctrine and we need only mention the seeming arbitrariness of the stance, although it would seem to be a statement made within the context of Thomistic metaphysics and, thus, of essentialism."¹¹⁵ The second danger is of the rational theoretical order, and the Pope now treats of it. We have seen that some hold that freedom is the source of value and that universal truth is thus denied. John Paul II maintains that even those Catholic thinkers who do not adhere to the absolute implications of this doctrine have been affected by it — that is, "have actually posited 'a complete sovereignty of reason' in the

¹¹³ As we shall see, Pope Pius XII had developed this notion at length.

¹¹⁴ "Deus . . . perfecte novit id quod est bonum homini, atque suo ipsius motus amore hoc ei proponit in mandatis." (VS, 35)

¹¹⁵ The thrust of the arguments used so far in the document seems to be leading to a notion of nature which is literalistic in the extreme. It may be called 'fundamentalist.' This notion will be developed below.

domain of moral norms."¹¹⁶ This has led to a situation where there is a denial of the authority of God in moral matters. Another variation of this error is proposed by those who "have introduced a sharp distinction . . . between an 'ethical order,' which would be human in origin and of value for 'this world' alone, and an 'order of salvation,' for which only certain intentions and interior attitudes regarding God and neighbour would be significant."¹¹⁷ Thus, the rules of Scripture would not be universal but merely an exhortation to action. Again, reason would be the source of value. (VS, 27) The answer to this error lies in the proper understanding of the natural law and its relation to the Divine Law.¹¹⁸

The Pope now takes up the question of how man can be free and autonomous, and at the same time under the law. That is, freedom is based upon a true understanding of reality, and it is in conforming to this understanding that humans act morally and exercise their freedom. This conformity allows humans to participate in the wisdom of God and to be truly free. (VS, 38-40) Of course, the crux of the discussion has been treated, in part,

¹¹⁶ "ut affirmarent rationem plene sui iuris esse quoad morales normas." (VS, 36)

¹¹⁷ "distinctionem induxerunt . . . inter ordinem ethicum, ex hominibus genitum et ad hunc mundum solummodo pertinentem, atque salutis ordinem, secundum quem nonnullae tantummodo intentiones et interiores aliquae habitudines quoad Deum et proximum momentum haberent." (VS, 37)

¹¹⁸ As we saw in discussing faith and reason in our comments on Chapter One, the truths of faith and reason do not contradict; rather, the latter are contained in the former.

only by noting that nature shines forth the truth of God; and this is explained rationally by what may be termed Saint Thomas's development of Aristotle's notion that there are forms (essences) which inform reality and the knowledge of which tells humans how to achieve their completion in moral acts by acting in conformity to this nature. This nature is being, for the Pope and for Saint Thomas a reflection of God's wisdom and in a sense (analogical) Nature. John Paul II seems to assume this context for his discussion, and by this perhaps avoids the real problem of showing that the Thomistic system, even when placed in a personalist context, does answer the modern problematic. However, the conclusion is reached that genuine freedom does not reject but confirms the moral law (VS, 41), a conclusion which is logical within the context.

We have referred to the Thomistic context of John Paul II's discussion. It is time to examine the Pope's explanation of this doctrine, which he does in sections 42-45 of VERITATIS SPLENDOR. The discussion is carried on, as we have noted, within the context of a realist metaphysic and a belief in God. (As a result, truth is a transcendent, known not by empirical means alone but rather by the function of abstraction and is, thus, metaphysical in the Comtean sense. It follows, then, that 'nature' and 'natural' refer to an order created by God in accordance with essentialist definition.) These two presuppositions, it appears, must be accepted to give the doctrine its proper strength. John Paul II argues by quoting from both the authority of Saint Augustine and

Saint Thomas. With Saint Augustine he defines God's eternal law as "the reason or the will of God, who commands us to respect the natural order and forbids us to disturb it."¹¹⁹ Now this divine law is known by human reason and is therefore also called natural law. (VS, 42) As John Paul II (in the words of Saint Thomas) puts it: "Among all others, the rational creature is subject to divine providence in the most excellent way, in so far as it partakes of a share of providence, being provident both for itself and for others. Thus it has a share of the eternal reason, whereby it has a natural inclination to its proper act and end. This participation of the eternal law in the rational creature is called natural law."¹²⁰ The point is made and John Paul II continues throughout the rest of his discussion to argue, on the basis of this notion, that man is free to chose between good and evil, which he knows naturally through reason. However, this reason is helped by God's grace to achieve not uncontrolled freedom (the ability to do anything human inventiveness can conceive) but to be free to conform to human nature through the right choice of what is natural to the person based on his self-understanding in an essentialist sense. Nature, then, is to be understood in opposition to the

¹¹⁹ "ratio seu Dei voluntas [est] quae iubet servare naturae ordinem et vetat turbare eum". (VS, 43)

¹²⁰ "Inter cetera autem - scribit Sanctus Thomas - rationalis creatura excellentiore quodam modo divinae providentiae subiacet, in quantum et ipsa fit providentiae particeps, sibi ipsi et aliis providens. Unde et in ipsa participatur ratio aeterna, per quam habet naturalem inclinationem ad debitum actum et finem; et talis participatio legis aeternae in rationali creatura lex naturalis dicitur." (VS, 43)

divine or the supernatural, but there is an analogous link between the two such that nature reflects or shines forth the intelligence of God, which is proper order in terms of the definition (nature) of things. In short, the essence of things defines them, and this applies to human acts as well. Thus, "God's plan poses no threat to man's genuine freedom."¹²¹ Armed with this doctrine, John Paul II is now in a position to reject as false any theory that either demands absolute freedom or wills in any way to disassociate freedom from truth or nature.¹²² We will now examine such theories with John Paul II.

The Pope first turns to those notions like "the penchant for empirical observation, the procedures of scientific objectification, technological progress and certain forms [which] have led [to] these two terms being set in opposition, as if a

¹²¹ "In hoc proposito hominis libertas minime laeditur." (VS, 45)

¹²² It is evident from the context of the discussion that the term 'nature' admits of many significations. That is, 'nature' may be 'definition' (what a being is as existing and known) and it may be that total reality that is the result of God's creative power and exists over against (as contingent) the absoluteness of God. Both these meanings are interrelated and both reflect the glory of God. Trust, then, is the proper knowing of 'nature' in its dual meaning, and such knowledge is a further interrelation. To know is to know 'nature,' which is to know both definition and order and is, thus, to know reality or truth, which in Aristotle's terms is the adequation of the mind to reality. This knowledge of the truth is to know God (through His effects) and, by expansion, His will. That is, human acts flow from the 'nature' of what the human is by nature or definition, and thus the acts themselves participate in this 'nature' and are given a proper nature of their own in relation to human nature. For example, man as an intellectual being should comport his bodily acts of eating and sexual activity in relation to this nature of being an intellectual being. This complex is shown clearly in Paul VI's HUMANAE VITAE. (See Appendix One.)

dialectic, if not an absolute conflict, between freedom and nature were characteristic of the structure of human history".²²³ This has given rise to two differing reactions by moralists. Some have been so taken by the strength of 'nature'²²⁴ that they have seen ethics to be the result of statistical averages of the way humans act as a majority. Such an attitude, quite obviously, contradicts the notion of man as the freely acting moral person that we have seen. In other words, such thinkers are guilty of misunderstanding the term 'nature.' However, other thinkers also misunderstand the proper meaning of 'nature,' but with differing results. These thinkers do retain the notion of human freedom and give man a certain transcendence but, like those thinkers treated above, still see an opposition between 'nature' and 'freedom.' That is, it is 'freedom' which man asserts against 'nature' in order to achieve his true identity or nature.²²⁵ This notion has led to two separate theories, both of which seem to misunderstand, at least in the Papal view, the true meaning of the term 'nature.' We will examine each of these theories in turn.

²²³ "in ipsas res observandas inclinatio, obiectivationis scientifica rationes viaeque, technicus progressus, liberalismi quaedam genera, effecerunt ut duae hae res inter se contenderent, veluti si dialectica - si non prorsus decertatio - inter libertatem et naturam peculiare esset quiddam structurale humanae historiae." (VS, 40)

²²⁴ "Nature" in this context, of course, means empirical reality. (VS, 46)

²²⁵ Here, the term 'nature' should be seen in its connotation of 'essence.' In the present instance, the Pope seems to be referring to those thinkers loosely termed 'existentialists'. That is, those thinkers who like Sartre who believe that man 'creates himself.'

Both the theories, in failing to properly understand what is meant by 'nature,' see a false opposition between 'nature' and 'freedom.' Both schools hold that "freedom [is] . . . somehow in opposition to or in conflict with material and biological nature, over which it must progressively assert itself,"¹²⁶ and this because of their understanding of 'nature.' First, they "are at one in overlooking the created dimension of nature and in misunderstanding its integrity."¹²⁷ For one school (that of social science), "nature becomes reduced to raw material for human activity and for its power: thus nature needs to be profoundly transformed, and indeed overcome by freedom, inasmuch as it represents a limitation and denial of freedom".¹²⁸ In other terms, 'freedom' is man's ability to deny the limitations of 'nature,' which can be either solely material and in this sense natural, or else biological. The other theory (that of modern philosophy) holds that the self is opposed to the world and that man is truly man as a 'spiritual' construct.¹²⁹ In regard to the notion of nature,

¹²⁶ "eam discordem existimant vel contrariam naturae materiali et biologicae, quam gradatim superare deberet." (VS, 46)

¹²⁷ "conveniunt ad obliviscendam condicionem naturae creatae adque eiusdem integritatem infitiandam." (VS, 46)

¹²⁸ "natura pro humana actione materies redditur atque pro eius potestate: ipsa est omnino immutanda, immo libertate praetergredienda, cum eius quasi limes sit et negatio." (VS, 46)

¹²⁹ In its extreme form this notion holds that, in the dialectic between 'nature' and nurture, 'nurture' is the truly human and 'nature' the inhuman. A value judgement seems to be implied here. Some radical views on sexuality as cultural construction stem from this view.

then, these thinkers hold that "nature would include in the first place the human body, its make-up and its processes: against this physical datum would be opposed whatever is 'constructed,' seen as the product and result of freedom. Human nature, understood in this way, could be reduced to and treated as a readily available biological or social material. This ultimately means making freedom self-defining and a phenomenon creative of itself and its values."¹³⁰ This, of course, is a denial of the existence of 'nature' in the sense of 'essence' and man would be nothing but his 'freedom.' Or in more traditional terms, man would become absolute arbitrator of his own being and activity.¹³¹ That is, he would become God. In sum, then, for the doctrine of this document man is free as part of his 'nature,' but this freedom is to conform to this 'nature' and is thus limited by itself in the sense we have tried to outline.

The Pope, with the above, has introduced the question of freedom and he now proposes to give a proper understanding of this controversial term. As already noted, the proper understanding of freedom which the Pope has intimated throughout the above

¹³⁰ "natura, hoc quidem sensu, humanum corpus, eius complexionem et vires primum complecteretur: his physicis elementis opponerentur quae 'conficiuntur', id est, 'cultura', quatenus libertatis opus et effectus. Humana natura sic accepta, ad biologiam vel socialem materiam redigi tractarique posset, quae semper praesto esset." (VS, 46)

¹³¹ This seems to be the sense of the following: "Hoc significant ad extremum libertatem per se ipsam definire eamque reddere postulatum quod se ipsum suosque valores crearet. Sic ad extremum homo ne naturam quidem haberet et sibi ipsi per se ipsum existentiae ratio. Nihil aliud esset homo quam sui ipsius libertas!" (VS, 46)

discussion is the traditional Catholic one, that to be free is to follow nature. Let us now follow the Pope as he maps out this path.

The first point to be made, since the theories we sketched above fail to understand what man truly is, is to show what man is by his 'nature' or 'definition' or 'essence.' That is, man is both a soul and a body and his 'nature' (or, his 'essence') is the expression of both of them.¹³² Thus for example sexual morality must be based upon an understanding of man's body as defined by his essence, which directs his sexual acts to a proper end. (VS, 48) The body is not a raw datum but is part of what man is and takes its meaning from the totality of man's nature.¹³³ In other words, to deny the limitations upon man's freedom imposed by the very make-up of that freedom as limited by the 'nature' (to be en fleshed) of man (which includes the limitations imposed by the existence of the body as part of man's 'nature' or 'essence') is to fall into a form of spiritualism (traditionally seen as some form of Gnosticism) which has been consistently countered by Church teaching throughout the centuries. We are now in a position to attempt a definition of 'natural law' as understood by the Pope;

¹³² We are obviously dealing with a Scholastic metaphysical universe here. That is, the definition is a true reflection of what the thing is in reality, and thus the various terms such as nature, essence and so on are all synonymous.

¹³³ Thus sexuality is defined by the total being called man. That is, the body is not a blank text to be inscribed by man's creativity. To keep to the example of the Pope, sexuality is the expression of man's need to reproduce himself as is shown by its usual result. So there is natural sex as opposed to unnatural. (See Appendix One on Paul VI's HUMANAE VITAE.)

and a consequence of this defining of 'natural law' will be a clarifying of our notion of 'nature' and its relation to 'freedom.'

In the words of John Paul II: "the true meaning of the natural law . . . refers to man's proper and primordial nature, the 'nature of the human person,' which is 'the person himself in the unity of soul, and body,' in the unity of his spiritual and biological inclinations and of all the other specific characteristics necessary for the pursuit of his end."²⁴ In short, natural law is the very meaning of man, and thus freedom is part of the nature of man (the ability to conform to his nature), and is of the very essence of the natural law. Man as body and soul, therefore, is to be understood as a unity and the body is to be understood in relation to the soul as form — and thus the human person is, in fact, the Aristotelian notion of man.²⁵ So the Pope notes, quite correctly in his own terms: "By rejecting all manipulations of corporeity which alter its human meaning, the Church serves man and

²⁴ "verus sensus legis naturalis, quae pertinet ad propriam primigeniamque hominis naturam, ad naturam scilicet "personae humanae" quae est ipsa persona in animae corporisque unitate, in unitate videlicet eius proclivitatum ordinis simul spiritualis simul biologici et aliarum peculiarium proprietatum ad finem obtinendum necessariorum." (VS, 50)

²⁵ As we have noted all along, the use of 'person' by the Pope is to be seen as a rhetorical concession, not an ontological one. That is, we are, as we have insisted, in the world of Aristotle and the Scholastics, not in that of Kant or the so-called Personalists. The basis of this whole papal approach to person is, of course, to be found in the discussions concerning the 'nature' of man initiated by Aristotle's De anima.

shows him the path of true love."²³⁶ Since this is true, there can be no opposition between 'freedom' and 'nature,' and we may say that the human person becomes the basis of morality and freedom (and, indeed, that following the moral law is itself freedom) and the foundation of moral judgement. The good of the person, expressed in love,²³⁷ becomes the official Catholic morality. However, we must mind the meaning assigned these words.

In the light of the above, we may agree with the Pope that the natural law is universal and immutable as it is inscribed in every human person. (VS, 51) A further objection to the Pope's position under discussion is that, while nature is shared by all, the individual has his own freedom. That is, the universal absorbs the individual if we do not grant a separation between nature and freedom. Again, the Pope argues that the very knowledge of the natural law guarantees the individual and his uniqueness, which is part and parcel of the whole. Thus, "By submitting to the common law, our acts build up the true communion of persons and, by God's grace, practise charity, which binds everything together in perfect harmony (Col. 3:14)"²³⁸ - and so we respect the individual and his

²³⁶ "Corporalitatatis respuens adulterationes quae eius humanam significationem demutant, Ecclesia homini inservit eidemque veri amoris viam demonstrat, in qua solummodo is verum Deum invenire potest." (VS, 50)

²³⁷ Love is to be seen in its Pauline sense of doing the will of God which, as we have seen, is held by the Pope to be the following of the 'natural law.'

²³⁸ "Communi legi obsequentes, actus nostri veram personarum communionem efficiunt et, Dei gratia, caritatem exercent, quae est 'vinculum perfectionis' (Col. 3, 14)" (VS, 51)

rights. The Pope ends this section by noting that negative precepts are always binding and that one must act according to conscience. However, while conscience is in part formed by culture, man is always more than his culture, and therefore proper moral acts appeal back to a time before evil entered the world and when man acted according to his true nature. (VS, 52-53)¹³⁹ We now turn to the question of conscience.

For John Paul, following GAUDIUM ET SPES, conscience is "the sanctuary of man, where he is alone with God, whose voice echoes within him".¹⁴⁰ Nevertheless, as we have seen, conscience is to be understood as 'recognizing' the good to be done and the evil to be avoided and not as 'creating' these categories of judgement. In the light of the entire discussion of the natural law which we have just concluded, it would appear we may state, without being presumptuous, that conscience is always at the service of the natural law and that its judgement refers to the relating of the general to the particular. (As a possible paradigm for the latter function of conscience referred to, one could cite the decision to limit the number of children one may have for a serious reason and in accordance with the Church's teaching on birth control. Another example may be found in solving the question of what type of government history and custom suggest for a particular society.)

¹³⁹ That is, at a time when 'absolute' natural law prevailed, contrary to the present time when only 'relative' natural law is available. See T, I, pp. 154ff, and Chapter 3 below.

¹⁴⁰ "sacrarium hominis, in quo solus est cum Deo, cuius vox resonat in intimo eius." (VS, 55)

Thus conscience recognizes but does not create values, nor does it depend upon itself and its understanding to function; rather, it is the application of true knowledge to the situation.¹⁴¹ (That conscience can be in nonwilful error would seem obvious.) As John Paul concludes, "freedom of conscience is never freedom 'from' the truth but always only freedom 'in' the truth"¹⁴² – and, this truth, we have seen, is the natural law.

As we have noted several times in the course of our discussion, moral acts have a specific content which springs from the natural law. Thus the Pope rejects the opinions of those thinkers who teach that it is the fundamental option one makes concerning God that makes one moral and not the individual acts one commits. (VS, 66) This would seem to represent a type of bad faith whereby one places intention (in the sense of a psychological disposition) over reality (what one actually does). As the Pope observes: "To separate the fundamental option from concrete kinds of behaviour means to contradict the substantial integrity or personal unity of the moral agent in his body and in his soul."¹⁴³

¹⁴¹ Concerning the notion of situation, it is clear that the situation is to be reacted to within a given body of principles which are objective in themselves and do not spring from the situation. For example, charity dictates that one help the poor. However, the exact form this help should take depends upon the particular circumstances which the donor and recipient find themselves in, and it is in this judgement that conscience would concur, not as to whether one should help.

¹⁴² "conscientiae libertas numquam est resolutio 'a' veritate, sed semper ac solum est 'in' veritate" (VS, 64)

¹⁴³ "Optionem fundamentalem a definitis sese gerendi rationibus seiungere idem est ac dissentire ab integritate substantiali vel ab unitate personae moraliter agentis quae

That is, as John Paul further states: "Judgements about morality cannot be made without taking into consideration whether or not the deliberate choice of a specific kind of behaviour is in conformity with the dignity and integral vocation of the human person."¹⁴⁴ In short, it is the act, as act, and not the 'psychic' disposition of the actor that defines the morality of the act. In this regard, there is another point to note: the distinction between mortal and venial sin. Here the Pope is arguing for the matter of the act as a gauge of gravity. Some hold that one need consider only the degree of involvement of one's freedom in the act rather than the act itself as the gauge of gravity. Both factors are, of course, necessary to judge the gravity of an act; nonetheless, as John Paul has argued all along, moral acts are objective and it is thus the matter of the act which constitutes, objectively, the gravity of the act. Neither the end nor the intention, in itself, is sufficient to enable one to properly judge the gravity of a particular act. (VS, 69-70)

We are left with one final problem. Some hold that it is the end or object of the act which gives it moral value. (VS, 71) Expressed in its most radical formulation, this position maintains that it is permissible to do evil (an act that objectively would be evil according to the natural law) to achieve a good. (VS, 74)

corpore et animo constat." (VS, 66)

¹⁴⁴ "Iudicium de moralitate fieri nequit, si abstrahitur a congruentia aut discrepantia deliberatae delectionis cum definita se gerendi ratione quoad personae humanae dignitatem et integram vocationem." (VS, 67)

Again it seems we may not be presumptuous in telescoping this discussion and seeing that the issue at stake here is the 'objectivity' of the moral willing and, thus, as one intends clearly the act and not the end seen as independent of the act. (VS, 76) As John Paul notes, quoting Paul VI: "There exist acts which 'per se' and in themselves, independently of circumstances, are always seriously wrong by reason of their object,"¹⁴⁵ and, as Pope Paul insists in relation to the Council and its reading of the signs of the times: "[It is not] as if the Council taught that nowadays some things are permitted which the Church had previously declared intrinsically evil."¹⁴⁶ Chief among these intrinsically evil acts is the taking of life by acts of homicide, abortion, euthanasia and the like. (VS, 79) So we have it. Morality is the practice of the natural law, which practice will bring fulfilment to man on earth both individually and socially, and lead him to an eternity in God's company. John Paul then turns to pastoral matters which are not explicitly pertinent to the present exposition, but to which we will have occasion to return at a later phase of our project.

Truth as authority: a reading of Pius XII's HUMANI GENERIS

HUMANI GENERIS was published by Pope Pius XII in 1950 to discuss

¹⁴⁵ "esse actus, qui per se ipsos et in se ipsis, extra rerum adiuncta, propter obiectum suum semper sunt graviter illiciti" (VS, 80)

¹⁴⁶ "[non est] quasi ex Concilii magisterio nonnulla hodie liceant, quae antea Ecclesiae 'intrinsece mala' declaravit." (VS, 80, note 131)

some of the false opinions, then current, that he considered to be a serious threat to the foundations of the Catholic Faith. These may be summarily listed as follows: i) the notion that the 'theory' of evolution was, indeed, a 'fact'; ii) a certain historicism that attempts to explain human life in purely human terms; and iii) a false 'eirenism' which attempts to falsely reconcile opposing opinions regarding the truths of religion. Quite naturally the Pope is most interested in defending those opinions held to be true by the Church's teaching Magisterium. The Pope feels that this false eirenism leads to a disregard for the timeless truths of Scholastic philosophy, truths which Pius holds to be approved by this same Magisterium. Now, within the context of the present project, the stated occasion of HUMANI GENERIS is only obliquely related to the work of John Paul, who is primarily interested in putting forth the Catholic moral teaching. Nevertheless, in working out this attitude towards his stated problems, Pius evolves a doctrine regarding truth in general and morality in particular, a doctrine that is in agreement with the doctrine of John Paul in VERITATIS SPLENDOR and that indicates that John Paul had 'gone back' to the doctrine of Pius rather than develop the potential for modernization which we saw as a possible direction indicated by the Fathers of Vatican II. In the present instance we will first expound Pius's teachings on his stated questions. Secondly, there will be an attempt to make explicit the points of agreement between the teachings of Pius and those of John Paul. We begin with an analysis of HUMANI GENERIS.

Pius begins his encyclical by establishing the proper foundation for discussing the problems we have noted. For this pontiff, as we found to be the case for John Paul, truth is to be found in Scripture as read by the Church's teaching authority. (HG, 3) While Pius holds, with tradition, that man may know the truth through reason, he nonetheless takes a rather dim view of man and his reason as unaided by Scripture. (HG, 2) As a result, the argument that follows in regard to the stated problems will be carried on on two levels.¹⁴⁷ In the foreground will be the teaching authority asserting itself as grounded in Scripture and tradition, while lurking in the background will be a reason that can come to much of what the Magisterium enunciates but which is curtailed by the condition where "man can, whether from prejudice or passion or bad faith, refuse and resist not only the evidence of the external proofs that are available, but also the impulses of actual grace."¹⁴⁸ In handling the specific problem of this

¹⁴⁷ Pope Pius is much more 'pessimistic' concerning reason than John Paul II. This is evident not only from the wording of the texts themselves but also from the 'structure' of the two encyclicals. As we have seen, John Paul spends the majority of his time elucidating the 'reasonableness' of his moral position while Pius is much more sparing in his use of reason. Of course, both pontiffs subscribe to the doctrine that reason can know the truth but that this truth must be supplemented by faith. (As we shall see, Pius, like John Paul, accepts the natural law without question.) This position is implicit in their acceptance of the truth of Scholastic philosophy, especially as expounded by Saint Thomas Aquinas.

¹⁴⁸ "Homo enim sive praeiudicatis ductus opinionibus, sive cupidinibus ac mala voluntate instigatus, non modo externorum signorum evidentiae, quae prostat, sed etiam supernis afflatibus, quos Deus in animos ingerit nostros renuere ac resistere potest." (HG, 4)

encyclical, then, Pope Pius will use reason, but a reason enlightened by a faith that holds man to be a being whose destiny and thus whose beliefs are beyond the purely 'natural' order. (HG, 2) What follows will examine Pope Pius XII's teachings on evolution, on historicism and on what he calls "an imprudent eirenism."¹⁴⁹

Pius XII begins his discussion by stating that many hold evolution to be a fact, and he finds that this belief gives succour to Communists and their belief in dialectical materialism. The belief further leads to existentialism, which holds that there are no immutable essences of things. In other words, the world is constantly in the process of becoming, and there is nothing beyond the perception of the moment. (HG, 5-6)¹⁵⁰ Moreover, this false notion of evolution teaches that there is "a certain historicism which, attributing value only to the events of man's life, overthrows the foundation of all truth and absolute law both on the level of philosophical speculation and especially Christian dogma."¹⁵¹ The acceptance of evolution as a scientific fact is seen as the basis of denial of what will be presented as the true

¹⁴⁹ "imprudentium irenismo" (HG, 12)

¹⁵⁰ This is reminiscent of John Paul's discussion in sections of VERITATIS SPLENDOR.

¹⁵¹ "falsus quidam 'historicismus', qui solis humanae vitae eventibus inhaerens, cuiusvis veritatis legibusque absolutae fundamenta subvertit, cum ad res philosophicas tum ad christiana etiam dogmata quod attinet." (HG, 7)

way, which is to say the Scholastic way of seeing the world"¹⁵² -- the use of both reason and faith to explain the world and indeed what lies beyond it on a supernatural plane. Now, the Pope wishes to make it plain that he is not disparaging the use of reason but only the improper use of it, which leads many to fall into a false fideism. (HG, 8) That is, reason needs to be guided by "Magisterium vivum," who can read Scripture within tradition and make it relevant to the matters at hand. In short, the very confusion and doubt caused by secular and non-Catholic attempts to understand reality are themselves a proof of the validity of Pius's position.¹⁵³

¹⁵² Pope Pius XII is proceeding in a mode that was very common before Vatican II. That is, he saw a complete opposition between modern thought, with its denial of the transcendent (abstract beings like essence and immaterial ones like the immortal soul), and the truth of those systems like Scholasticism that admit of the existence of essence and the immaterial. (See Pius X.) The Council was encouraged by John Paul XXIII to read the signs of the times, which would seem to imply an acceptance of modern or scientific thought. Of course, the problem Pius saw is still present after the Council and John Paul is very much aware of it. As we have seen, he countered it by insisting upon Scholasticism with its belief in essence and the immaterial, and this puts him in line with Pius XII and against the possible modernization of the Church's position. He was anticipated in this by Pope Pius XII's rejection of fideism, which will be discussed below.

¹⁵³ This seems to be the thrust of the following passage from HUMANI GENERIS: "In hac tanta opinionum confusione aliquid solaminis Nobis affert eos cernere, qui a 'rationalismi' placitis, quibus olim instituti erant, hodie non raro ad veritatis divinitus patefactae haustus redire cupiunt, ac verbum Dei in Sacra Scriptura asservatum agnoscere ac profiteri, utpote disciplinae sacrae fundamentum. At simul dolendum est haud paucos istorum, quo firmiter verbo Dei adhaereant, eo magis humanam rationem adimere, et quo libentius Dei revelantis auctoritatem extollant, eo acrius Ecclesiae Magisterium aspernari, a Christo Domino institutum, ut veritates divinitus revelatas custodiat atque interpretetur. Quod quidem non solum

Having assigned reason a valid place in understanding the truth, the Pope now proceeds in a reasonable way to examine the errors that he has referred to. He believes that it is proper to examine these erroneous theories because the cure for them can come only from an understanding of the errors they contain. Further, it must be remembered that these theories contain some truth. (HG, 9) However, one must not confuse the programme proposed by the Pope with a false 'eirenism' that attempts to find a consensus among "honest men"¹⁵⁴ and in so attempting tends to reform the traditional teaching of the Church (its philosophical and theological Scholasticism) with a completely new philosophy and theology. (HG,11) We will now look, with Pope Pius, at some of these new opinions.

The Pope begins his treatment of these by noting that there are those thinkers who wish to reduce dogmas to a minimum and to cut the forming of dogmas free from traditional theological and philosophical language. They hope, by this, to bring the dogmas and their formulation into line with what they consider to be Scriptural language and thus to bring into the Church those who have left because of the Church's insistence on tradition in addition to Scripture. This would seem to refer to those Christians who left the fold of the Catholic Church at the time of

Sacris Litteris aperte contradicit, sed ex ipsa rerum experientia falsum manifestatur. Saepe enim ipsi a vera Ecclesia dissidentes de sua ipsorum in rebus dogmaticis discordia palam, conqueruntur, ita ut Magisterii vivi necessitatem fateantur inviti." (HG, 8)

¹⁵⁴ "honestique viri" (HG, 11)

the Reformation. (HG, 14) It is further believed that by this move Catholic doctrine will be modernized and be made compatible with modern thought. The extreme of this notion holds that this turn must occur, as dogma is the result of a historical development which is not tied to any particular philosophical or theological system, including Scholasticism. (HG, 15) However, the Pope feels that to give in to this attitude would "not only lead to what they call dogmatic 'relativism,' but that they actually contain it."¹⁵⁵ To capitulate to these thinkers would be to neglect items of knowledge (both philosophical and theological) "[which] are based on principles and notions deduced from a true knowledge of created things."¹⁵⁶ We will now follow Pope Pius as he argues for the necessity of Scholastic philosophy and theology as well as against the dangers of 'modernization' and false 'eirenism.'

It is obvious from the above that for Pius XII, Scholastic philosophy and theology form the very essence of the teaching of the Magisterium. (HG, 17) It follows, then, that to modernize the philosophical and theological system of the Church is "to neglect . . . [what is] expressed and perfected so often by the age-old work of men endowed with no common talent and holiness, working under the vigilant supervision of the holy Magisterium and with the light

¹⁵⁵ "Patet autem ex iis, quae diximus, huiusmodi molimina non tantum ducere ad 'relativismum' dogmaticum, quem vocant, sed illum iam reapse continere." (HG, 16)

¹⁵⁶ "principiis ac notionibus ex vera rerum creatarum cognitione deductis." (HG, 16)

and leadership of the Holy Spirit . . . so that these things may be replaced by conjectural notions and by some formless and unstable tenets of a new philosophy, tenets which, like the flowers of the field are in existence today and die tomorrow; this is supreme imprudence and something that would make dogma itself a reed shaken by the wind."¹⁵⁷ It may be noted that there is a certain circularity in Pius's position. That is to say that he seems to be arguing that his authority assures the authority of Scholasticism and vice versa. Whatever the case, the point is clear and, as we have seen, John Paul echoes these thoughts. With the necessity of Scholastic thought assured, the Holy Father now passes to a direct discussion of the question of the Teaching Authority of the Church. In examining this discussion we will keep in mind the thoughts of Pope John Paul II on the matter.

The Pope begins by noting that many deny this authority or interpret it to suit their own purposes. (HG, 18) However, he states quite explicitly that in the history of the Church, when the Pope has spoken on matters under dispute, the dispute has ended and the Pope's judgement become mandatory. (H, 19) Thus even those matters which are included under the 'Magisterium ordinarium' are to be taken as the final word on the subject. As Pius argues from

¹⁵⁷ "neglegere . . . quae pluries saeculari labore a viris non communi ingenii ac sanctitatis, invigilante sacro Magisterio, nec sine Sancti Spiritus lumine et ductu . . . ut eorumdem in locum coniecturales notiones sufficiantur ac quaedam fluxae ac vagae novae philosophiae dictiones, quae ut flos agri hodie sunt et cras decident, non modo summa est imprudentia, verum etiam ipsum dogma facit quasi arundinem vento agitatam." (HG, 17)

the Scriptural passage that "He who hears you, hears me"; it follows that "if the Supreme Pontiffs in their official documents purposely pass judgement on a matter up to that time under dispute, it is obvious that the matter, according to the mind and will of the same Pontiff, cannot be any longer considered a question open to discussion among theologians."¹⁵⁸ This includes Encyclicals.¹⁵⁹ So it is the Pope who embodies the Teaching Authority of the Church. As the Holy Father notes, "The deposit of faith of our Divine Redeemer has been given for authentic interpretation not to each of the faithful, not even to theologians, but only to the Teaching Authority of the Church."¹⁶⁰ It would appear clearly then that Pius XII is affirming the teaching of the First Vatican Council concerning the Pope's Teaching Authority; and as we have argued, neither the Second Vatican Council nor Pope John Paul II have in any way rescinded on this issue. Having established the

¹⁵⁸ "Qui vos audit, me audit" (Luke 10:16); it follows that: "Quodsi Summi Pontifices in actis suis de re hactenus controversa data opera sententiam ferunt, omnibus patet rem illam, secundum mentem ac voluntatem eorundem Pontificum, quaestionem liberae inter theologos disceptationis iam haberi non posse." (H, 20)

¹⁵⁹ As Pope Pius puts it: "Neque putandum est, ea quae in Encyclicis Litteris proponuntur, assensum per se non postulare, cum in iis Pontifices supremam sui Magisterii potestatem non exercent." (H, 20) As we have noted, John Paul II does not deviate from this path, and even in the light of Vatican II the position of the Pope in *LUMEN GENTIUM* and the action of Paul VI in his handling of the birth control controversy show that this 'tradition' of Pius XII has survived in the teaching of the Church. It would seem sensible then to accept the two encyclicals we have been examining as 'binding,' and thus a true reflection of Church Teaching.

¹⁶⁰ "Quod quidem depositum nec singulis christifidelibus nec ipsis theologis divinus Redemptor concedidit authentice interpretandum, sed soli Ecclesiae Magisterio." (H, 21)

competency of the Magisterium to teach true doctrine, Pius XII now turns his attention to the authority of Scripture.

In his continuation of establishing the bases for the authority of his teaching, Pius XII takes up the question of the place that Scripture occupies in his repertoire of authoritative sources. He does this by referring to an erroneous position on Scripture that conveys a complex of opinions which we will list, after which we will examine Pius's answer to them.

The general context of the false opinions regarding Scripture has to do with the question of the divine authorship of Scripture. (HG, 22) The first consequence of this denial of divine authorship is that of those who hold this error, "which asserts that immunity from error extends only to those parts of the Bible that treat of God or of moral and religious matters."¹⁶¹ As a result: "In interpreting Scripture, they will take no account of the analogy of faith and Tradition of the Church. Thus they judge the doctrine of the Fathers and of the Teaching Church by the norm of Holy Scripture, interpreted purely by human reason of exegetes, instead of explaining Holy Scripture according to the mind of the Church which Christ Our Lord has appointed guardian and interpreter of the whole deposit of divinely revealed truth."¹⁶² In the light of the

¹⁶¹ "sententiam, iam pluries reprobata, renovant, secundum quam Sacrarum Litterarum immunitas errorum ad ea solummodo, quae de Deo ac de rebus moralibus et religiosis traduntur, pertineat." (HG, 22)

¹⁶² "In Sacra Scriptura interpretanda nullam haberi volunt rationem analogiae fidei ac 'traditionis', Ecclesiae; ita ut Sanctorum Patrum et sacri Magisterii doctrina quasi ad trutinam Sacrae Scripturae, ratione mere humana ab exegetis explicatae,

argument the Pope has been unfolding on his teaching authority, this position is clearly to be rejected. There is one further position on Scripture to be noted. This is the false opinion of those who hold that the 'literal'¹⁶³ meaning of Scripture is to be superseded by "[what] they are pleased to call symbolic or spiritual,"¹⁶⁴ by which it is held that "all difficulties vanish, difficulties which hinder only those who adhere to the literal meaning of Scripture."¹⁶⁵ In answering this error the Pope reaffirms the teaching of his own Encyclical, DIVINO AFFLANTE SPIRITU, which, while allowing a certain latitude in using 'higher' critical techniques in reading Scripture, also builds its teaching upon the tradition of the Church in general that Scripture is read authoritatively by the Magisterium, and he cites in particular the encyclicals of Benedict XV and Leo XIII. (HG, 24). Now that the Pope has outlined and answered the basic errors regarding the teaching authority of the Church and the truthfulness of Scripture as read in the Church, he turns to those errors that he feels flow from this dual source.

Pope Pius XII lists a number of errors which he feels he must

sit revocanda, potius quam eadem Sacra Scriptura exponenda sit ad mentem Ecclesiae, quae a Christo Domino totius depositi veritatis divinitus revelatae custos ac interpres constituta est." (HG, 22)

¹⁶³ The term 'literal' as used here seems to refer to the Thomistic understanding of that term and not the 'fundamentalist' concept. For Saint Thomas's notion see ST, I, 1.

¹⁶⁴ "quam symbolicam ac spiritualem appellant" (HG, 23)

¹⁶⁵ "difficultates omnes evanescere, quibus ii tantummodo praepediantur, qui sensui litterali Scripturarum adhaereant." (HG, 23)

address in the name of the truth. The fountainhead of these errors, so to speak, is the doubt (modern) man feels about the power of reason. (HG, 25) Coming from this source are such errors as reason being unable to prove the existence of a personal God, to come to the notion that the world had a beginning and that creation was a free act of God. (HG, 25) Other errors mentioned by Pius in this connection are: rejection of belief in the Mystical Body; denial of the real Presence; the existence of angels; and the denial of the Beatific Vision as the end of man. (HG, 25-28) Nonetheless, the rest of the Encyclical only deals implicitly with those last questions while explicitly commenting upon the problem of the extent of reason's power. In the context of our present project, this question of reason is of course paramount. As a result, the next portion of our commentary on HUMANAE GENERIS will be restricted to examining this question as it is dealt with by Pius XII. (HG, 29-34) The concluding articles (HG, 39-43) deal with certain questions in positive science raised by the theory of evolution. These problems will be treated briefly, as they touch upon the relation of science (empirical knowledge) and truth (adequation of the mind to reality including metaphysical reality), and thus are directly related to our project.

Pope Pius begins his discussion of the power of reason by making the following pivotal statement: "It is well known how highly the Church regards human reason, for it falls to reason to demonstrate with certainty the existence of God, personal and one; to prove beyond doubt from divine signs the very foundations of the

Christian faith; to express properly the law which the Creator has imprinted in the hearts of men;¹⁶⁶ and finally to attain to some notion, indeed a very fruitful notion, of the mysteries. But reason can perform these foundations safely and well only when properly trained, that is imbued with that sound philosophy which possesses an authority of even higher order because . . . this philosophy, acknowledged and accepted by the Church, safeguards the genuine validity of human knowledge, the unshakeable, metaphysical principle of sufficient reason, causality, and finality, and finally the mind's ability to attain certain and unchangeable truth."¹⁶⁷ In other words, the truth value of Scholastic philosophy (held to be self-evident by Pius [HG, 30]) is guaranteed by the very faith it is held to be the basis for.¹⁶⁸ It would seem

¹⁶⁶ The relationship between the teachings of John Paul II and those of Pius XII regarding the 'natural law' would seem to be made obvious by this statement in HUMANAE GENERIS.

¹⁶⁷ "In comperto est quanti Ecclesia humanam rationem faciat, quod pertinet ad existentiam unius Dei personalis certo demonstrandum, itemque ad ipsius christianae fidei fundamenta signis divinis invicte comprobanda; parique modo ad legem, quam Creator animis hominum indidit, rite exprimendam: ac denique ad aliquam mysteriorum intelligentiam assequendam eamque fructuosissimam. Hoc tamen munus ratio tum solum apte ac tuto absolvere poterit, cum debito modo excolta fuerit; nempe cum fuerit sana illa philosophia imbuta, quae . . . altioris etiam ordinis auctoritatem habet . . . quia . . . philosophia in Ecclesia agnita ac recepta, et verum sincerumque cognitionis humanae valorem tuetur, et metaphysica inconcussa principia - rationis nempe sufficientis, causalitatis, et finalitatis - ac demum certae et immutabilis veritatis assecutionem." (HG, 29)

¹⁶⁸ It is helpful at this point to refer once again to John Paul's document. Even though he does not give the unqualified explicit support to Scholasticism as such that we have just seen in Pius's letter, John Paul does, in fact - by citing Saint Thomas as authoritative, and by the very structure of the reasoning we have seen him use - implicitly underwrite the

to follow logically, as Pius points out (HG, 32), that a philosophy such as Scholasticism would be the perfect foundation for a sound theological training.¹⁶⁹ Pope Pius XII, by way of completion of his treatment of the 'sana philosophia,' notes that this philosophy, although rationally coherent, is not, 'sterile rationalism' that overrides proper emotion. (HG, 33) Pius shows this to be the case by noting that, "Finally, they reproach this philosophy taught in our schools for regarding only the intellect in the process of cognition, while neglecting the function of the will and the emotions. This is simply not true. Never has Christian philosophy denied the usefulness and efficacy of good dispositions of soul for perceiving and embracing moral and religious truths. In fact, it has always taught that the lack of these dispositions of good will can be the reason why the intellect, influenced by the passions and evil inclinations, can be so obscured that it cannot see clearly."¹⁷⁰ Thus, Saint Thomas's notion that "the intellect can in some way perceive higher goods of the moral order . . . as it experiences a certain 'connaturality' with these goods, whether this 'connaturality' be purely natural,

explicit endorsement of Pius.

¹⁶⁹ Again we are reminded of John Paul and his statement that he did not wish to impose a philosophy or theology. On this issue, see above.

¹⁷⁰ "Numquam enim christiana philosophia utilitatem negavit et efficacitatem bonarum totius animi dispositionum ad res religiosas ac morales plene cognoscendas et amplectendas; immo semper docuit huiusmodi dispositionum defectum causam esse posse cur intellectus, cupiditatibus ac mala voluntate affectus, ita obscuratur ut non recte videat." (HG, 33)

or the result of grace"¹⁷¹ is simply a spelling out, in plain terms, of the recognition of the importance of the will in 'comprehending' reality. However, those thinkers like Henri Bergson who hold that "the appetitive and affective faculties have a certain power of understanding, and that man, since he cannot by using his reason decide with certainty what is true and what is to be accepted, turns to his will, by which he freely chooses among opposite opinions,"¹⁷² obviously take the matter too far. Pius ends his discussion of the true philosophy by noting that his teaching is in keeping with his predecessors' and that he is quite within the competence of his office since: "[it] by divine institution has the mission not only to guard and interpret the deposit of divinely revealed truth, but also to keep watch over the philosophical sciences themselves, in order that catholic dogma may suffer no harm because of erroneous opinions."¹⁷³ Thus ends Pius's discourse on philosophy. We will now turn to his thoughts on "those questions which, although they pertain to the positive sciences, are nevertheless more or less connected with the truths

¹⁷¹ "in animo affectivam quamdam 'connaturalitatem' cum eisdem bonis sive naturalem, sive dono gratiae additam" (HG, 33)

¹⁷² "facultatibus nempe appetendi et affectandi vim quamdam intuendi adiudicare, atque hominem, cum non possit rationis discursu cum certitudine discernere quidnam ut verum sit amplectendum, ad voluntatem declinare, qua inter oppositas opiniones ipse libere decernens eligat, cognitione et voluntatis actu incompte permixtis" (HG, 33)

¹⁷³ "cuius profecto est, ex divina institutione, non solum veritatis divinitus revelatae depositum custodire et interpretari, sed ipsis etiam philosophicis disciplinis invigilare, ne quid detrimenti ex placitis non rectis catholica patiantur dogmata." (HG, 34)

of the Christian Faith."¹⁷⁴

Pope Pius XII, in accordance with his successors and predecessors, takes the Thomistic position that there is only one truth. Pius expresses this by noting that "In fact, not a few insistently demand that the Catholic religion take these sciences into account as much as possible. This certainly would be praiseworthy in the case of clearly proved fact."¹⁷⁵ As a result, the discussion concerning scientific knowledge has to do not with 'facts' but with 'theories,'¹⁷⁶ and caution is therefore always advised since the truth of faith and Scripture must be borne in mind. It follows logically from this that the Church does not reject the 'theory' that holds that the body evolves from prior living matter, but it goes without saying "that souls are immediately created by God"¹⁷⁷ and that the theoretical nature of

¹⁷⁴ "de questionibus . . . quae quamvis spectent ad disciplinas, quae 'positivae' nuncupari solent, cum christianae tamen fidei veritatibus plus minusve conectantur." (HG, 35)

¹⁷⁵ "enim non pauci exoptulant ut catholica religio earumdem disciplinarum quam plurimum rationem habeat. Quod sane laude dignum est ubi de factis agitur reapse demonstratis;" (HG, 35).

¹⁷⁶ As Pius puts it: "caute tamen accipiendum est ubi potius de 'hypothesibus' sit quaestio, etsi aliquo modo humana scientia innixis, quibus doctrina attingitur in Sacris Litteris vel in 'traditione' contenta. Quodsi tales coniecturales opiniones doctrinae a Deo revelatae directe vel indirecte adversentur, tum huiusmodi postulatum nullo modo admitti potest." (HG, 35) This means that faith and revelation are, as it were, the master or controlling sciences. It is important to note, as we have in prior instances (see discussion of GAUDIUM ET SPES), that this caution extends to morals also. For example, the whole debate concerning the technology of birth control is revelant here.

¹⁷⁷ "animas enim a Deo immediate creari catholica fides nos retinere iubet" (HG, 36)

evolution should not be lost sight of. (HG, 36) On the principle that caution must be shown in the face of theories that contradict Catholic faith, the Pope notes that "when, however, there is a question of another conjectural opinion, namely polygenism, the children of the Church by no means enjoy such liberty."¹⁷⁸ The reason for this is quite evidently founded upon the Catholic notion of original sin, "which proceeds from a sin actually committed by an individual Adam and which through generation is passed on to all and is in everyone as his own."¹⁷⁹ So it must be held that the original couple are the source of all humans and that the soul is from God and did not evolve. The last point the Pope makes has to do with the historical veracity of Scripture, and we will now turn to this discussion.

Restricting his comments to the historical books in the Old Testament in general and to the first eleven chapters of Genesis in particular, the Pope notes that while "the first eleven chapters of Genesis, although properly speaking not conforming to the historical method used by the Greek and Latin writers or by competent authors of our time," appear "nevertheless [to] pertain to history in a true sense."¹⁸⁰ That is, when the Sacred Writers

¹⁷⁸ "Cum vero de alia coniecturali opinione agitur, videlicet de polygenismo, quem vocant, tum ecclesiae filii eiusmodi libertate minime fruuntur." (HG, 37)

¹⁷⁹ "quod procedit ex peccato vere commisso ab uno Adamo, quoque generatione in omnes transfusum, inest unicuique proprium". (HG, 37)

¹⁸⁰ "undecim priora capita Geneseos, quamvis cum historicae compositionis rationibus proprie non convenient, quibus eximii rerum gestarum scriptores graeci et latini, vel nostrae aetatis

add popular narrations to their tales they do so with the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and with the express purpose of relating God's dealing with the world.¹¹¹ Thus, as historians, "our ancient sacred writers must be admitted to be clearly superior to the ancient profane writers".¹¹² With that, Pope Pius XII has put forth his teaching concerning science and history and his understanding of the truth of faith and Scripture. Modern science notwithstanding, the faith rests secure. In this as in so much of his teaching, he and John Paul have a meeting of minds. However, it still remains to make this meeting of minds between the two pontiffs evident, and this we will do in the conclusion that follows.

periti usi fuerint," they are "nihilominus quodam vero sensu . . . ad genus historiae pertinere." (HG, 38)

¹¹¹ This seems to be point the following is making.:
 "eademque capita, oratione simplici ac figurata mentique populi parum exculti accommodata, tum praecipuas veritates referre, quibus aeterna nostra procuranda salus innititur, tum etiam popularem descriptionem originis generis humani populi electi. Si quid autem hagiographi antiqui ex narrationibus popularibus hauserint (quod quidem concedi potest), numquam obliviscendum est eos ita egisse divinae inspirationis afflatu adiutos, quo in seligendis ac diiudicandis documentis illis ab omni errore immunes praemuniebantur." (HG, 38)

¹¹² "antiquos profanos scriptores aperte praecellere dicendi sint." (HG, 39)

Conclusion

We are now in a position to offer some thoughts regarding our original contention that John Paul II has not taken the 'modernizing' option some held was presented by the Second Vatican Council and that he has, rather, chosen to emphasize the 'conservative' option which, we have tried to show, was never far from the surface in the Council documents.¹⁰³ First, we feel that our insistence that Vatican II was not really an enterprise in 'modernization' was borne out by our analysis of the texts of LUMEN GENTIUM and GAUDIUM ET SPES. Further, the acceptance by the Council Fathers of Pope Paul VI's reservation of the birth control issue to himself and his subsequent handling of the issue (see Appendix Two) would seem to bear this notion out. In short, then, we are putting forth the proposition that Pope John Paul II is, as he himself asserts, true to the teaching (if not the spirit) of the Second Vatican Council. If the preceding is true, it still remains to show that Pope John Paul's teachings on morality and, by extension, his attitude towards the modern world in general and scientific knowledge in particular are not only traditional but, in fact, underwrite and restore (inasmuch as this was necessary) those

¹⁰³ It must be stressed that the present project is dealing with the 'texts' of the Council as they were officially promulgated and not with the politics or personal positions of the participants. Thus, when we attribute a notion to the Council Fathers, we do so in terms of their collegiality in communion with the Supreme Pontiff. It does appear that much of the 'hope' for the Council rested not on its collegiality but upon individuals and their opinions and aspirations.

of Pope Pius XII.¹⁸⁴ What follows will be an attempt to relate the teachings of VERITATIS SPLENDOR with HUMANI GENERIS and the 'conservative seeds' found in the documents of Vatican II, with particular emphasis upon LUMEN GENTIUM and GAUDIUM ET SPES.

Turning specifically to a comparison of VERITATIS SPLENDOR with HUMANI GENERIS, it is important to note at the outset that the former is a work of ethics and the latter a work of what, for lack of a better term, may be called epistemology.¹⁸⁵ This does not however mean that the work of John Paul II does not reflect that of Pope Pius XII, or, in our terms, that VERITATIS SPLENDOR does not reinstate (or, as we have maintained, 'continue') the teachings of Pope Pius XII. This is simply to note that the teaching of Pius concerning truth in general and the use of reason in particular is the structure upon which John Paul has erected his ethical edifice. To be more specific, Pope Pius XII makes it evidently clear that reason is Scholastic reason which is able to discover the true meaning of nature. That is, nature is a pathway to, or in the

¹⁸⁴ With the wisdom of hindsight, it would now seem clear that there never was any real danger to the mainstream tradition as it was encoded by Pius XII and that the so-called 'Catholic Restoration' is more aptly termed the 'Catholic Continuation.'

¹⁸⁵ By 'epistemology' I mean to imply not a critical theory of knowledge in the modern sense but rather what could be termed an 'ontology' or, perhaps, a 'metaphysic' in the sense of a theory of being. In simple terms, Pius XII's HUMANI GENERIS presents a world view which reveals, at least to his satisfaction, the very structure of reality. All reasoning must be done within this 'gestalt' and is conditioned by it. It is this world view that John Paul II accepts (by accepting the natural law) as the basis for his own ethical discussions and, so, it seems proper to say that Pius's work grounds John Paul's as that of John Paul's restores (or continues) Pius's.

metaphor of John Paul a reflection of, Divine Truth.¹⁸⁶ Thus, while Pius uses this to show that science must reflect this truth and that the teaching Magisterium of the Church is the competent authority to judge on these matters, John Paul applies the same criteria to moral problems and declares that the natural law (which in ethics is the application of Scholastic ontology to understanding man and his proper acts) also is a reflection of the Divine Truth and that the Magisterium is likewise (and for the same reasons) the legitimate custodian of this truth and the sole judge as to its validity. Of course, Pope Pius XII has more specific writings dealing with ethics, but these works also depend upon the natural law for their basis and, thus, upon the structure of being elaborated in HUMANI GENERIS, which is borrowed from the Scholastic philosophy. It is for this reason that we have chosen to compare VERITATIS SPLENDOR with HUMANI GENERIS.

If the above is a proper assessment of both the ontological and the ethical systems at work in the Church's teaching, then our contention is correct that Vatican II, whatever it may have promised, has been put into practice by the present pontiff and that it also has remained true to the Magisterium's mandate, as enunciated by Pius XII, to "spread the Good News of the Gospel" according to the tradition handed to it by the past. This tradition includes the natural law as judged and enunciated by

¹⁸⁶ So far we have more or less assumed the meaning of Scholasticism. It will be necessary at a later date to make precise this notion, specifically in relation to an understanding of the 'natural law.'

Scholasticism. We are now in a position to look at the reaction in Canada to John Paul's Encyclical and relate it to both the modern and postmodern situations.

EXCURSUS ONE

The meaning of 'nature' as exemplified by its use
by Pope Paul VI in his HUMANAE VITAE

We have referred to the term 'nature' constantly throughout our discussion. We have suggested that this term signifies what may loosely be called the substance, essence or definition of any entity as these terms are understood in the Scholastic tradition.¹ The term is one with a shifting signification, however, and what follows will attempt, through a reading of Pope Paul VI's HUMANAE VITAE, to come to an understanding of what this troublesome term both denotes and connotes. As we have noted, the birth control issue is an exemplary one in the Catholic elucidation of morality since the Church's teaching on this subject is based upon a specific understanding of the 'natural law'. It is for this reason that Paul's encyclical on this very subject is helpful in our struggle to render precise the meanings of a word which more than any other has been a scandal to those who do not share the official teaching of the Church on ethics in general and on birth control in particular.

Pope Paul VI begins his discussion of the birth control

¹ The substance or essence of a thing is that which defines the being as a being within a designated class as genus and species. It is what Aristotle (see Metaphysics) and the Scholastics (see St. Thomas) saw as making a being what it is and defining its proper being and those actions which flow from this proper being. Thus it is the nature of the thing and the understanding of this nature that renders a proper or natural mode of acting. In regard to this discussion see De ente et essentia.

controversy by noting that while for the creating of new life "married persons are the free and responsible collaborators of God the Creator,"² the fulfilment of this duty has nevertheless at all times "posed grave problems to the conscience of married persons"³ — but "with the recent evolution of society, changes have taken place that give rise to new questions which the Church could not ignore."⁴ Thus the question of transmitting life has been, and still is, a serious question which the Church feels called upon to deal with, and to provide guidelines for the correct fulfilling of this "most serious duty."⁵ The work of Pope Paul is, in fact, a reaction to a general feeling in the Church that the question of the transmission of life had reached a point where it was felt by many that the Church's traditional notion required profound examination.⁶ Pius XII had allowed the use of the so-called rhythm method, but as we have noted, the Fathers of Vatican II had given voice to the hope that the signs of the times would be read regarding this issue and the commission and the Pope seemed to have

² "coniuges liberam et consciam Deo Creatori tribuunt operam" (HV, 1)

³ "[in] omni tempore coniugum conscientiae arduas facessivit quaestiones" (HV, 1)

⁴ "recens humanae societatis cursus eiusmodi mutationes invexit, ut novae quaestiones sint exortae, quas Ecclesiae ignorare non liceat." (HV, 1)

⁵ "munus gravissimum" (HV, 1)

⁶ As Pope Paul VI notes in HUMANAE VITAE, 5, Pope John XXIII in March 1963 instituted a commission to study the question. However, regarding the authority of this commission and its final effect, see the discussion below.

the charge of reexamining this doctrine and its appropriateness. HUMANAE VITAE is Pope Paul's response to this request. It should always be borne in mind that this teaching of the Pope is seen as authoritative and thus puts in perspective not only the Church's understanding of the 'natural law' but also the practical meaning of collegiality.⁷ The Pope then goes on to note the changes he feels have taken place in the world and which necessitate the present response. We will first list these problems with Paul VI, and then note the problems these changes give rise to. The completion of this task will make it possible to follow the Pontiff's handling of these difficulties.

Now the Pope notes that to properly discuss the issue at hand it is necessary to consider it "beyond partial perspectives — whether of the biological or psychological, demographic or sociological orders."⁸ Thus, while the modern questions which seem to dominate the secular discussion of the need for birth control

⁷ See HV, 4 and 6, especially section 6, where the Pope says that the commission was unable to come to a proper conclusion on the question of the transmission of life. As Pope Paul puts it: "quodque praesertim quaedam quaestionis dissolvendae viae rationesque exstiterant, a doctrina morali de matrimonio, a Magisterio Ecclesiae firma constantia proposita, discedentes." Obviously, the traditional position of the Pope vis a vis the other members of the hierarchy is being put forward here. The Pope, further, notes: "Quare, actibus ad Nos missis accurate expensis, re diligentissime mente animoque excussa, assiduisque Deo admotis precibus, vi mandati, Nobis a Christo commissi, nunc gravibus huius generis quaestionibus responsum dare censemus." (HV, 6) In short, the Pope as Pope is competent to render the proper notion concerning this issue. The 'naturalness' of this proper notion will be discussed below.

⁸ "ultra particulares alias eiusdem generis rationes — cuiusmodi eae sunt, quae biologicae aut psychologicae, demographicae aut sociologicae appellantur" (HV, 7)

are important to the Pope, Paul VI expresses his requirement that the problem is to be considered "in the light of an integral vision of man and of his vocation, not only his natural and earthly, but also his supernatural and eternal vocation".⁹ The Pope then notes that the main claims made to justify artificial birth control¹⁰ are based upon an appeal to the demands of both "conjugal love and of 'responsible parenthood,'"¹¹ and it is necessary to determine the sense of these notions in the light of man's true being. In doing this, the Pope claims (not unjustly, as we have tried to argue) to be following the teaching of GAUDIUM ET SPES. (HV, 7) The Pope deals with each of these concepts in turn.

Paul VI defines the 'vera natura' of conjugal love as taking its origin from God. (HV, 8) This means that marriage is not a human institution but is "the wise institution of the Creator to

⁹ "circumspicienda est, ut totum hominem, totumque, ad quod is vocatus est, munus complectatur, quod non tantum ad naturalia et terrena, sed etiam ad supernaturalia et aeterna pertinet." (HV, 7)

¹⁰ Pope Paul VI, of course, assumes that natural birth control is acceptable, and his whole argument rests upon this doctrine and the distinction between artificial and 'natural' methods of contraception that it implies. (Pius X, CC and Pius XII, Allocutio conventu unionis italicae inter obstetrices) Thus the nature he is referring to is not merely the essence of the being, man, but also extends throughout reality, and it follows that sexuality also has an essence which dictates its 'natural' use. (The 'nature' to transmit new life and to ensure closeness in marriage. Nevertheless, it would seem the one end includes and fructifies the other.) It is in this sense that we have referred to the 'essentialism' as taught by the texts we have seen as a kind of 'fundamentalism.' But see Appendix Two in this regard.

¹¹ "sive coniugalis amoris, sive paternitatis sui officii consciae" (HV, 7)

realize in mankind his design of love."²² So the essence (nature) of marriage is to further the plan of God's love in the world, and therefore the love in marriage is not merely erotic but divine and issues, as does God's love, in the transmission of life. (HV, 8)

What seems to be at stake here are two points – one of which we have seen before and the other a principle of Scholastic philosophy. The first point is that man is both body and soul, and his mode of loving is therefore both sensual and spiritual. The second point, referring to the transmission of life, seems to be an application of the Platonic principle (transmitted through the Scholastic tradition) that the good (in this case, the love the couple expresses and shares in God) diffuses itself. This is, as we have seen, conjugal love, and "this love is fecund for it is not exhausted by the communion between husband and wife, but is destined to continue, rising up new life."²³ As Paul VI notes, this is quite in keeping with the teaching of GAUDIUM ET SPES and allows for a dual end or 'telos' for marriage, putting the pontiff in a position to argue for natural as opposed to artificial birth control.

The Pope begins by defining what he means by 'responsible parenthood'. In summary, 'responsible parenthood' implies a knowledge of the biological laws of reproduction, a chaste approach

²² "illud sapienter providenterque Creator Deus ea mente instituerit, ut in hominibus suum amoris consilium efficeret." (HV, 8)

²³ "hic denique amor 'fecundus' est, quippe qui non totus in coniugum communione contineatur, sed eo etiam spectet ut pergat, novasque exsuscitet vitas." (HV, 9)

to the use of sexuality and lastly that the decision to limit births and practice sexual intercourse must be reached for "grave motives and with due respect for moral law."¹⁴ 'Responsible parenthood,' then, is not simply a matter of frustrating conception but implies both chastity in the use of sexuality and moral imperatives in the choices concerning the means of limiting births. (HV, 10)

What then is it about the nature of the marriage act that places it under these injunctions? The Pope, at this point in the discussion, seems to be expanding his notion of the term 'nature'. That is, he deduces from the 'nature' or 'definition' or 'being' of the act of sexual intercourse (always within marriage, its only valid locus) both a reason to justify non-fecund intercourse and a method which is licit in rendering the act non-fecund. However, it must be borne in mind that this non-fecund aspect of the act is part of 'nature' and not of human design and intention.¹⁵ That is, husband and wife may choose to have intercourse during those times when the wife is infertile and, by doing so, frustrate conception, but this is to follow 'nature' in that "God has wisely disposed natural laws and rhythms of fecundity which, of themselves, cause

¹⁴ "seriis causis moralibusque praeceptis observatis." (HV, 10)

¹⁵. As has been often noted in the traditional discussion of this problem, intention can be double. That is, one chooses to act in circumstances which allow for an outcome that, while it may be desired, is not directly caused.

a separation in the succession of births."²⁶ Thus the natural law which "every marriage act open to the transmission of life"²⁷ observes, while at the same time the principle of 'responsible parenthood' is met. Natural law consequently refers to all that is ordered in the universe towards man achieving his end or goal in all its complexity. That the Pope as the Teaching Magisterium of the Church can, in fact, rule on the meaning and application of this 'natural law' is, according to Pope Paul, something "no believer will wish to deny."²⁸ In other words, 'natural law' is that rule of reality and life which the Magisterium both recognizes through reason and accepts through faith in revelation and which it is competent to elucidate as binding upon all. It is, to be somewhat ironic, the way things should be (and in fact are) according to the dictates of God's plan for the world. A plan that reason can discern but which, as we have seen, needs to be enriched by God's revelation as developed within the traditional teaching of the Church's Magisterium (which is to say, the ontology of the Scholastic world view). Just as science and metaphysical truth cannot be contrary in their true expression by the Magisterium, so too nature and supernature are compatible provided they are mediated by the Magisterium. The rest of Pope Paul's encyclical

²⁶ "Deus . . . naturales leges ac tempora fecunditatis ita sapienter disposuit, ut eadem iam per se ipsa generationes subsequentes intervallent." (HV, 11)

²⁷ "ut 'quilibet matrimonii usus' ad vitam humanam procreandum per se destinatus permaneat" (HV, 11)

²⁸ "Nemo sane christifidelium eant infitiat." (HV, 4)

concerns itself with the pastoral implication of this doctrine, but as we have achieved our goal of defining 'nature' as it is used in the context of the Church Magisterium, we may leave off our discussion.

EXCURSUS TWO

The Papal use of 'nature' and the charge of 'fundamentalism'

We have referred to the Magisterium's teaching on the 'natural law' as a type of 'fundamentalism'. By this terminology we mean to imply that what is 'natural' within this system is not always evidently so and that it requires a certain 'literalism' in order to call what seems 'cultural' 'natural'. Lastly, there seems to be a certain hypocrisy in claiming something as 'natural' while it is contradicting what would seem to be the 'natural' outcome. (The rhythm method of birth regulation would seem to be a glaring example. Indeed, the whole doctrine of second intention seems to be guilty of this accusation.) The example most open to all these charges would seem, as we have indicated, to be the Church's doctrine on birth control. The once-held notion of slavery as being natural¹ would serve just as well, but there is no need to generate endless instances. Rather we will try to first expand on our meaning of 'fundamentalism' and subsequently, by a reading of section forty-seven of John Paul II's VERITATIS SPLENDOR, attempt to see how the Magisterium would answer this charge. One last quibble. While it is true that when the notion of 'nature' is transposed to the modern scene (realm of empirical science) the issue we are dealing with disappears, it seems to reemerge with the

¹ "Rappelons que Bossuet lui-meme, au XVIIe, déclarait l'esclavage "de droit naturel." R. Pernoud, II, p. 173.

postmodern situation.² By way of completion, it may be noted that Romanticism did give 'moral' value to Nature in opposition to the modern rejection of nature, and thus shows affiliation with both the Church's notion and that of postmodernism. In the present instance, however, we are concerning ourselves solely with the Magisterium's reaction to the charge of fundamentalism.

Pope John Paul refers to what we have called 'fundamentalism' as 'physicimus et naturalismus.' (VS, 47) The Pope means by these terms that the 'natural law', if understood in this way, would be merely biological laws which would lock the human being into a mode of acting that was pre-determined and unchangeable. (A clear example of this would be the gender theory of the Church.) Those who charge that this indeed is the Church's doctrine argue that it would seem to militate against the creative ability of man to act within his cultural and 'free' situation. In short, it would be a denial of man's freedom. Thus, for example, the Church's condemnation of all sexual acts except 'procreative, conjugal' intercourse (see Excursus One) would deny man's true being and "Consequently, in too superficial a way, a permanent and unchanging

² Also the term 'natural law' appears in the thought of eighteenth-century thinkers like the 'physiocrats' who claimed to be 'scientific.' Again to quote Pernoud, "le libre jeu des 'lois naturelles' est regardé [par les physiocrates] comme la base meme de cette science économique . . ."; (Ibid., p. 184) and in regard to property rights: "Il n'est pas naturel que l'on puisse acquerir le droit complet de suffrage en achetant un petit terrain sur lequel un citoyen ne peut subsister"; (p. 192) and lastly, "Cet homme [des Lumieres] . . . il lui suffira, pour regler sa conduite, de la conformer aux lois naturelles." (Ibid., p. 203)

So the term 'natural law' is ambiguous. For a furtherance of this discussion see note six below. In relation to postmodernism and 'nature' see Chapter Three.

character would be attributed to certain kinds of human behaviour, and, on the basis of this, an attempt would be made to formulate universally valid moral norms."³ In other terms, the morality of an act cannot be determined by "a naturalistic understanding"⁴ but rather "in the power of his own counsel."⁵ That is, the understanding and the defining of 'nature' is a human act of cognition and is as a result progressive and, in a sense, conditioned by the culture and situation of the subject inasmuch as the 'symbolic or metaphorical' function of the definition would not be denied. It is this function that the Church's position would seem to deny. As we have seen in the main body of our text, the Pope answers this charge by noting that the very 'nature' of freedom is to follow what is determined by 'nature' in the nonmetaphorical or ontological sense. In short, if one accepts the universe of discourse of the Pope, the objection is ruled out of order. To hold the objection to be valid one would have to reject the ontology of the Pope's discourse, and thus the entire discourse concerning nature.⁶ This problem then is one more example of the

³ "Sic, nonnullis humanis moribus permanens immutabilisque ratio omnia leviter tributa esset, et ideo leges morales conditae essent in universum validae." (VS, 47)

⁴ "Naturales proclivitates" (VS, 47)

⁵ "in manu consilii sui reliquit" (VS, 47)

⁶ By 'symbolic' we mean to imply that the 'nature' of a thing is an approximation of what it is in terms of observation and empirical description. It follows from this that to say something is 'natural' is to say that it conforms to what is generally considered the being's definition or function. For example, a particular type of sexual activity would be natural to the extent that it is considered to conform to a culture's understanding of

antimodernism of the Magisterium's position.

To close the present discussion we may note that the 'inconsistencies' we have pointed out in the Church's doctrines (namely on slavery and political institutions) would seem to stand as witness to the fact that man does think and react in history and that even the Church must, at times, bow to the winds of change.

its function. It follows, then – and it is historically the case – that different cultures consider different sexual activities 'natural.' (It is interesting to note that the Magisterium is willing to grant this to political structures. (GS,) We are saying that the Magisterium's use of nature is fundamentalist in the sense that it freezes the meaning of things according to a particular cultural understanding and then extends this absolutism to cover every human activity. (Again it is instructive to recall the institution of slavery in this connection of 'being natural.' In the light of this, one may add 'inconsistent' to 'fundamentalist.')

Thus, man is a body and soul and must act within the context of this understanding. Further, sexuality, as an example, is defined in relation to this 'nature' of man, and as a consequence natural sexual activity must reflect this prior nature. Even in marriage, sexuality must be controlled by reason and contribute to the good of man as a being with a spiritual destiny. In terms of gender theory, this same attitude has placed women – because of the ability to give birth and the dependency this entails – in a subservient position to man, who is then held to be naturally superior or at least different in ability and destiny. (Scientific advancement has caused a rethinking of this 'natural position.')

Lastly in this regard, one might cite the problem of female priests. To say that because Jesus was a man and the priest represents Jesus and that therefore the representative must be a man is a case of 'literalism' or 'fundamentalism.' However, it must be conceded that within the context (Scholasticism) in which the Magisterium carries on its debate, this position is logical and, in so far as it goes, valid.

Excursus Three - CATECHISMUS ECCLESIAE CATHOLICAE as a preparation for VERITATIS SPLENDOR

The issuing of CATECHISMUS ECCLESIAE CATHOLICAE by Pope John Paul II on 9 October 1992¹ not only predated the long promised moral treatise which would underpin the moral teaching of the CATECHISM but also anticipated this same doctrine. VERITATIS SPLENDOR was issued the next year (6 August 1993), but the stage had been set the previous year by the CATECHISM. That is, the CATECHISM was the penultimate act that cut at the very root of whatever hope for modernization Vatican II had fostered. In the CATECHISM, which need not delay us for long, we see the seeds of what we have noted had come to full growth in VERITATIS SPLENDOR. Let us now turn to the CATECHISM with an eye to ferreting out those elements that announce the doctrine of VERITATIS SPLENDOR.

The CATECHISM is divided into four major sections, each of which is further subdivided into two. For example, the first major section is entitled "Profession of Faith" and it in turn is subdivided into two sections the first of which is the foundation of the second. So in our example, subsection one deals in sequence with the points of doctrine touching the fundamentals of theology (by way of illustration, this section opens with a discussion of

¹ It is interesting to note that the CATECHISM was first written in French and published in that language. A Latin translation was made, of course, but it would seem that the 'official' text is the French one. It is for this reason that the quotations in the present instance are from the French text. For a history of the writing of the CATECHISM see Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger and Christoph Schonborn, Introduction to the Catechism of the Catholic Church (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1994), pp. 23-27.

man's quest for God) while the second subsection discusses the twelve articles of the Apostles' Creed, articles which give 'praxis' to the theory expounded in the first subsection. This structure is followed for the three remaining major themes of the liturgy in conjunction with the seven Sacraments; the basis of morality is then explored coupled with the Ten Commandments, and, lastly, the theoretical nature of prayer, in general, joined to a reflection on the seven petitions of the Pater Noster.² So it is

². In terms of actual structure the organization works out in the following scheme:

PREMIERE PARTIE: La profession de la foi

Chapters One to Four discuss the particular make up of man that allows him to be capable of God. Then, God's love for us and the need for Faith to bring this love to its proper end is dealt with. This subsection ends with a treatment of the place of Scripture in the plan of salvation.

Chapters Five to Twenty-nine enunciate the specific content of Faith from Creation to the Last Things. The base text for this elucidation is the Apostles' Creed as we have noted.

DEUXIEME PARTIE: Les sacrements de la foi

Chapters Thirty to Thirty-two describe the nature of the Sacraments as the living and celebrating of the Paschal Mystery in the Church.

Chapters Thirty-three to Forty-one discuss the meaning and particular grace of each of the seven sacraments.

TROISIEME PARTIE: La vie de la foi

Chapters Forty-two to Forty-three elucidate the basis (both that which is revealed and that which can be known by reason) of Catholic morality.

Chapters Forty-four to Fifty-three take up each of the Ten Commandments in turn and expand and apply their meaning to actual praxis.

that the CATECHISM covers the entire field of the Catholic faith in terms of what is to be believed, of the life of the Church, of what is to be done and of prayer life. In the present instance we will examine in detail the third of the major themes noted above, namely that dealing with morality. Specifically we will focus on those points of moral doctrine that paved the way for VERITATIS SPLENDOR.³

As we have noted, the CATECHISM treats of moral problems in Part Three, Section One.⁴ We will now turn to that section of the work with an eye to comparing it with the way we have seen John Paul treat moral problems in VERITATIS SPLENDOR. True to the form utilized by John Paul in his moral Encyclical, Part Three of the CATECHISM begins with a discussion of morality as it is handed down from God. However, the thrust of this approach is the 'personalist' one of VERITATIS SPLENDOR. In Section One, the first

QUATRIEME PARTIE: La prière dans la vie de la foi

Chapter Fifty-four expounds the nature, importance and power of prayer.

Chapter Fifty-five makes plain the seven lessons of the PATER NOSTER.

³. Specifically, Chapters Forty-two to Forty-three with a particular emphasis on Chapter forty-three, 1954 - 1960 dealing with Natural Law which we saw was pivotal to John Paul's discussion of moral matters in VERITATIS SPLENDOR.

⁴. It is helpful to keep in mind that the CATECHISM is divided into PARTS (4) which are divided into two SECTIONS each. Each SECTION is then divided into CHAPTERS which are subdivided into ARTICLES. Like all Papal documents, the paragraphs of the text are numbered sequentially and refers are given following this numbering.

of the three chapters has to do with "the dignity of the human person,"⁵ and this dignity of the person is known from Scripture, where it is shown that man discovers himself in Christ (CCC, 1701) and "in Christ, 'the image of the invisible God'."⁶ Thus man is the image of God, and as such has the vocation to beatitude in the possession of God as an end of life. (CCC, 1716-1725) This ability (if one may so describe it) to be godlike, or to act morally, is quite evidently based on man's ability to make free choices and therefore to act in a responsible manner. (CC, 1730-1742) It follows, as Catholic tradition has consistently taught, that "freedom makes man a moral subject."⁷ That man is a moral subject necessitates a moral object which "It is therefore an error to judge the morality of human acts by considering only the intention that inspires them or the circumstances . . ."⁸ The doctrine here then is the familiar one of VERITATIS SPLENDOR. That is, there is an objective good and evil and this leads us directly to the natural law. Of course, in the treatment of the CATECHISM, the work does not go directly to the natural law but develops the notion of virtue and vice, a development which is common in 'religious' moral discussion.' The question of conscience is also

⁵ "La dignité de la personne humaine" (CCC, 1700)

⁶ "dans le christ "image du dieu invisible" (Col. 1, 15).

⁷ "La liberté fait de l'homme un sujet moral." (CC. 1749)

⁸ "Il est donc erroné de juger de la moralité des actes humains en ne considérant que l'intention qui les inspire, ou les circonstances." (CCC, 1756)

⁹ Articles 5 - 8.

dealt with, and it is noted that conscience can choose good and evil according to reason and God's law and can be in involuntary error. This is quite in keeping with the doctrine of John Paul in VERITATIS SPLENDOR.¹⁰ For our purposes, we may bracket that discussion and go directly to the CATECHISM's discussion of the natural law.

Before dealing with the natural law, the CATECHISM, in Chapter Two of our section, deals with the social nature of morality. This, we have seen, is to apply the teaching of GAUDIUM ET SPES, the important document of Vatican II on the Church and the modern world, and we will simply point out that both the CATECHISM and GAUDIUM ET SPES teach, in the words of the CATECHISM, that "The vocation of humanity is to show forth the image of God and to be transformed into the image of the Father's only Son. This vocation takes a personal form since each of us is called to enter into the divine beatitude; it also concerns the human community as a whole."¹¹ With this point made, we now turn to Chapter Three and its discussion of 'Le salut de Dieu: la loi et la grâce.'

From our stated perspective on the CATECHISM we will not concern ourselves with the discussion of grace but restrict our remarks to the CATECHISM's teaching on the question of law (Article

¹⁰. CCC, 1798, 1800 and 1801.

¹¹. "La vocation de l'humanité est de manifester l'image de Dieu et d'être transformée à l'image du Fils unique du Père. Cette vocation revêt une forme personnelle, puisque chacun est appelé à entrer dans la béatitude divine; elle concerne aussi l'ensemble de la communauté humaine." (CCC, 1877)

One). Now the CATECHISM makes the expected point that "The moral law is the work of the Divine Wisdom."¹² There are, according to the CATECHISM, three subdivisions of the moral law, namely "I. The natural moral law; II. The Old Law; III. The New Law or The Law of the Gospel."¹³ This division is quite in keeping with VERITATIS SPLENDOR and we need only examine the meaning of the first type of law to make our point that the CATECHISM was paving the way for the doctrine of the Encyclical. We will now look at the Catechism's treatment of 'la loi naturelle.'

The CATECHISM is quite plain about what it means by the natural law. Using both Christian and pagan sources, the document under consideration notes that natural law is written in the hearts of all (CCC, 1954) and has the force of law because it is the voice of a reason higher than human and to which man's freedom is under obligation.¹⁴ That is, this law is both natural and divine in that it shows man the proper way to act in relation to his unique end, which is the possession of God through a life of virtue. Natural

¹²"La loi morale est l'oeuvre de la Sagesse divine." (CCC, 1950)

¹³"I. La loi morale naturelle; (CCC, 1954) II. La Loi ancienne; (CCC, 1961) and III. La Loi nouvelle ou Loi évangélique (CCC, 1965)."

¹⁴. This analysis is based upon the text of Leo XIII quoted in the CATECHISM. We give the French text following the practice of the CATECHISM.

"La loi naturelle est écrite et gravée dans l'âme de tous et de chacun des hommes parce qu'elle est la raison humaine ordonnant de bien faire et interdisant de pécher. (. . .) Mais cette prescription de la raison humaine ne saurait avoir force de loi, si elle n'était la voix et l'interprète d'une raison plus haute à laquelle notre esprit libre doit être soumis. Léon XIII, en, "Libertas praestantissimum". (CCC, 1954)

law, then, is the light of intelligence which God has given to man in his knowledge of the truth. (CCC, 1995) It is universally present in all men, as Cicero, among the pagans, has taught. (CCC, 1956) Nevertheless, its application is variable in that "it can demand reflection that takes into account various conditions of life according to places, times, and circumstances."²⁵ However, in its general principles it is universal (1958) and, thus, is immutable with regard to these principles and must be obeyed as such. (CCC, 1958) So it may be said that "it also provides the indispensable moral foundation for building the human community . . . the necessary base for the civil law . . ."²⁶ In short, it is the rational touchstone for moral activity in all its facets. Yet, "the precepts of the natural law are not perceived by everyone clearly and immediately."²⁷ This is to note, with Pius XII (CCC, 1960) and the Catholic tradition, that man's condition is one of sinfulness which clouds his reason and for which "the natural law provides revealed law and grace with a foundation prepared by God and in accordance

²⁵ "elle peut requérir une réflexion adaptée à la multiplicité des conditions de vie, selon les lieux, les époques, et les circonstances." (CC, 1957).

²⁶ "la loi naturelle fournit les fondements solides sur lesquels l'homme peut construire l'édifice des règles morales qui guideront ses choix. Elle pose la base morale indispensable pour l'édification de la communauté des hommes. . . la base nécessaire à la loi civile . . ." (CCC, 1959)

²⁷"Les préceptes de la loi naturelle ne sont pas perçus par tous d'une manière claire et immédiate." (CCC, 1960)

with the work of the Spirit."¹⁸ This exposition would seem to be a perfect preparation for the doctrine which Pope John Paul II put forth in his VERITATIS SPLENDOR.

So we have it. The CATECHISM is a preparation for the encyclical, and the one reenforces the other. Later in the present project we will return to the CATECHISM for a look at some of the practical effects of this general doctrine. For the present, as we appear to have achieved our stated purpose, we may now leave off our discussion.

¹⁸. "La loi naturellle procure 133 la loi révélée et à la grâce une assise préparée par Dieu et accordée à l'oeuvre de l'Esprit." (CCC, 1960)

CHAPTER TWO

Canadian Reaction to Pope John Paul II's VERITATIS SPLENDOR

Introduction

The purpose of what follows is to give some indication as to how the encyclical has been received in Canada. In order to come to as clear as possible a conception of this reception we have adopted a dual methodology. That is, in terms of general Canadian reaction, we have conducted a representative sampling of the secular, Catholic and Protestant print media in order to assess their reactions to the Pope's Encyclical. Within the confines of the category of the print media, there are two books which relate to this Canadian reaction.¹ These two books will be reviewed, and then we shall turn our attention to a representative purview of the press. By 'representative' we mean to underline the fact that it has not been possible to examine every publication in this medium; consequently, we have looked at the better-known newspapers in the secular and Catholic sectors and, in the case of journals (both secular and Catholic), we have conducted as complete as possible a search. The results of this treatment of the print media appear as Section One of the present chapter. The second element of our methodology has been to conduct a survey among a representative

¹ These books are:

Jean Desclos, Resplendir de vraie liberte. Lectures de VERITATIS SPLENDOR (Montréal: Editions Mediaspaul ["Brèches théologiques" 20], 1994), and

Joe Selling, and Jan Jans, eds, The splendor of accuracy: An examination of the assertions made by VERITATIS SPLENDOR (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing, 1994).

population in the Montreal area. The survey used appears as Appendix One and the results of it are presented in Section Two below.

After marshalling our evidence from both our literature review and our survey, we will propose a conclusion concerning the reaction to VERITATIS SPLENDOR in terms of its being positively or negatively received in relation to those theological convictions held by the recipients.

Section One - The Reaction to VERITATIS SPLENDOR in the Print Media

As we noted above, there have been very few book-length studies of VERITATIS SPLENDOR; however, there have been two issued which are pertinent to the North American scene in general and the Canadian in particular. We will therefore begin our study of the print media's reaction to the Pope's letter with a look at these two volumes. We will then move on to a study of the press and journal reaction to the Encyclical. In our research into the print media it will be seen that in Canada the secular newspapers reacted to the encyclical as a news item to be reported and that the comments were largely negative or noncommittal. Catholic newspaper tended to be more positive in their comments and treatment. The situation in the journals was largely one of avoidance (particularly in the Catholic journals), while those who did acknowledge the existence of the document were, almost one hundred percent conservative in outlook and congratulatory of the Encyclical as confirming a position they already held. What follows will be divided into the type of publication (journals first, then, newspapers), and with it an exposition of the opinions expressed or not expressed, as the case may be. A summary will be presented which will confirm the suggestions made above. Let us now turn to the print media and their reaction to Pope John Paul II's encyclical on morality, VERITATIS SPLENDOR.

A. Books

Of the two volumes published in response to the letter, the first, an international publication edited by Joseph A. Selling (Belgium) and Jan Jans (Netherlands) and entitled The Splendour of Accuracy, contains six articles and an introduction which deal with specific points treated by SPLENDOR VERITATIS. The general tone of the volume is one of "disagreement and dissatisfaction" with the document and is an attempt to correct what the authors see as mistakes in the moral theology of the Pope.² Put in a less dramatic way this means that 'accusations' made in the encyclical concerning the wrong use of reason in moral matters are being not so much answered as explained away. Using the practice of artificial contraception as the test case, the book attempts to outline a situation where the teaching of John Paul becomes subject to legitimate criticism and disagreement. Joseph A. Selling, in his article "The Context and the Arguments of VERITATIS SPLENDOR," argues that from the time of Paul VI's HUMANAE VITAE' moral

² As Selling and Jans say in their Introduction: "Neither the editors nor the contributors to this volume wish or intend that this study be understood as a challenge or a rebuke to the teaching of the magisterium in the encyclical VERITATIS SPLENDOR. [Given the defense of 'proportionalism and teleology' on pp. 99 ff and pp. 136 ff., this statement of intent seems more a 'cover' than a fact. Indeed, from the point of view of the present project all authors in this work are posing questions in such a way as to deny the philosophical and theological context of the encyclical.] Nor do we hope that it be understood as 'an answer', much less 'the answer', of the non-traditionalist moral theologians [we have, of course argued that being 'traditional' is precisely the point] to the accusations made in the text of this Papal letter. Our intention is rather to respond to the assertions made in the text of the encyclical that give the impression of pointing to serious problem areas [the teaching of unsound doctrine like teleology and proportionalism] in contemporary Roman Catholic moral theology as it is being researched and taught in any number of universities and institutions of higher learning." (p. 10)

³ Professor Selling, since he seems to see an ambiguity in the teaching of Pope Paul on contraception (p. 14) and encouraged by the fact that many Catholics both lay and clerical disagreed with the teaching of the encyclical, feels that the 'spirit' of Vatican II allows one to speculate fundamentally on the 'question of

theologians have begun to reconsider the whole methodology of moral theology concerning the possibility of acts being morally evil in themselves. (A, p. 15) That is, the question being posed was the nontraditional one of whether or not the circumstances and motives (see especially, A, pp. 136 ff.) of an action were part of the definition of the moral act itself. Thus, "the questions were not what is moral or immoral but rather how does one arrive at making such distinctions in the first place and then how does one apply them to what are in reality very complex ethical issues? These are questions of method." (A, p. 16) In short, the notion that substance is indeed an existent was called into question.⁴ In other terms, our reading of the context of VERITATIS SPLENDOR differs from that of Professor Selling in that we see the tradition as being upheld and criticism like that contained in the present volume being the result of the posing of the questions in a modern (or as Selling calls it, 'revisionist') sense. It is within this context that we will review the articles in THE SPLENDOR OF ACCURACY.

Gareth Morre's article "Some Remarks on the Use of Scripture in VERITATIS SPLENDOR" (A, pp. 71-98) is a frank disagreement with the Pope's use of the story of the rich young man as an example of a call to obey the Commandments. Rather, Professor Morre sees the story as being one that portrays the problems of the rich attaining

authority and moral teaching' as put forth by the magisterium. (p. 19) Our position would be, in the light of our discussion of the context of VERITATIS SPLENDOR, that such an attitude (without debating its ultimate truth or falsity) is unwarranted on both counts.

⁴ The use of the term 'method' does not negate our approach inasmuch as the discussion carried on under the rubric of 'method' concerns definition (the meaning of any moral action), which we have argued above is explained 'essentially' in the Scholastic system John Paul uses to expound his doctrine. Of course, one could approach the problem of 'ethics' (including 'Christian' ethics) from a modern perspective, but this would be to leave the intellectual territory of the Magisterium. Once this point is made, the treatment in THE SPLENDOR OF ACCURACY is not so much answered as rendered irrelevant to the papal position.

the Kingdom of God. (A, pp. 73-79) Morre feels that the Pope has thus forced his own concern with law and legality onto the Scriptural passage (A, p. 81). Having exposed this 'error,' Morre then calls into question the Pope's sincerity in basing his teaching upon Scripture. From our perspective, again, such criticism, while perhaps technically correct, misses the point of the Pope's purpose, which is to 'follow' the tradition of the Magisterium and the practice of the Church. In this case, the pontiff's 'creative' use of Scripture is both sanctioned by traditional practice and flows directly from his philosophical position. It may be noted that Morre's rather different conclusion also follows from a prior commitment to 'modern' Biblical scholarship and philosophical thought.

Louis Janssens' "Teleology and Proportionality: Thoughts about the Encyclical VERITATIS SPLENDOR" (A, pp. 99-113) is an attempt to answer the charge against such doctrines made by the Pope. As we have seen, the Pope accuses these theologians of holding to a doctrine of 'relativism' in morals and rejects the position as denying that some acts are, in themselves, evil. Once more it is not a question of engaging the author under consideration in a debate as to the 'truth value' of his assertions. Indeed, there is much that is attractive in his arguments for both the use of proportionalism and teleology in moral matters. The fact still remains that the Pope, by accepting the existence of substance and its consequent, the 'natural law,' not only disagrees with a theory which he feels places the onus of moral proof not upon the objective existent (the moral act) but upon the perception of that existent, but must do so. In other words, the Pope and his critic are in two different worlds of discourse and the desired dialogue is ruled out of court.⁵ The same argument, mutatis mutandis, can

⁵ In regard to these 'worlds of discourse' it would appear that Professor Janssens is recasting the traditional Thomistic discussion of the 'object of a moral act' within the Anglo-American analytic context, where the question is one of meaning of terms rather than existence of substantial entities. (A, pp. 105-106)

also be applied to Bernard Hoose's discussion of "Circumstances, Intentions and Intrinsically Evil Acts" (A, pp. 136-152), where the whole matter seems to revolve around the definition (by circumstance and intention) of whether such and such an act is indeed the act referred to by the Pope. When, for example, is homicide (the taking of a human life) murder and when is it something else which may be justified (valid execution, say). Like Janssens, Professor Hoose is willing, when pushed, to admit of intrinsically evil acts, but only as a matter of definition and not as an objective existent. The implication of this difference, in the mind of the Pope (given his essentialism) amounts to a denial in the real order.⁶

Brian V. Johnstone in his treatment of "Erroneous Conscience in VERITATIS SPLENDOR and the Theological Tradition" (A, pp. 114-135) attempts to show that there are various traditional approaches to this question. The one the Pope adopts is that of Saint Thomas, who taught that an erroneous conscience is only 'per accidens' binding, and thus the objective moral order is preserved. (A, pp. 118 ff.) Professor Johnstone holds that there is another approach, which sees the binding of the erroneous conscience as springing from the dignity of the person and conscience as developing towards the truth. In other words, the person acting in accordance with a fundamental option to do the good, which is always problematic and even mysterious. (A, pp. 130 ff.) At this point we would seem to be in a situation where a discussion would be at cross-purposes, inasmuch as the issue at stake is not the

⁶ It should also be noted that in the light of EVANGELIUM VITAE and the Pastoral section (chap. 3) of VERITATIS SPLENDOR the Pope's position in regard to human life and its preservation is a rigorist one and the traditional arguments of self-defense and capital punishment are certainly put in a different light if not entirely annulled by this stance. This rigorism, it would seem, extends to all moral decisions inasmuch as the Pope sees all negative commands as universally binding. Again, we are not discussing the 'truth value' of the critics' positions, only their relation to the Church's tradition in general and Pope John Paul's teaching in particular.

morality of this act as opposed to that act but rather the conflict is between a philosophical and pastoral (in modern terms, a psychological) approach. This is merely to note that Saint Thomas is using his Aristotelean framework to explain how an invincibly erroneous conscience can be both 'good' and 'bad' at the same time. Professor Johnstone, on the other hand - and he admits as much (A, p. 132) - is concerned with the 'state' of the moral agent in a good but erroneous position, and therefore as well with the 'psychological' implications of the problem. Once more it seems a case of incompatibility of subject matters.

Finally we have the article of Jan Jans concerning "Participation - Subordination: (The Image of) God in VERITATIS SPLENDOR" (A, pp. 153-168). Professor Jans is concerned with assuring that God is not seen as what amounts to a "moral king with obedient servants" but rather that individual believers see their moral activity not as a matter of obedience but as the existentialization of a moral law that is something interior to and integral to the person discovering it. There would seem to be no objection to such a position in the teaching of VERITATIS SPLENDOR, at least in the second chapter, which treats of the natural law. Jans would seem to admit as much (A, p. 167), and the point of his article seems to be to make evident a certain tendency in VERITATIS SPLENDOR to sometimes imply that God is simply a law-giver (the assumed position of Thomistic analogy would appear to modify this position implicitly) and to encourage research into the notion of "God as the transcendental mystery of involved love and the human person as categorical moral subject." (A, p. 167) In this final article, then, there appears to be much more sympathy between the Pope and his method and that of the author than we have observed in the others. At any rate, the entire volume, while of interest, does not seem to throw much light on the encyclical itself, in that the problematic of the authors does not emerge as being the same as that of the Pope.

In direct opposition to The Splendour of Accuracy is the

position taken by theologian Jean Desclos in his work Resplendir de vraie liberté. Unlike the other book reviewed, Professor Desclos sees John Paul's VERITATIS SPLENDOR as a document that meets the moral crisis of our time.⁷ In other words, the work we have before us is one both of exposition (R, chap. 2-5) but also of advocacy in that Desclos believes "the encyclical of John Paul II has the merit of recalling to us the necessities of the moral life and to an ethical reflection concerning the highest requirements of the human project grasped in community."⁸ If one is to remedy the crisis of our time, then, the Pope's words must be heeded. With the above point made it simply remains to comment upon Desclos' handling of the document.

In regard to his understanding of it, Desclos reads the document within its proper context, and from our perspective seems to be willing to accept the antimodern implication of John Paul's work.⁹ In short, Desclos would agree with our contentions regarding the proper reading of VERITATIS SPLENDOR. He accepts the Pope's contention that objective evil exists and that true liberty is to conform to the 'nature' of man. (R, chap. 4 and 5) Having

⁷ This sentiment is present throughout the whole of Desclos' work. See especially R, pp. 5-12 and pp. 23-28.

⁸ "L'encyclique de Jean-Paul II a le mérite de nous rappeler les exigences d'une vie morale et d'une réflexion éthique à la mesure de la plus haute réussite du projet humain vécu en solidarité." (R, p. 254)

⁹ Professor Desclos does not question the metaphysical basis of the Pope's teaching. In particular, he develops the implications of this system in his discussion of true liberty, and in general seems at home in the Scholastic world of the encyclical.

expounded the document, Desclos then turns to its sources. He stresses, particularly, the work of saints Augustine and Thomas and sees the encyclical (as do we) as a logical development from both tradition and Scripture and as not contradicting the 'spirit' of Vatican II. (R, pp. 226-229)

In summary, the present book is a valid exposition of the teaching of John Paul II and adds nothing to our exposition except, perhaps, in making more explicit the influences on the encyclical as a product of tradition and of the personal work of John Paul before his elevation to the Papacy.²⁰ (R, pp. 179-191) Desclos has a tendency not only to reproduce the thought of the Pope but to do so without criticism. In consequence, his treatment of Pope John Paul's 'personalism' is one that does not seem to foreground the 'antimodern' nature of the Pope's understanding of 'person.' (R, pp. 179-185) Of course, being convinced of the truth value of the document, Desclos has little choice but to accept the document in all its implications. We conclude this short review by noting that Desclos' treatment agrees with ours in its content, if not in its intent, and that Desclos represents that school of theology in the Roman Catholic Church that accepts the Magisterium's teaching both in its philosophical context and, resulting authority.

B. Canadian Catholic magazines

The collection of Canadian Catholic magazines held by Saint Paul's University in Ottawa was utilized as the main locus of research for

²⁰ Desclos notes that "La catégorie de personne devient capitale dans sa pensée." (R, p. 179)

two reasons. Firstly, in researching Canadian Catholic magazines one is not able to use an accumulative index as no such research tool has yet been published. Secondly, Saint Paul's collection was chosen as it proved to be the most extensive available in either Montreal or Ottawa. Of course, some supplementary material was collected outside Saint Paul's, but by and large it was this collection that formed the nucleus of our research. The methodology was to search for articles on VERITATIS SPLENDOR in the year following its date of publication. What will catalogue the results of that method; we will commence by listing the magazines consulted and then present an analysis of the few articles that were found in this search. Finally, the results of the search will be placed within the general pattern suggested above.

Of the forty-seven Canadian Catholic magazines sampled, seven²² had one article or more dealing directly with the

²² The articles were as follows:

Bruno Cadore, "Stimulant mais trop catégorique," La Vie, 7 October 1993, p. 16.

Daniel Callam, "Veritatis Splendor," The Canadian Catholic Review, December 1993, pp. 2-4.

William E. Carroll, "Conscience and Automony," The Canadian Catholic Review, December 1993, pp. 32-33.

J.F. Collane, "Donquichottesque . . .," La Vie, 7 October 1993, p. 16.

Guy Durand, "L'encyclique 'Veritatis Splendor': La difficile opération morale," L'Église Canadienne, November 1993, pp. 372-373.

Guy Durand, "Rencontre Evêques - Théologiens," L'Église de Montréal, 2 June 1994, p. 607.

Bernard Hubert, "Une énergique intervention de Jean-Paul II," L'Église Canadienne, January 1994, pp. 12-13.

Jean-Pierre Manigne, "La liberté à l'épreuve de la morale," La Vie, 1 October 1993, pp. 12-41.

Matthew Meehan, "The Splendor of the Truth," Canadian Messenger of the Sacred Heart, September 1994, p. 15.

P. R., "La splendeur de la vérité," L'Église Canadienne,

Encyclical in question. (For twelve of these titles²² no back copies were available, but it seems safe to speculate that they probably had no mention of the encyclical. The pattern was that most of the 'smaller' publications avoided the issue. The remaining titles²³ yielded no information on VERITATIS SPLENDOR.

1) Daniel Callam, "Veritatis Splendor"

Father Callam in his editorial gives a rather concise but both a complete and – according to our reading – a valid summary of VERITATIS SPLENDOR. He accepts the position of the Pope without question and this to the extent of stating that the Encyclical is: "The solemn teaching of the magisterium calls for internal and external assent." (p. 4) He concludes his editorial unyielding in his assent and in his demand for assent by noting: "When what it says [the moral teaching enjoined by the Encyclical] goes against

January 1994, p. 12.

Théodule Rey-Mermet, "La splendeur de la vérité," Choisir, December 1993, pp. 8-11.

Gianfranco Rossi, "Pour une éthique planétaire," L'Église de Montréal, 2 June 1994, pp. 3-7.

Michel Salamolard, "Le courage de la vérité," Choisir, June 1994, pp. 17-20.

Michel Séguin, "L'encyclique 'VERITATIS SPLENDOR': La vérité qui rend libre!," L'Église de Montréal, 28 October 1993, pp. 1043-1045.

Bela Somfai, "'Veritatis Splendor' Encyclical a Portent of Interesting Times," Compass, January/February 1994, pp. 50 ff.

²² Namely, Apostolate; Celebrate; The Conrad Grebel Review; Frontiers; Mensonge et Désinformateur; Notre-Dame du Cap; Presence; Rassembler; Rencontre; Revue; Ultimate Reality and Meaning.

²³ Cahiers de Spiritualité; Ignatienne; Canadian Journal of Counselling; Canadian Journal of Philosophy; Canadian Historical Review; Caravan; Interculture; Liturgie; Foi et Culture; Mission Étrangère; National Bulletin on Liturgy; Nouveau Dialogue; Orient; Prêtre et Pasteur; Relations; Studia Canonica; Scarboro Missions; Sociologie et Sociétés; Univers; Vie Liturgique; Vie Oblate.

the grain, the hesitant faithful, I would suggest, must work toward the internal from the external." (p. 4) In other words, this writer feels that the Pope's words must be accepted 'sicut Roma dixit.' It is interesting to note, in this regard, that Father Callam has consistently taken a conservative view of Church doctrine. For example, in his twenty-fifth year-anniversary article on HUMANAE VITAE Father Callam notes among other approving statements made by Pope Paul VI that "The Church's stand on contraception is a specific case of the proper use of technology."⁴ We seem to have here another example of the Pope's thoughts spawning a type of thought we have called 'Catholic fundamentalism.'

2) William Carroll, "Conscience and Autonomy"

In this article from The Canadian Catholic Review, subtitled "American Notes" we have the opinion of the journal's American contributor. It is interesting that this writer completely accepts the notion of John Paul in VERITATIS SPLENDOR that "Conscience is not some independent capacity to decide what is good and what is evil. Conscience functions within the moral order, it does not constitute that order." (p. 33) He further notes that "One manifestation of the tendency of modern individualism to separate freedom from truth can be found in arguments about the primacy of conscience." (p. 32) Thus, the Pope is seen as correcting "the increasing emphasis since the eighteenth century on the radical

⁴ Daniel Callam, "My Two Cents' Worth," Canadian Catholic Review, November 1993, p. 3.

autonomy of each human being" (p. 32). In other words, he is issuing a call to return to those times when the 'natural law' defined the freedom enjoyed by conscience. This, as we have seen, is to follow the Church's antimodern position. Carroll sees this not only in terms of world history but also in terms of American culture (and, by implication, Canadian?). As he puts it: "American individualism is particularly susceptible to the error of making human subjectivity, expressed in the distorted notion of the primacy of conscience, the criterion of human dignity. Such a view leads to a society in which human choice serves as its own justification. What is right becomes nothing more than what is chosen." (p. 33) Again we see that the position taken by this writer is antimodern (and, it could be construed, a misrepresentation of modern ethics) and based upon a view of contemporary society as immoral when compared to a more moral past, a return to which is the only guarantee of a viable future. The position outlined by the writer is certainly in keeping with the teaching of the Church, but whether it is simply antimodern or postmodern remains to be seen. However, it does seem at this point allowable to note a certain apocalypticism and even sectarianism becoming characteristic of those who strictly (one is tempted to say literally) follow the Pope's teaching. Whatever the case may eventually turn out to be, the Pope's conservatism does not seem an issue.

3) Bruno Cadore, "Stimulant mais trop catégorique"

Cadore, a Dominican priest, moral theologian and assistant director

of the Centre d'éthique médicale de Lille, in the short interview reported here takes what he calls a 'prophetic' view of the encyclical. His first reaction was to see what could almost be called a double 'message'¹⁵ and, thus, he sees a connection in this 'double souci' a resemblance to GAUDIUM ET SPES and its hope of changing the world. Nevertheless, as Father Cadore notes: "This dimension exists in the encyclical but it is not in the foreground."¹⁶ This note leads to the second question concerning how the encyclical will affect Father Cadore in his pastoral commitment. He feels, as we have said, that the pastoral prong of the letter is 'prophetic' and calls for a radical and complete respect of persons, something he sees as a "sectorial concern"¹⁷ in the world. Thus, the Pope's letter is "a map that is conceived on the premise that each man can live to the full his ethical capacity."¹⁸

Father Cadore then is asked to express what, in the document, causes him difficulty. He cites an obvious problem, that of combining the ethical teaching with the pastoral concern. That is, it seems difficult to deal with the question of acts that are always and everywhere evil in themselves as applied to real people

¹⁵ Translating from the following French text: "On se trouve certainement face à un texte marqué par un double souci, pastoral et théologique." (V, 16)

¹⁶ "Cette dimension existe dans l'encyclique, mais elle n'est pas au premier plan." (V, p. 16)

¹⁷ "préoccupation sectorielle" (V, p. 16)

¹⁸ "Une charte qui s'appuie sur la conviction que tout homme peut être rejoint dans sa capacité éthique." (V. p. 16)

involved in the real world. This in the case both of repentant sinners and of those who are striving but 'caught' in the world.

Cadore ends the interview by noting that while "the encyclical does well to do battle with certain relativistic tendencies,"¹⁹ nonetheless, by denouncing this "subjectivisme" (V. p. 16) it runs the risk of encouraging the very thing it wants to oppose. Father Cadore feels this is the case because "[the faithful] are faced with certain abrupt [moral] judgments which tend to ignore the conditions of the concrete situations [in which] Christians will feel they are acting alone. Such situations encourage rather than discourage subjectivism."²⁰ All in all, it may be said that Cadore takes a 'diplomatic' approach to the issue but seems, in the final analysis, to view the document positively. Thus he also sees that it can be discussed critically in terms of "la question du pluralisme." (V. p. 16)

4) J.-F. Collange, "Donquichottesque . . ."

Professor Collange is a Protestant theologian in Strasbourg and makes the following three points concerning the encyclical. First, it is a medieval and not a modern text, a point we have made frequently. Secondly, it fails to overcome its 'thomism' with the use of biblical language. This is a rhetorical problem and is

¹⁹ "L'encyclique entend bien lutter contre un certain relativisme." (V, p. 16)

²⁰ "Face à certains jugements abrupts qui leur paraissent ignorer leur situation concrète les chrétiens sont en fait renforcés dans la conviction qu'ils doivent s'en tirer seuls. Si bien que ce qui est destiné à détourner du subjectivisme l'encourage". (V, p. 16)

something that does confuse one. However, it seems that the problem here is not so much 'biblical language' as it is how to use that language. The Pope has, in fact, little choice in this matter (due to his 'philosophical' position) and to agree with Collange in this matter is simply to agree that Catholics and Protestants read the Bible differently. Lastly, there is problem of dogmaticism. As Collange notes: "The truth is more an object of research rather than a stable given."²¹ Collange also notes that "ethical truth is not of the same order as the truths of faith,"²² a point we noted in our discussion regarding speculative and practical reason as 'ignored' by John Paul. In the context of the modern world, Collange's observations would seem to be just but ineffectual in the situation out of which the Pope is operating.

5) Guy Durand, "La difficile question morale" (also published as an abstract in Le Devoir, 6 October 1993)

Durand begins his article with a summary of the doctrine of VERITATIS SPLENDOR which, as one would expect, is quite in keeping with the reading suggested above. He ends his doctrinal review by noting that: "the object is to outline Christian morality without alteration or accommodation,"²³ and this attitude agrees with our reading. Having outlined the document, Durand offers "several

²¹ "La vérité est plus un objectif de recherche qu'une donnée immuable" (V, p. 16)

²² "la vérité éthique n'est pas du même ordre qu'une vérité de foi" (V, p. 16)

²³ "l'objectif de présenter la morale chrétienne sans altération ni accomodement" (p. 374)

critical reflections [that] come to mind."²⁴

The first critical reflection has to do with the rather authoritative tone of the document. Durand refers to the fact that, while the Pope does not wish to 'impose' a philosophy and theology, nonetheless - as we have noted - John Paul insists upon the truth of Scholasticism. Durand wonders: "Doesn't the wish to define and to impose the truth on the intellect contradict the respect and freedom for the intellect put forth in the document?"²⁵ This is an obvious problem but it would seem, for the Pope, to be a problem of teaching method rather than of doctrine. Apparently on the level of 'teaching and learning' one can allow for the development of intelligence, but its direction would not be under control if one introduced notions of development into the very heart of doctrinal discussion itself. In other words, the problem is still one of the existence of an objective way of seeing the world, and if such a stance exists (the Pope would point to Scholasticism) then Durand's point, no matter how well taken, is nullified. Durand seems to avoid this rather fundamental question.

Durand's second notion, that "the document is hardly open to the new or to new tendencies,"²⁶ follows from his first critical observation. It is hard to imagine a new form of objectivity that

²⁴ "plusieurs réflexions critiques viennent à l'esprit." (p. 375)

²⁵ "La façon de vouloir définir et imposer la vérité aux intelligences ne contredit-elle pas le respect de l'intelligence et de la liberté prôné par le même document?" (p. 375)

²⁶ "le document est bien peu ouvert aux nouvelles, aux tendances nouvelles" (p. 375)

the Pope would find satisfactory." Continuing with his critique, Durand remarks on being "disturbed by the absence of certain concepts . . . which are traditional in Roman documents."²⁷ These concepts have to do with the mercy of God, the fact of the gradualness of conversion and, finally, with the fact that moral action is a subjective decision which is often put off, perhaps mitigated by personal factors, and in any event only achieved, as Durand notes, gradually. Lastly, Durand points out that "the remark of Christ that man is not made for the Sabbath but the Sabbath for man"²⁸ is completely ignored by the document. Again one must agree with Durand, but it can be observed in regard to the gradualness of conversion that when conversion does occur (and this is especially true of Saint Augustine) one is always given the impression that the effect is instant, and this is the tradition the Pope is working in. In regard to the principle concerning the Sabbath, one can only lament the lack of reference to this point, but once again, in terms of the doctrine put forth by the Pope, it

²⁷ The text of M. Durand reads as follows: "Ainsi, certaines recherches théologiques ne peuvent être tout bonnement traitées de 'relativisme' alors que leurs auteurs cherchent à établir une nouvelle forme d'objectivité, de nouveaux repères d'objectivité." (p. 375) It seems that Scholasticism defines both its mode of objectivity and its method of judgement, and thus would rule any 'new basis' out of court. There is also the question of scientific knowledge in the modern sense, which would undercut the whole edifice of the Church. Nevertheless, as his statement stands, M. Durand does have a valid point.

²⁸ "par l'absence de certains concepts . . . que d'autres documents romains en traitaient." (p. 375)

²⁹ "la déclaration du Christ a l'effet que le sabbat est fait pour l'homme et non l'inverse" (p. 375)

seems logical if somewhat un-Christian. Lastly, Durand expresses shock at the Pope's demand for loyalty and observes that "this conception contradicts the same nature of the intelligence and the liberty of the faithful in belief, which constructs the splendor of Creation,"³⁰ as well as the document's tendency "that it contradicts the acceptable [as understood in faith] nature of the Church as a communion of men and women searching for God."³¹ One can only utter 'amen' to Durand's sentiments, but our reading indicates these stirring words can only ever be fine sentiments and not 'truths' of the Catholic Church. All in all, Durand both understands and sympathizes with the document but brings, I think, unrealistic expectations to it. Nevertheless, his 'liberalism' is both refreshing and rare in one who takes John Paul seriously.

6). Guy Durand, "Rencontre Evêques - Théologiens"

In this brief article Professor Durand reports on the meeting of bishops and theologians which takes place annually in Montreal in the Archbishop's office. The participants, quite naturally, discussed VERITATIS SPLENDOR with particular emphasis on its position concerning free thought throughout the Church. Under Saint Augustine's rubric of "in necessary things, unity, in

³⁰ "cette conception contredit la nature même de l'intelligence et de la liberté des fidèles dans la foi, portant ainsi atteinte à la splendeur de la Création." (p. 375)

³¹ "qu'elle contrevient aussi à la nature et à la crédibilité de l'Eglise, communion des hommes et des femmes qui cherchent Dieu." (p. 375)

debatable things, freedom, and in all things, charity,"²² those present posed questions of truth and the essential elements of faith. It seems however that no answers, as such, were forthcoming. Rather it became apparent that some were positive and some negative in their reaction to the document. Most importantly for our purposes, none was definite.

There were discussions concerning the "genre littéraire" (EM, p. 607), and the bishops present disagreed among themselves as to the need for dogmatism versus consultation in regard to forming ecclesiastical teaching. Finally, Durand reports that those present realized that "freedom of thought and speech is not a mere concession but a right."²³ But this 'right' must be balanced by "la solidarité ecclésiale" (EM, p. 607) and so the discussion, as we have argued, was by necessity inconclusive.

7) Bernard Hubert, "Une énergique intervention de Jean-Paul II" In this short discussion Monsignor Hubert gives a brief outline of the teaching of VERITATIS SPLENDOR and observes that "[John Paul] does not call forth Papal infallibility [and that] his message must be welcomed with what theologians call 'la réception' by the people of God for it to be taken as a definitive word."²⁴ Hubert gives

²² "in necessariis unitas, in dubiis libertas, in omnibus caritas"

²³ "La liberté laissée de penser et de parole n'est pas une simple concession, un privilège, mais un droit . . ." (EM, p. 607)

²⁴ "[Jean-Paul] n'engage pas l'infaillibilité pontificale [et que] son message doit connaître un accueil que les théologiens appellent 'la réception' par le Peuple de Dieu pour être considéré comme une parole définitive." (EM2, p. 13)

the example of the reception of HUMANAE VITAE, which "did not penetrate the profound layers of the Christian conscience."³⁵ The result of this speculation for Hubert is that discussion and questioning "are of the nature to favour the profound and deep reception of Magisterial texts in their entirety."³⁶ Therefore, despite his seeming liberalism, the writer is in fact saying what we have been pressing for all along. He is speaking not from the standpoint of doctrine but from the standpoint of pastoral teaching, and as such he is in complete accord with the thought of the Pope.

8) Jean-Pierre Manigne, "La liberté à l'épreuve de la morale"

In this article the writer gives the context of the encyclical and notes that it is addressed to bishops in the first instance (to underwrite the authority of these bishops, the writer speculates), and, then, to all the baptized. Following the divisions we have noted, M. Manigne sees the conclusion of Part One as "constituting a dead end where there is a tendency to separate the morals of the Gospel or the authority of Christ from that of the Church."³⁷

Having established, as it were, the authority of the text, Manigne sees Part Two of the document as showing the true nature of

³⁵ "n'a pas pénétré les couches profondes de la conscience chrétienne." (EM2, p. 13)

³⁶ "sont de nature à favoriser l'approfondissement, l'appropriation, la 'réception' des textes Magistère dans l'Eglise tout entière." (EM2, p. 13)

³⁷ "constitu[ent] d'entrée de jeu une fin de non-recevoir face à toute tentative pour séparer l'Évangile de la morale ou encore l'autorité de Jésus-Christ de celle de l'Eglise." (V, p. 12)

liberty, a liberty which denies the subjectivity the Pope feels is prevalent in the modern world." The writer sees the problem clearly and reports it honestly if somewhat pessimistically. He mentions the fact, as does the Pope, that intention can lessen the gravity of a sin and, in general, seems to understand the teaching of the encyclical. The article ends by noting that John Paul calls for a 'radical' charity and that one can be called upon, and can be empowered by God, to be a martyr for the faith. All in all, Manigne seems to present the encyclical in confrontation with modernity in an objective way, while at the same time indicating his own reaction more by tone than by direct statement.

9) Matthew Meehan, "The Splendor of the Truth"

This is more a declaration than an analysis. That is, Father Meehan makes it quite clear that he supports the document without hesitation and will use it in his forthcoming column on moral issues. It is indeed as he says, "What Catholics believe." (SH, p. 15) It goes without saying that there can be no quarrel with the validity of such a reading.

10) Théodule Rey-Mermet, "La splendeur de la vérité"

In this reading of the encyclical Father Rey-Mermet publishes his agreement with the sentiments of the Pope expressed in VERITATIS

" It is interesting to note that 'liberal' and 'conservative' reactions to the document seem to hinge upon one's interpretation of the 'modern' moral climate. As we have noted in part one of the present project, the Pope sees nothing but trouble in the 'modern' notion of 'freedom' and 'individuality'. In fact, when he presented his new encyclical on abortion and other human life issues, EVANGELIUM VITAE, he described it as opposing a culture of death that he perceives as being characteristic of the contemporary scene.

SPLENDOR and sees the work as guaranteeing true human freedom. Indeed, he sees it as "la plénitude de l'Esprit qui établit dans le Christ Jésus." Or, "là où est l'Esprit du seigneur, là est la liberté" (2 Cor 3, 17). Et c'est dans cette liberté que vit le chrétien." (C, p. 11)

11) Michel Salamolard, "Le courage de la vérité"

This article is a response of a conservative who completely accepts the doctrine of VERITATIS SPLENDOR against an opposition (Eugen Drewermann and Jan Marejko) who seem to hold that the encyclical is unbiblical in the sense that it defines man as a soul to be formed (C2, p. 18), sees the Church as not the true 'deposit' of truth (C2, p.18) and, finally, condemns the 'triumphalism' and 'arrogance' in regard to possessing the truth that is found, according to the two objectors, in VERITATIS SPLENDOR. (C2, p. 18) Salamolard quite simply dismisses his interlocutors with quotes from authority (John Paul's encyclical). The article concludes (with what seems a rather strange twist, given the 'literalist' reading of SPLENDOR VERITATIS up to that point) by endorsing the custom of the Church's establishing of distinctions in moral matters. The article is entirely in agreement with this, and sees it as being completely within the sphere of the Gospel. It is nothing other than the use of conscience in its proper sense. The most obvious example of this would be the old debate concerning self-defense. However, since the Church must leave these decisions to conscience, the author feels he has a case to justify the use of condoms (préservatifs) not as a contraceptive but as a weapon in

the war against AIDS. In short, this article seems to fully endorse the teaching of John Paul while at the same time claiming the possibility of casuistry within the context of the encyclical. From the point of view of the present project it seems that both the discussion of killing and the use of the condom would be ruled out by John Paul's teaching. He explicitly teaches that intrinsically evil acts are always so (no matter the intention), and this doctrine would apply to killing as well as to an act of intercourse not open to procreation because of man's direct intervention. It may be observed in closing this discussion that Father Salamolard, despite his seeming openness, seems to be caught in a contradiction. As we have argued, the encyclical is a text of 'fundamentalist' thinking and must be approached as such.

12) Michel Séguin, "L'encyclique "VERITATIS SPLENDOR": La vérité qui rend libre!"

This reading of the encyclical by Father Séguin is essentially the one championed throughout this project. That is, while he concentrates on the meaning of freedom in the encyclical, it is to point out the relation of human dignity with freedom, which, if translated from this personalist orientation into the context of the encyclical, is to say that man must follow his nature (essence) and by doing so acts as he is and is, thus, free. The article closes on the note that, of course, the following of God's law is difficult, but we will always get the help we need from God. (EM2, p. 1045) In sum, in this article we are given one more 'conservative' reading whose correctness seems now to be both

established by consensus as well as empirically.

13) Bela Somfai, "Encyclical a Portent of Interesting Times" Professor Somfai represents, in his remarks on VERITATIS SPLENDOR, what we have called the 'liberal' side." After a rather general discussion of the Encyclical, he focuses his attention on three important points brought out by the Pope's letter. These are: i) the problem of the harmony between nature and freedom that is promised by the Encyclical; ii) the problem of stating that all negative Commandments are absolutely binding; and, iii) the question of intrinsically evil acts.

The first problem, that of the harmony between freedom and nature, seems to be as presented by Professor Somfai perhaps a false one. Somfai appears to think that when dealing with the acts of the body this harmony breaks down. As he puts it: "Its analysis of 'intrinsically evil acts' shows that the body has certain categorical limits that may never be freely disregarded." (p. 50) This is obviously the teaching of the document, but it is also 'in harmony' with the document's doctrine of freedom which is to 'follow nature,' as we have had numerous occasions to show. Somfai sees this point as important in the discussion of artificial birth control, "where biology alone, apart from intention and meaning that the agent brings, appears to determine the moral

" The following two articles from Catholic newspapers represent basically the same arguments used by Professor Somfai:

"Theologians say pope attacks 'caricatures,'" Western Catholic Reporter, 11 October 1993, p. 8.

"Document begs many legitimate moral questions," National Catholic Reporter 15 October 1993, p. 17.

judgement." (p. 50) This insight is undoubtedly true within a scientific, or, at least, a nonfundamentalist atmosphere, but as we have argued, this is not the atmosphere the Pope is working in.

The second point of contention, that Somfai mentions has to do with the Pope's statement concerning negative obligations that "oblige each and every individual, always and in every circumstance." (VS, 52 [sic]) Somfai sees this as reintroducing into moral theology a pre-Vatican II flavour that smacks of neoscholasticism and Kantianism; he holds that Pope John Paul is teaching that "The prohibitive precepts of the natural law . . . impose categorical obligation." (p. 50) It is hard to agree with Somfai, in that it would seem that the natural law is the way reality is and, therefore, to deny it would be to be in error objectively. On the other hand, Kantian ethics is purely subjective in its content. (Indeed, Pope John Paul had repeatedly made that point before his elevation to the papacy.) Somfai then notes that this position of the Pope's is the death knell of casuistry, which allows for "unavoidable conflicts" which would validate certain acts that the Pope holds to be always binding in their negative aspect. The 'Winnipeg statement' of the Canadian bishops regarding birth control is taken as a case in point. This 'statement,' which allows the use of artificial birth control if no other means were found to conserve the value of family life, was approved by Paul VI. It would take a detailed analysis of the 'Winnipeg statement' to answer this point thoroughly, but reasoning from generalities it would seem to be a question of authority

rather than doctrine; and as we have argued above, the Pope becomes the final arbitrator in all Church matters. Although this position seems contradictory in itself, the matter would have to be solved, it would seem, under that rubric. (The other possibility is that the Canadian bishops are in schism with Pope John Paul II unless they accept his ruling, which is the final one - as opposed to the rather debatable one of Pope Paul VI.)

The present article also notes that Pope John Paul does not speak of the principle of 'double effect.' The Pope seems to be saying that the negative principle should always be obligatory even if it means harm to the moral agent. This is apparently the teaching of the Pope, and one can only agree that it imposes a maximalist moral life on the believer. This would seem to end the matter, although Somfai, following Karl Rahner, seems to think that negative Commandments would be rendered meaningless "through the infinite number of qualifying clauses that would be needed to describe all the possible circumstances under which it would be applicable." (p. 51) Again it would appear that such thinking is not in accordance with the 'spirit' of John Paul II, who seems exactly to demand the highest acts of morality without exception and without anything but a 'literalist' understanding.

The last point is that of intrinsically evil acts, acts that is which because of their object ("what is immediately achieved by the action" [p. 51]) are always evil no matter the intention of the agent. True, intention can diminish the evilness of an act, but never completely eliminate it. Somfai feels that such an attitude

lessens the possibility of moral discernment. That is, if one is to judge morally, the intention must be considered. It appears that the Pope again is insisting upon his point that morality demands obedience to natural law, and the fact of natural law is objective and non-negotiable. Somfai certainly has a valid point (in the abstract), but not in relation to the encyclical. Further, the notion that "most actions entail both beneficial and damaging consequences" (p. 52) is outlawed in the letter as 'proportionalism,' which is reduced by John Paul to include those thinkers who would deny intrinsically evil acts and would base morality upon a notion of utilitarian ethics. Somfai would argue for a distinction here, but once more the text of the Pope speaks for itself. With this, Somfai ends his reflections – reflections, it must be noted, that are both interesting and pressing but which in the context of VERITATIS SPLENDOR are misdirected.

Somfai's article closes with the author noting that the encyclical does call for rethinking moral theology in many areas (at least, in terms of the post-Vatican II developments), and that one is left with a choice: either stress the ambiguities of VERITATIS SPLENDOR and "claim ample room for creative interpretation of the text" (p. 52) or take a 'fundamentalist' approach and "use its sentences to bring judgement on just about any view that does not meet . . . [one's] approval." (p. 52) Somfai is justly upset by the implications of the papal document, but that fact does not change the teaching of the Pope, which we have argued is indeed on the side of the 'fundamentalist.'

C. Canadian secular (and Protestant) newspapers and journals

We continue our review of the Canadian reaction to VERITATIS SPLENDOR by taking a look at those Canadian secular journals and newspapers that have mentioned John Paul's encyclical. It should be made clear at the outset that there is no question here of being one-hundred-percent complete. We have used the standard works of reference in this area and have satisfied ourselves with what, we hope, is a representative sample of the secular print media's reaction to the Pope's letter.

In terms of an overview, the articles that have appeared in the secular press in Canada may be divided into three general categories: i) articles that report the release of the document and which make little or no comment upon it; ii) articles that speak directly to the content of the document either positively or negatively, or report a discussion of these two possible reactions; iii) the debate concerning the appointment of Raymond Dumais as bishop of Gaspé and his attitude towards the document. We will examine each of these approaches in turn, and end our treatment of the secular press with a discussion of two articles which discuss the encyclical, one from Time magazine and one from The Canadian Forum. We will then be in a position to examine the Catholic Press's reaction to our document.

Both the English and French secular press see the publishing of the encyclical as newsworthy but not as a major event. The vast majority of the stories on the encyclical are more or less buried in the middle of the papers or consigned to the religious section.

A normative example of reporting the issuing of the document is found in the Halifax Chronicle Herald of 6 October 6 1993, page A 11, where, using their wire service, the paper reports that Pope John Paul II has issued the encyclical, and proceeds to give what will turn out to be the standard reaction. The substance of the article can be seen in the headline, which reads, "Pope knocks individual conscience." The text develops this theme by noting that birth control is an intrinsic evil and "[the encyclical] makes clear that he [the Pope] expects Roman Catholic theologians and institutions to toe the line."⁴⁰ In other words, the Pope and his document are seen as both autocratic and reactionary. A list of the titles of articles⁴¹ in both the French and English press show

⁴⁰ Such statements may seem like commentary but, as we have seen in our first chapter, such 'conservative' notions truly express the sense of the document.

⁴¹ The following is a sampling of the articles that appeared around the time of the issuing of the encyclical and which purport to report the event.

"Encyclical warns mortal sin paves way to hell," The Winnipeg Free Press, 13 November 1993, p. B 16.

"Nothing but the truth? The Pope's encyclical on morality attempts to define rigidly what some consider to be a flexible situation," Vancouver Sun 11 October 1993, p. 69.

"Pope presses home 'evil' of birth control (Pope's encyclical)," Vancouver Sun 4 October 1993, p. A 4.

"Encyclical seen as attack on situational ethics: some activity intrinsically evil, Pope says," Winnipeg Free Press, 9 October 1993, p. B 21.

"Nouvelle Encyclique," Le Soleil, 24 September 1993, p. A 7.

"Le contrôle artificiel des naissances est un 'mal intrinsèque', réaffirme l'encyclique," La Presse, 4 October 1993, p. A 7.

"La nouvelle encyclique veut rehausser l'ordre moral de la société," La Presse, 6 October 1993, p. D 16.

"La pape craint une 'culture de la mort,'" La Presse, 10 October 1993, p. A 10.

"Pour les évêques du Québec, un guide," La Presse, 16 October 1993, p. D 16.

that the attitude of the Halifax Chronicle Herald is rather general.

The second group of articles that we have enumerated are those which 'argue' for a specific point of view or report a discussion concerning the various reactions to the encyclical. Obviously with regard to such a document as the Pope's one is either for it or against it. (This point is made repeatedly that there is no third option. As we shall see below, the argument of the lone writer who pleads for such an option must be rejected.) However, oftentimes those who oppose it do so indirectly by stressing the 'ambiguity' of the document. In Chapter One of the present project we have argued against such a stance, but it is nevertheless common among 'liberal' theologians, as shall see.

We begin discussion of our second category by introducing the statement of the Canadian bishops on the encyclical, after which we will consider the attitude of the bishops of Quebec and then end with a few words concerning the debate itself. The main source for the Canadian bishops' position will be the article "The Pope's encyclical: Godsend or mistake?" by Michael McAteer which appeared in the Toronto Star on 16 October 1993. The same sentiments are expressed in the Calgary Herald's article of 9 October 1993, entitled "Moral Absolutes: Canadian bishops welcome Pope's

"Jean-Paul II s'attaque à l'effondrement des valeurs morales de la société moderne," Le Devoir, 6 October 1993, p. A 2.

"La vérité de Jean-Paul II," Le Devoir, 7 October 1993, p. 1.

These articles more or less repeat what we have seen in the Halifax Chronicle Herald. That is, the Pope is seen as reaffirming the traditional doctrine of the Church, and stress is laid on those doctrines that have to do with sexuality.

uncompromising stance on values (Pope's encyclical VERITATIS SPLENDOR)." We will first outline the bishops' reaction in the general Canadian context and then specify the issue in the Quebec situation.

In the McAteer article, Archbishop Adam Exner, head of the Canadian Conference of Bishops, makes the point that the encyclical is "a weapon in the fight against rampant immorality." Further, Exner "points out there are moral absolutes which are universally valid and unchangeable and there are some intrinsically evil acts." In short, the Canadian bishops accept the reading of the encyclical we have suggested above. In Quebec, the position of the Quebec bishops is made known in their response in La Presse of 27 October 1993 to an open letter published three days earlier in Le Soleil and written by sixty theologians who were "voicing their dissatisfaction with the almost nonexistent validity given in the encyclical to the thought and experience of the faithful on the moral question."⁴² The sixty theologians took particular exception to the Pope's position on artificial birth control and his attack on the principle of collegiality, an attack they saw as a general restriction on freedom of thought. (See below for a discussion of the 'open' letter.) In their answer, the bishops reaffirm their solidarity with the Pope and his teaching, and fail to see where the encyclical disregards either the opinions of the bishops or the

⁴² "proclament leur insatisfaction devant le peu de place qu'accorde l'encyclique VERITATIS SPLENDOR à la pensée et à l'expérience des fidèles dans les questions morales." (S, 24 October 1993, p. A 3)

realities of life. So we have it: the official position of the Canadian Church is a positive and wholehearted endorsement of the document. In the light of our prior discussion of the document, this would seem to be both expected, and indeed mandatory. We will now review some of the varying opinions put forward concerning the document.

In opposition to this 'literalist' reading of the bishops is the notion of Father Leo Walsh, who rejects both the positive and negative reactions we have seen so far and makes the following statement: "I don't think either of these reactions is correct at all. . . . What the encyclical does is give moral theology a shot in the arm. To get us all together, discussing this, chasing out where the truth lies." (TS, 16 October 1993, p. K 18) A member of the laity and a member of Concerned Catholics, Joanna Manning sees the letter as "a closed-circuit monologue between the Pope and the bishops . . . because it ignores the Second Vatican Council's teaching that the 'experience, the life and the conscience of the laity also form part of the teaching office of the church.'" (Ibid.) As we have seen, 'conservatives'⁴³ have welcomed the document in its most literal implications; however, a few writers in the press still argue for the liberal approach exemplified by Father Walsh's remarks. We will now follow a few of these arguments.

⁴³ The article now being reviewed cites two Catholic journals – Catholic Insight and The Orator – as giving full-hearted support to the encyclical, which the editor of The Orator sees as 'long overdue.'

But first it will be helpful to comment upon the remarks of Father Walsh and his 'third' option. It seems evident, in the light of our reading, that the Pope is 'teaching' doctrine and not 'inviting' discussion in his letter. As we have tried to argue, the basis of the doctrine is unquestionable as far as the Pope is concerned, and he underwrites this with his Papal prerogative. In regard to Joanna Manning's position, we can only appeal to the documents of Vatican II and their seeming support of John Paul II's stance. In short, as we have noted above and will insist throughout our project, one can only agree or disagree with the Pope's position.

Before commencing our proposed discussion of the liberal approach we will review two articles published in Montreal's La Presse. The first was published on Sunday, 10 October 1993 and the second on 24 October, again on a Sunday. Both articles are interesting in that, while they accept the teaching of the document, they do so in terms of hope and upon a rational basis. While it is true that this attitude can be obliquely attributed to the articles we have listed above, in the case of the articles under consideration this attitude is direct and explicitly developed.

The first article, "En durcissant le ton, Jean-Paul II risque de vider les églises" by Jean-Paul Lefebvre, notes that in the new encyclical the Pope "has chosen to harden any uncertainty on the part of the Magisterium concerning those moral issues which are at

the heart of the life of the people."“ The question Lefebvre asks in this context is: "La nouvelle encyclique changera-t-elle les choses?" and he answers that, in the light of current developments, the Pope may, indeed, make the Church irrelevant. In opposition to this danger, Lefebvre, basing his position on the few vague references in the encyclical to 'collegiality,' seems to be calling for 'civil disobedience' in the Church. He feels that tradition is also on his side and quotes Monsignor Rembert Weakland to the effect that the modern context encourages a tendency to democracy and, under this rubric, Lefebvre sees the People of God reacting to the encyclical as one would in a modern democracy to an unpopular law. As we have seen, the Church is no democracy, and collegiality no forum for dissent from papal teaching. Once more, while we may sympathize with a man who sees the only alternative to his suggestion as complete indifference, we must nonetheless repeat the obvious. The present pontiff has laid his cards on the table. One either plays them or gets out of the game.

Father Michel Séguin, in his article of 24 October 1993 entitled "L'encyclique VERITATIS SPLENDOR veut susciter un renouveau moral," accepts the type of reading we have proposed of the encyclical and sees it as an antidote for a society that has lost all sense of human dignity. While one wishes to support 'human dignity', one fails to find in this article (and those like it which support the Pope) any notion of what human dignity means

“ "a choisi de durcir encore la position d'un Magistère incertain confronté à des questions qui sont au coeur de la vie des gens"

outside of an abstract essentialist notion of man we have developed above. Further, while Father Séguin, as do other likeminded commentators, announces that the Pope's doctrine "resorts to a new and important existential argument how, for all time, in the Bible and in the Church, martyrs confirm in a particularly eloquent manner the unacceptable character of ethical theories that deny the existence of moral norms that are determined and valid without exception,"⁴⁵ he fails to back up with anything other than the Scholastic metaphysical universe in which the Pope reasons and through which he loses modern society. In short, both these articles, even though they support the Pope and attempt an elucidation of his teachings, can in fact do no more than rehearse what we have already seen the Pope do in the encyclical itself. We will now look at some opposition to John Paul's teaching.

L'Actualite published, on 15 October 1993, an article that, like several of those we have reviewed, restates the teaching of the encyclical and underscores (quite correctly in our view) that "the Pope is above all preoccupied in defending and illustrating the objective moral order."⁴⁶ The article ends by noting that "Le problème est de donner un contour précis à cet ordre [that is, the Pope does not distinguish between the objective evilness of say

⁴⁵ "recourt alors à un argument existential nouveau et important comment, de tout temps, dans la Bible et dans l'Eglise, le martyr a confirmé de manière particulièrement éloquente le caractère inacceptable des théories éthiques, qui nient l'existence de normes morales déterminées et valables sans exception." (P 2)

⁴⁶ "Le Pape est avant tout préoccupé de défendre et d'illustrer l'ordre moral objectif." (A, p. 16)

murder from that of artificial contraception]" (A, p. 17) and poses the quite sensible question: "Must we, with the Pope, wrap both acts within the same package as if they possessed the precision and clarity of the Decalogue?"⁴⁷ The final caveat given the Pope by the writer, Jean-Paul Guetny, seems a fitting comment on both the positive and negative aspects of the document. Guetny, after listing the ideals of the document as well as some of the past failures of the Church, advises "cave cadere" – which is, quite obviously, an ad-hominem argument that, while it is tempting to credit it as valid, does not in any way address the problem of idealism as proposed by the Church. All in all, this article would seem to be fair in both its analysis and criticism, although its conclusion, as we have suggested, leaves something to be desired.

Gregory Baum published an article in the Canadian Forum in December 1993. It is interesting to linger a bit over Professor Baum's work, since he both disagrees with the encyclical and at the same time takes a very positive position concerning the Church's traditional use of natural-law ethics. His argument is the familiar one (we have referred to it in our first chapter) that the Church, while it holds that natural law is eternal and universal, has, at times, changed its mind concerning various moral acts which were once held to be 'intrinsically' evil. Professor Baum notes slavery, interest taking, religious freedom and torture as examples. (CF, pp. 23-24) He then makes the following statement:

⁴⁷ "Faut-il, comme fait le Pape, les englober dans le 'package', faire comme si elles avaient pour elles la précision et la limpidité du 'Décalogue'?" (A, p. 17)

"We cannot account for the Church's history unless we recognize that the natural law is 'read' differently in different cultures and historical situations. The encyclical dismisses such an interpretation as relativist and subjectivist, opposed to the Church's objectivist understanding of moral law. Yet the triumphalist language of VERITATIS SPLENDOR, claiming that the Church has always known the immutable truth, creates a fiction and disguises the Church's history." This is, of course, true as far as it goes, and it is a difficulty which the Pope really does not address, at least not directly. Further, Baum makes the point that the "almost exclusive preoccupation of VERITATIS SPLENDOR is sexual ethics" (CF, p. 22) and so places the work within a very specific area of concern. This is a commonplace ploy among liberal theologians, who claim that they are not rejecting the whole teaching of the Pope, only the understanding of 'unnatural' sex acts - but is it a correct one? We have tried to show in our exposition of the Church's ethics that, in fact, the 'natural law' theory of ethics is, indeed, a 'total package.' That is, nature is essence, which is universal by definition and, therefore, immutable. This is as true of sexuality as it is of anything else. (In regard to the so-called 'changes' in nature concerning slavery one could note that the Church accepted slavery not because of its 'nature' but as a necessary result of a sinful world; and the prohibition against interest could be defined as meaning one thing

in a feudal economy and another in a capitalistic one." Sexuality presents a different problem in that it is a biological datum – and therefore natural – in a way the other two phenomena are not.) One must object to Baum's notion that sex is the obsession in the encyclical and not a result of a general attitude towards nature which we have called nonmodern but which is logical for all that. That sex is a modern preoccupation is, of course, another matter.

Professor Baum ends his article with the positive observation that "traditional natural law theory, purged of its immutability claim does address the present generation as a message of hope. Something is active in us, carrying us beyond ourselves, to create a culture of solidarity and compassion." (CF, p.) While these are noble sentiments, it would seem they are based only on an aspiration divorced from any tangible principle. In other words, if the natural law loses its immutability it becomes exactly what the Holy Father fears – subjectivist and relativist. It appears that Baum has taken an untenable position and represents a vain, if admirable, attempt at liberal appeasement.

We will end our discussion of the secular press's reaction to VERITATIS SPLENDOR by examining in passing the case of Monsignor

" In this regard it is interesting to note that between 1462 and 1839 (the time of Negro slavery) the Papacy did not condemn the practice, although before that time Pius II had called it "magnum scelus" and after that time it was called by Gregory XVI "an inhuman traffic" and "non-Christian." (A. Quenium, Les Idées chrétiennes et le traité atlantique [Paris: Kathola, 1993]) Obviously, no such evidence exists for sexual ethics. The Church has been surprisingly consistent here. The use of the family and a conservative sexual atmosphere for a stable social status could, of course, be cited as a possible motivation for this consistency.

Dumais, who was recently consecrated Bishop of Gaspé. His case is interesting as regards our project inasmuch as he was, before becoming a bishop, one of the signatories of the letter issued by sixty Quebec theologians which objected to (or, at least, took issue with) with the teaching of John Paul's encyclical by seeing it as too dogmatically determined and too uncompromising in its approach to artificial birth control." The matter was taken up by

" We will provide here a short outline of the contents of the letter. The signatories see the issuing of VERITATIS SPLENDOR as an opportunity to respond to some questions which disturbed them. As it is written in the letter: "Nous prenons cette initiative parce que, si certains aspects de cette dernière encyclique mettent opportunément en relief des préoccupations que nous faisons nôtres, d'autres nous mettent vraiment mal à l'aise." (EC, January 1994, p. 14) The first paragraph of the text of the letter more or less agrees with what may be called the 'spirit' of the encyclical. That is, the theologians see a great danger in modern society to Christian and human values. Secondly, they agree that "Oui, nous avons à 'découvrir' les obligations morales, tout comme les valeurs et non à les 'créer.'" In sum, then, it seems that on the 'theoretical' level they are at one with the Pope. They also agree that it is the 'act' which is to be judged in moral theology and not the 'circumstances.' However, "Le problème commence évidemment quand il s'agit de savoir si tel ou tel acte particulier doit être classé parmi ceux qu'il ne serait absolument jamais possible de légitimer." In other words, are there never "des zones grises"? The writers of the letter feel that there are and that the encyclical has not treated with sufficient precision the differences implied in recognizing these 'zones grises' elaborated by different schools of moral theology. As a result, they wish to show that, in certain moral issues what seem like faults of moral 'teleological' and 'proportionalist' thinking are not as they seem. In other words, many moral theologians, in defining, as justifiable certain moral acts, are doing so by 'redefining' the 'nature' of the act and not appealing to circumstances or to purpose or 'telos.' The example of self-defense that necessitates killing the assailant would seem to be a good instance of this. What the writers of the letter seem to be asking for is a recognition of casuistry as it has been practiced traditionally in Catholic moral theology.

Having presented their general case, the signatories now go to particular cases. Their first point has to do with the use of contraceptives, and is twofold. On the one hand, many conferences of bishops and officials have asked for a loosening of the rules on

both the English- and French-language press with an eye to a possible rupture in the doctrinal solidarity of the Church. Two points have come out of this minor controversy, both reported in the press. First, there is the notion that the Church does allow discussion of its doctrine and one can engage in such activity without fear of reprisal. This is the point of the La Presse editorial of May 5, 1994. The second point is that Monsignor Dumais was called to Rome to prove his faithfulness to the Holy see

artificial contraception, while on the other the faithful, most notably in North America, do not either understand or accept the Church's teaching on this subject. In short, the theologians named here "regrett[ent] que l'encyclique revienne sur la question de la limitation des naissances et réaffirme que les pratiques contraceptives par lesquelles l'acte conjugal est rendu intentionnellement infécond sont intrinsèquement mauvaises en toutes circonstances."

Following from the above notion that "la très large majorité des catholiques de notre continent, comme de plusieurs autres régions du monde, n'arrivent pas à comprendre la rigueur de la pensée catholique officielle sur ce sujet qui interesse leur vie quotidienne," the theologians feel that the Pope has ignored the 'moral experience' of the faithful and that he has acted with a 'dureté' which will alienate them. (We may note that both these objections of the theologians have been, as we have argued above, anticipated by the pontiff.)

The letter ends by noting that: "Nous sommes étonnés sur la question du dissentiment" because of "les recommandations . . . de réprimer tout dissentiment . . . indistinctement". The theologians feel that they are, in effect, being slighted in their task. (This feeling depends on the notion that the Church is a community seeking the truth. Again, we have argued above that this is not the case in any 'democratic' sense.)

The final section of the letter laments that VERITATIS SPLENDOR "semble . . . faire trop peu de cas de la collégialité épiscopale." We can end this short account only by referring the reader to the discussion above on collegiality.

Reaction to this letter is treated in the discussion in the text of the case of Monsignor Dumais.

and its teachings.⁵⁰ While Dumais chose to object, he did not leave the Church and remained loyal (or was forced to recant to take up his See); however, an article in the Ottawa Citizen reports the opposite reaction of Leonardo Boff, so-called father of liberation theology. Boff left what he calls the 'official' Church to become a part of what he calls the "popular church." In doing so he sees himself as rejecting the authority of the hierarchy of the 'official' Church. Boff notes that he "was confident that the Church could be reformed . . . [but] I don't believe that any more . . . [and] the Pope's latest encyclical proves it." He concludes by noting that "VERITATIS SPLENDOR . . . says only the pontiff can decide questions of moral doctrine." (OC, 8 January 1994, p. D5) It would seem that the actions of both Monsignor Dumais and Leonardo Boff indicate that our reading of the encyclical is on the right track. We will now turn to a sampling of some Catholic newspapers' reaction to the Pope's letter in order to complete our survey of the print media's reaction to VERITATIS SPLENDOR.

D. Reaction of Catholic newspapers

Due to the scarcity of sources in this area we will first indicate the general tenor of the reaction and then examine two examples in

⁵⁰ This fact was the most reported incident of the entire event. The following are a sample of the sources:

"Le futur évêque de Gaspé doit s'expliquer à Rome," La Presse, 11 February 1994, p. C12.

"Controversial theologian named new bishop," Toronto Star, 9 April 1994, p. J16.

"Pope names Gaspé bishop despite letter criticizing Rome," The Gazette (Montreal), 2 April 1994, p. A6.

"Theologians have duty to speak up: Gaspé's incoming bishop says," The Gazette (Montreal), 12 February 1994.

detail. The general reaction seems to be what one would expect from the Catholic sector, namely that the encyclical is hailed as both needed and true and is given unconditional support." We will

" The following list of article titles makes the above point obvious:

A simple report as in:

"New encyclical praised, critized," Catholic Register, 30 October 1993, p. 16.

"New encyclical both praised and condemned," New Freeman 16 October 1993, p. 6.

"Encyclical offers lesson on morality and limits of freedom," New Freeman, 16 October 1993, p. 7.

"Pope publishes exacting encyclical on moral theology," Prairie Messenger, 11 October 1993, p. 1.

"Papal encyclical's completion took six years, several drafts (VERITATIS SPLENDOR)," Catholic New Times, 24 October 1993, p. 13.

"News agency releases encyclical," Western Catholic Reporter, week 4 October 4, 1993, p. 1.

Or laudatory announcements like:

"Protestants are upbeat about impact of encyclical," National Catholic Reporter, 22 October 1993, p. 12.

"Church officials say encyclical responds to lack of moral values," The New Freeman, 16 October 1993, p. 7.

"Church called back to moral theology essentials," Prairie Messenger, 11 October 1993, p. 2.

"Canadian bishops welcome papal encyclical," New Freeman, 16 October 1993, p. 1.

"Encyclical offers lesson on morality and limits of freedom, (VERITATIS SPLENDOR)," Catholic New Times, 14 October 1993, p. 13.

"Encyclical addresses good and evil, limits of human freedom," Catholic Register, 16 October 1993, p. 1.

Or a more apologetic tone as in:

"Pope's encyclical opens farreaching debate on personal and social decision-making," Catholic Register October 16, 1993. p. 7.

"Theologians see new encyclical as mixed bag," Catholic Register 30 October 30 1993, p. 16.

"VERITATIS SPLENDOR has 'multiple agendas,'" Catholic New Times, 21 November 1993, p. 9.

"Sense of crisis informs Pope's teaching encyclical," Catholic Register, 13 November 1993, p. 5.

"Change in society, church, reason for new encyclical," Catholic Register, 23 October 1993, p. 5.

"Pope provides moral lessons, solid foundations, say European bishops," Catholic Register, 30 October 1993, p. 17.

"Echoes of old showdown haunt new encyclical," National Catholic Reporter, 27 August 1993, p. 12.

"Pope John's message distorted," Catholic Register, 23 October 1993, p. 5.

now examine a few instances where the coverage of the encyclical is both more extended and opinionated. Our first sources will be from various selected Canadian Catholic newspapers which tend to take a more or less negative attitude towards the encyclical,³² and the second source will be three pertinent issues of the self-consciously conservative Catholic weekly L'Informateur Catholique.³³ We will begin with the articles in the Montreal

"La splendeur de la vérité," L'Église de Montréal, 14 October 1993, p. 984.

All in all, the above indicates both the level of acceptance of the teaching of the encyclical by the Catholic newspapers and their seeming attempt to avoid any controversy. See main body of this project for two exceptions.

³² The following lists the articles in question:

"Theologians say pope attacks 'caricatures,'" Western Catholic Reporter, 11 October 1993, p. 8.

"Hearing greatly discouraged by VERITATIS SPLENDOR," Prairie Messenger, 8 November 1993, p. 16.

"John Paul II's truths sacrifice traditional of pastoral concern," National Catholic Reporter, 15 October 1993, p. 28.

"The Catholic 'approach' to sexuality," New Freeman, 12 February 1994, p. 11.

"Fundamentalism is a poor way to back papal encyclical," Prairie Messenger, 20 December 1993, p. 15.

"Encyclical style deters dialogue," Montreal Catholic Times, March 1994, p. 6.

"VERITATIS SPLENDOR: forward into the past," National Catholic Reporter, 7 October 1994, p. 18.

What follows is a list articles from National Catholic Reporter for 15 October 1993, containing a critique of VERITATIS SPLENDOR.

"VERITATIS SPLENDOR draws cheers and jeers," p. 15.

"Reactions, p. 16.

"Document begs many legitimate moral questions," p. 17.

"Contraception a baby among church's sins," pp. 18 ff.

³³ The issues chosen are the following:

23 May to 5 June 1993, where the CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH is discussed and which discussion reveals the 'moral thrust' of the paper.

6 to 19 June 1993, in which an article entitled "Les évêques québécois font part de leur inconfort à Jean-Paul II" indicates where the conservative church, at least in Quebec (although it

Catholic Times.

The lead front-page article of the newspaper under consideration is entitled "Encyclical draws mixed response." The encyclical is praised in familiar terms by Archbishop Exner and criticized by moral theologian Father Leo Walsh of Toronto, who sees the letter as "highly technical and nuanced" and as needing discussion by moral theologians, "who then will have to make it understandable in some way to the ordinary faithful." (MCT, November 1993, p. 1) As we have seen, Father Walsh is in line with those who view the document as unclear. We have argued that it is, in fact, perfectly clear; and it seems those conservative reactions we have noted make this abundantly evident. The article further quotes Joanna Manning, whose views we saw above, and whose opinion is that the spirit of Vatican II in regard to the lay conscience has not been honoured. Finally, Bishop Jean-Guy Hamelin, president of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, notes that while there are some "dangerous" roads of speculation on moral matters "there is no place where he [the Pope] says theologians must be silent." (Ibid.) This is true as far as it goes, but the case of Monsignor Dumais would seem to put such a statement in its proper perspective. We will now look at two further discussions of the papal document printed in this particular issue of the Montreal Catholic Times.

would seem to be general of all Catholic conservatives), stands on moral issues.

Finally, 20 March to 2 April 1994 discusses moral theology under the following rather chilling rubric: "Le temps de la dissidence est dépassé."

In his editorial comment, Bishop Leonard Crowley, auxiliary bishop of Montreal, announces in his title that the "Episcopate teaches with infallible authority" – which is, of course, true by implication; but, as we have seen, this authority is shared and grounded in the papal prerogative. Having made this point (a point, we have hinted, that is not necessarily applicable in its technical sense to the encyclical⁴), Bishop Crowley then notes that, with the publication of VERITATIS SPLENDOR, a "Christianity that no longer marks a common way but only proclaims indefinite ideals would no longer be the Christianity of Jesus Christ and his first Apostles." (Ibid., p. 2) This is because "Faith includes morals, not just general ideals. It gives concrete directives for human life." In other words, the Pope's new encyclical is mandatory and definitive and "must" be followed as the *modus vivendi* of Christianity. Bishop Crowley's point seems to be that it a 'law' to be followed in the sense of particular acts to be done. While Bishop Crowley's use of 'infallibility' is imprecise in the theoretical sense, from the point of view of practice what he says seems to be true of the document, as is his second point concerning Christianity and 'law.'

Continuing with a sample of articles that are critical of the encyclical, we may mention the review by Kathleen Dunn of the seminar given by Father Michael Fahey on the rhetorical failures of VERITATIS SPLENDOR. Writing in the Montreal Catholic Times for March 1994, she makes the point that Father Fahey criticizes the

⁴ See above.

document not for its teaching but for its method of teaching. By taking a dogmatic approach, Father Fahey feels that the Pope is not only out of touch with the grassroots of the faithful but is also failing to allow time for the comprehension of the teaching. Father Fahey was also critical of the patriarchal language of the encyclical and "its failure to reflect the voice of women". (MC2, p. 6) Along a similar line to the previous article's is a piece entitled "VERITATIS SPLENDOR has 'multiple agendas'", in the Catholic New Times for 17 November 1993 by Lisa Sowle Cahill, who accepts the 'objectivity' of the moral teaching but faults the document for stressing the incompetence of fallen reason in the project of moral knowledge. She feels that "The fideist and authoritarian conclusion of this encyclical will increase the marginalization of Catholics who try to embrace the role of human values in our culture's moral sensibilities." (CNT2, p. 9) In concluding her remarks she notes, as does Father Fahey, the use of sexist and exclusionary language. Commenting on this phrase from the encyclical that "She [the Church] understands sinful man and loves him with a mother's love," she notes that "This kind of thing only adds fuel to the fire of those who claim that the church's interpretations of our sexual 'nature' are simply cultural products and patriarchal ones at that." (Ibid.) As we have often stated in the present project, such sentiments as these, while understandable and laudable, are misplaced. The Pope seems to mean exactly what he says and expects Catholics to accept it.

The article entitled "John Paul II's truths sacrifice

tradition of pastoral concern" in the National Catholic Reporter for 15 October 1993, while it pleads for a living and Christian approach to man in the world and stresses that morality "is a reflection of the eternal mind of God" (NCR2, p. 28) nevertheless seems to miss the point of the encyclical. That is, the author of the article seems to misunderstand a tradition that has always had belief in 'objective evil' (as does John Paul's letter) and 'charity' for the sinner (likewise found in the document). In other words, to love the sinner is not to love the sin, and it seems that this point is made quite emphatically in the third section of the encyclical. At this juncture, the liberal pattern of objection seems clear and will be the 'leitmotif' of what follows. This 'leitmotif' seems to ignore the comprehensive intention and the logical consistency of John Paul II's position. Again, one either accepts or rejects the package - a point which, while it is bewailed by liberals, does not seem to be taken seriously. In concrete terms, this means that if one is to criticize the document it must be done on a basic level or not at all.

A series of articles in the National Catholic Reporter will occupy our attention now. The lead article of this series (15 October 1993, p. 15), entitled, "VERITATIS SPLENDOR draws cheers and jeers," merely reports what we have now come to see as the typical situation. However, the publication lists the opinions of what it terms hierarchy, moral theologians and others. (p. 16) As is to be expected, the members of the hierarchy are in general

agreement with the document and seem to feel that moral theologians can work comfortably within its framework. The moral theologians include Lisa Sowle Cahill whose views we reviewed above; Hans Kung who sees the encyclical as a 'warning' to stick to the straight and narrow; and Father Richard McCormick, who sees the problem as being a misunderstanding of the "fundamental option" which he holds does not separate one's choice from one's concrete activity. Finally, both Father Richard McBrien and William McInerny feel that the encyclical is too negative and condemnatory and will be more divisive than HUMANAE VITAE. Of the others quoted, Dr. John Crosby and Father Gile Dimock (both department chairs, in philosophy and theology respectively) are pleased with the encyclical, which they see as "teaching with authority" the necessity of an objective moral law, which is the only possible basis for a successful personal and social existence. A medical ethicist, Father Kevin O'Rourke notes that "Catholic Theology is not carried out in an ivory tower," and seems to feel people will follow their conscience rather than the abstract teaching of the encyclical. Studs Terkel seems to be unable to believe that such a document could be issued in this age, and both Francis Kissling and Sister Mayreen Fiedler see it as irrelevant to the Catholic laity, who are being treated like children. All in all, the acceptance and rejection of the teaching of the encyclical falls about where one would expect.

This series of articles ends with a long essay by Andrew M. Greeley, arguing that contraception has been accepted by the American laity and that the Pope has completely misunderstood the

issue. That is, he has not seen the "importance" of sex in marriage. The article would seem to reflect an attitude that no one in or out of the Church would deny, but its relevance for moral theology seems, at least where the Pope is concerned, to be nil.

Turning our attention to the Montreal Catholic Times for November 1993 we find another series of three articles devoted entirely to the encyclical. The first one is a series of excerpts from VERITATIS SPLENDOR, and while these "neither summarize nor represent the most salient points of the document . . . they [do] convey the tone and breadth of the encyclical." (p. 11) The first three groups of texts cited (numbers 31, 32, and 45) make it clear that human freedom is the most crucial issue in human life and that freedom "wherein each individual is faced with his own truth . . . Taken to its extreme consequences . . . leads to a denial of the very idea of human nature." (VS, 32) This is, as we have seen, characteristic of the document. The same may be said of the notion that God's plan is the true way of freedom. (VS, 45) In regard to conscience we are given numbers 54, 61, and 64, all of which teach that it is the "properly" formed conscience which is to be followed and that conscience is always formed by the truth of reality. None of these thoughts surprises us. The next group of texts are on human acts and again represent the notion we have seen in our analysis of the encyclical. Numbers 71, 72, 81 and 85 are singled out to show there are, indeed, some acts that are "intrinsically evil" and that "a good intention or particular circumstances can diminish their evil, but they cannot remove it." (VS, 81) Finally,

the article quotes numbers 93, 95, and 97 of the document to the effect that moral life implies sacrifice and only a morality of universal application, as taught by VERITATIS SPLENDOR, "can guarantee the ethical foundation of social coexistence, both on the national and international levels." (VS, 97) All in all, one must agree that these quotes do, as a matter of fact, "convey the tone and breadth of the encyclical." (MCT, November 1993, p. 11)

In contrast to the statements that reveal the 'salient' parts of the encyclical, the article by Bede Hubbard entitled "VERITATIS SPLENDOR examines moral principles, not sexuality" needlessly complicates the issue of moral action by confusing 'objective moral evil' with 'subjective guilt.' That is, while Father Hubbard is quite correct in his headline, the encyclical is indeed concerned with moral principles and not specifically with sexual matters; nonetheless, he seems to devote an inordinate amount of space in his article to proving that "the media, among others, have attempted to prejudge VERITATIS SPLENDOR narrowly and simplistically" (Ibid.) Hubbard seems to feel that even though the Pope "offset[s] th[e] contemporary tendency toward a fragmented individualism," he nevertheless seems to 'interpret' the Pope as holding that "conscience is an essential but not the sole aspect of moral decision making . . . [and that] when there is a divergency between the personal decision of a person and the objective moral teaching of the Church, the person must continue to be respected and the Church must continue its mission of teaching." (Ibid., p11) All of which is true, of course, but Hubbard seems to confuse

an 'uninformed conscience' with what is 'objectively' moral. His quoting of number 95 of the encyclical is both misleading and out of context, and again illustrates his inability to distinguish between 'objective evil' and 'subjective guilt'.⁵⁵ In short, then, Father Hubbard seems to confuse the basic moral teaching of the document - which is, as we have argued, based upon an 'objective' moral universe with the pastoral mission of the Church to teach with charity. Hubbard should therefore be grouped with Professor Baum as one who wishes to 'water down' the total effect of the Pope's teaching. Again, while such sentiments are perhaps laudable, they do falsify, or, so it would seem, a proper reading of the text.

The final article on this page devoted to the encyclical concerns the reaction of the Canadian bishops to the document. As we have seen, the headline of the article - "Encyclical's release called for solidarity - is true in terms of the Pope's wishes and true to the response of the bishops of Canada. We have already had occasion to quote Bishop Himalayan, who holds that the job of the bishops is "to see how they can present the encyclical's contents to the faithful." (Ibid.) Archbishop Turcotte underscored his

⁵⁵ The text, quoted in English translation by Hubbard, reads as follows: "A clear and forceful presentation of moral truth can never be separated from a profound and heartfelt respect, born of that patient and trusting love which man always needs along his moral journey; a journey frequently wearisome on account of difficulties, weakness and painful situations. The Church can never renounce the 'principle of truth and consistency, whereby she does not call good evil and evil good'; but she must always be careful not to break the bruised reed or to quench the dimly burning wick." (VS, 95)

acceptance of the existence of 'intrinsically' evil acts but noted that this truth "must be proposed, not imposed"; and that while the question of abortion is one of these "intrinsically evil acts" in the question of the "writing of this precept into law, to impose it on everyone, a line must be drawn." (Ibid.) This 'line' is of course that in "a pluralist society there is separation between Church and state." (Ibid.) In sum, then, even though Father Hubbard seems to stress the existence of 'objective and intrinsically' evil acts, the substance of the treatment given the encyclical on page 11 is in agreement with our proposed reading of VERITATIS SPLENDOR and, even in the case of Father Hubbard, the seeming disagreement with our 'narrow' reading is more one of emphasis than doctrine. It will be helpful to end our treatment of the reaction of the Catholic newspapers with a look at an extreme conservative reaction to the question of moral theology in general, and VERITATIS SPLENDOR in particular, with a view to assessing just how 'extreme' Pope John Paul II is in his moral teaching.

To place what follows in context, a few words are in order concerning our choice of L'Informateur Catholique as a heuristic model for assessing the Pope's conservatism as expressed by VERITATIS SPLENDOR. It seems to us that the group surrounding this newspaper represents a 'spirit' in the Church which is diametrically opposed to the 'spirit' of Vatican II. As we have noted in our first chapter, the expectations spawned by the Second Vatican Council can be summed up as a hope that the Roman Catholic Church would heed the call of John XXIII to 'read the signs of the

times'. These signs seemed to negate much of what the Church had become under Pope Pius XII - that triumphal institution which was incapable of error and whose very structure was such that it was unchangeable and worthy of unquestioned acceptance. It goes without saying that the Pope was both the cause and guardian of this triumphalism and contained in his person the very substance of the Truth in all its facets. There was also a popular 'mystical' element to this Church which expressed itself in paranatural phenomena like Fatima and which phenomena underwrote the truth of the Church's supremacy. This is not the place to enter into a debate concerning the validity of either this Church's self-image or the truth value of these paranatural phenomena. Our interest is in understanding the teaching of the Church and then relating this understanding to the modern and postmodern situations. Apologetics concerning the Church, either negative or positive, are not our purpose. Rather, we have introduced the consideration above in an attempt to give a picture of the Church before Vatican II. Now, we have argued that the present pontiff has returned the Church (doctrinally) to the time of Pius XII. With the introduction of the present considerations on popular 'mysticism' as illustrated in L'Informateur Catholique we are contending that, on the 'popular' level, the same return has occurred. That is, a newspaper like L'Informateur Catholique wholeheartedly supports paranatural events like Fatima or, in its case, the appearances of Our Lady at places like Medjugorje, and holds that the truth of the faith and the penetration of God into nature depends heavily upon these events.

It should be noted in this connection that both Pope Pius XII and Pope John Paul II have either claimed visions (Pius's famed vision of the 'dancing' sun) or have approved such events.⁵⁶ Thus our examination of L'Informateur Catholique is more a case study than a specific analysis of articles on VERITATIS SPLENDOR. It would appear no less pertinent for that, however. As indicated, we will review L'Informateur Catholique's treatment of the Catechism, the reaction of the bishops of Quebec to the Pope's teachings, and then take a look, with the paper, at the situation moral theology finds itself in after VERITATIS SPLENDOR.

Interestingly enough, L'Informateur Catholique, when treating of the Catechism, does not deal with any specific doctrines taught by the book. Rather, in the context of covering a meeting of Catholic journalists, it makes the point that with the Catechism there is now an official version of what the Church believes, and which will allow journalists to quote from an authoritative source.⁵⁷ Quite naturally, the paper sees the Church as the victim

⁵⁶ In regard to the validity of our contention, a quick review of the articles published by L'Informateur on Medjugorje (23 May to 5 June, p. 7, may be cited among many examples) clearly makes the point. That John Paul II is not averse to such beliefs is indicated by his acceptance of the Medjugorje apparitions and by his special devotion to Mary, coupled with his belief that his dedicating Russia to her has caused the downfall of communism. Of course, his 'mystical' inclination is rationally based in his study of John of the Cross, but nonetheless he has more than once publically endorsed what we have called the 'popular mysticism' of the pre-Vatican II Church.

⁵⁷ As L'Informateur Catholique, quoting Monsignor Foley, puts it: "une source d'information fiable et authentique au sujet de ce qu'est l'Eglise catholique, de ce qu'elle fait et de ce qu'elle enseigne au nom de Jésus-Christ." (23 May to 5 June 1993, p. 14) Note that as the Church teaches so too does Christ.

of misunderstanding and as having to combat "l'ignorance massive" and expects that there will be "au moins la malice occasionnelle" (Ibid.) when the press treats of the Church's beliefs and practices.⁵⁴ In keeping with the general defensive position regarding the Church's public image the paper quotes Monsignor Foley as observing that it would be suitable for journalists to give "a constructive critique . . . to build up rather than destroy; to analyse rather than scandalize."⁵⁵ In summary then, the article concludes by noting that "it is important that the press report its critiques concerning the politics of the Church in such a manner as to make the positive course of the Church evident."⁵⁶ It is interesting to note that there is absolutely no discussion of the content of the Catechism or that there could be any possibility of disagreement either with it or the policies of the Church, even, it would appear, in the political arena. Truly this is the Church before Vatican II.

The second issue that we will engage in connection with

⁵⁴ In regard to the Catholic people themselves, their job is to listen. As L'Informateur Catholique has it: "La presse catholique devient sans doute alors la façon la plus efficace d'informer et de former des millions de catholiques en leur rappelant les vérités enseignées par leur foi et les normes morales qui devraient guider leur existence." (Ibid., p. 14) As we have seen in our first chapter, the content of this teaching is the traditional one of Catholic doctrine and morality.

⁵⁵ "une critique constructive . . . à améliorer plutôt qu'à détruire; à analyser plutôt qu'à scandaliser" (Ibid. p 14)

⁵⁶ "Il est important que la presse inscrive ses critiques concernant les politiques de l'Eglise dans le cadre de tout ce qu'on doit admettre d'action positive au sein de l'Eglise." (Ibid., p. 14)

L'Informateur Catholique concerns the bishops of Quebec in relation to the papacy. Now the immediate context of this discussion is the 'ad limina' visit of the bishops to the Pope. This visit took place in June 1993, four months before the issuing of VERITATIS SPLENDOR and it is thus instructive of the political context (in terms of the Church) into which the encyclical was launched. First, the Pope, as is his custom, notes "the changes that have taken place in Canadian society and the questions which have arisen regarding our belief system".⁶¹ However, despite these 'changements survenus,' the Pope's solution is the traditional one of the Church,⁶² and, with the wisdom of hindsight, truly traditional.⁶³

Even purely political events in Quebec like the Quiet Revolution are judged in relation to the conservative thrust we have been developing. This event has had both good and bad effects, and one of these bad effects is the lessening of the influence of the Church, which must try to reinsert itself into the life of the

⁶¹ "Les changements survenus dans la société canadienne et les questions qui ont surgi au sujet de nos croyances" (6 to 19 June 1993, p. 9)

⁶² As the newspaper reports: "Les chrétiens canadiens, recommande-t-il, doivent faire preuve de solidarité dans tous les secteurs de la vie sociale et, lorsque cela est nécessaire, savoir apporter du secours. En ce sens, l'Évêque de Rome appuie l'action de ses confrères québécois lorsqu'ils encouragent les laïcs à s'engager dans la vie politique et sociale de la province pour servir les autres 'selon l'esprit évangélique de la doctrine sociale de l'Église.'" (Ibid., p. 9)

⁶³ With the issuing of VERITATIS SPLENDOR, the Church entered the final phase of its return to the past as we have consistently striven to show.

people." Th the article puts the cap on this conservatism by noting that women are not suitable for the priesthood and should accept those tasks that are especially theirs." The article ends with the bishops' attestation of their loyalty to the Pope and acceptance of his doctrines. As we have seen, the issuing of VERITATIS SPLENDOR was also accepted with practically no negative reaction. In other words, L'Informateur Catholique represents a common Catholic attitude, at least among the hierarchy. While it is true that both Pope and bishops recognize "une situation inconfortable" due to American culture's stress on the rights of the individual, the position of the Church must nonetheless be

" The words of the Pope as quoted by the newspaper are as follows: "La 'révolution tranquille' . . . a entraîné des changements majeurs dans la vie sociale du Québec. Comme vous le voyez . . . une telle évolution engendre des aspects positifs mais aussi des éléments inquiétants: baisse de la pratique religieuse, désintégration des structures familiales, avenir plus sombre, surtout pour les jeunes." (That is, the Pope singles out all the aspects of 'modernization' as being destructive. This is, as we have seen, the normal Catholic practice.) He continues: "Il est l'heure de passer à l'action sans s'attarder à regarder en arrière et à analyser les situations." (Ibid., p. 9)

" After noting "la responsabilité confiée à l'Église de transmettre fidèlement les enseignements du Seigneur" he continues to teach that "l'Église-épouse est fidèle à son Seigneur en appelant au sacerdoce des hommes qui, par le don total d'eux-mêmes, sont destinés à être personnellement le symbole du Fils incarné de Dieu." (Ibid. p.9) Women then are important but only in a secondary way, as presumably they do not function as a symbol of Christ. We have referred to the 'literalism' involved in this position in our first chapter. The Pope, of course, says this in a much more diplomatic way. We quote: "Elle [l'Église] reconnaît la grande importance de la participation des femmes à la vie communautaire, surtout dans l'exercice des importantes responsabilités que vous leur confiez de plus en plus souvent." (Ibid., p.9)

upheld even though this requires "vivre une double solidarité.""

We are now in a position to wrap up our discussion of the media reaction to Pope John Paul II's *SPLENDOR VERITATIS*. We will end with a discussion of three articles from L'Informateur Catholique for 10 March - 2 April 1994. The encyclical had been out for almost a year when these articles were published, and the Pope's position had been made quite clear. As we have seen, this position is the conservative one of the 1950s and our opinion on the matter will only be strengthened by what follows.

The first article is by Evelyne Lauzier Bouchard and concerns the thoughts of an ex-Lutheran pastor, now Catholic priest (ordained in 1991), Richard John Neuhauss. Father Neuhauss is noted for his strong line on the need for certainty in moral theology. The article we have before us is a report on a conference that Neuhauss gave to the American bishops on "les questions morales et médicales." (Ibid., p. 8) Father Neuhauss, author of

" We quote the entire context of our remarks in our main text: "Le président de l'Assemblée des évêques du Québec a pour sa part expliqué à Jean-Paul II que la culture américaine accorde une telle importance aux droits de la personne et à l'égalité sociale entre hommes et femmes, que le message de l'Église concernant la place et le rôle des femmes au sein des communautés chrétiennes apparaît souvent déphasé par rapport à la réalité."

"Les évêques québécois, a-t-il précisé, se sentent coincés dans une situation inconfortable. Désireux de vivre une double solidarité, nous voulons, d'une part, demeurer unis aux leaders de l'Église universelle et, d'autre part, accueillir les éléments positifs qui constituent les semences de l'avenir de notre peuple." (Ibid., p. 9) Although one hesitates to say it, it seems that, like the Pope when treating the question of modernity in the Church in general and the position of women in particular the bishops chose diplomacy and evasion rather than direct statement. This rhetorical as opposed to doctrinal stance is, as we have seen, characteristic of *VERITATIS SPLENDOR*.

the book The Catholic Moment, which deals with the need to form American culture according to the Catholic Church, carried this theme into his lecture to the bishops. He holds that the doctrines of HUMANAE VITAE and by implication SPLENDOR VERITATIS must be upheld, and that Catholics must follow the traditional teaching on birth control, which was the specific topic of his conference. He notes that "we must recognize this teaching as an essential part of the truth proposed by the Catholic Church."⁶⁷ He is particularly concerned with what he calls "proportionalisme," which "produces conditional Catholics, and conditional Catholics are deprived of the joy of discipleship experienced by unconditional Catholics."⁶⁸ In the light of our prior discussion, these statements speak for themselves.

A smaller article reports a position of Cardinal O'Connor of New York. Of course, the notice itself came not from the Cardinal, but from an aide who is in fact, Monsignor Michael Wreen, a consultant on religious education in the diocese. Wreen noted that criticism of the documents of the Holy Office tend to threaten the stability of Catholic doctrine, and a moratorium on such criticism is therefore declared in the New York archdiocese. This applies especially to the twin documents of the CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH and VERITATIS SPLENDOR. As the prelate concludes: "It is

⁶⁷ "il faut donc reconnaître cet enseignement comme une partie essentielle de la vérité proposée par l'Église catholique." (Ibid., p. 8)

⁶⁸ "produisent des catholiques conditionnels, et les catholiques conditionnels sont privés de la joie du disciple sans étiquette, du disciple inconditionnel". (Ibid, p. 8)

time that we begin again to express ourselves 'una voce,' with a single voice."⁶⁹ It would be hard to be any clearer than this. As a cap to the thoughts expressed in this paper is Father Blackburn's question-and-answer column, which makes it painfully clear that one who procures an abortion is purely and simply 'kicked out' of the Church. It would appear that our judgement has not been too severe.

In the same issue, Kevin Kelly and Paul Bouchard note the remarks of Cardinal Ratzinger inviting "les théologiens à poursuivre le dialogue avec 'le monde réel.'" (Ibid. p. 12) This invitation reveals itself to be a pointing out that this 'reality' is really the doctrine put forth in the NEW CATECHISM and VERITATIS SPLENDOR, and that the 'hangover' and 'letdown' after Vatican II must be overcome.⁷⁰ The Cardinal also notes that Islam is now a force to be reckoned with. The events of the recent Cairo Conference have taken this germ to a fruition that is at once disturbing and expected. That is, despite obvious differences of 'strategy', both groups, the Catholics and the Muslims, have 'fundamentalist' elements that agree on sexual and gender issues and, it may be pointed out, see themselves as 'cultural forces'. (Whether these traditional enemies can find a profounder common ground remains to be seen. Cardinal Ratzinger is correct to be

⁶⁹ "Il est temps que nous recommencions à nous exprimer 'una voce', d'une seule voix." (Ibid., p. 8)

⁷⁰ There is "un réel motif de dépression et de souffrance, spécialement si nous le comparons aux églises d'il y a 20 ans." (Ibid., p. 12)

concerned with the "problème de la théocratie" (p. 12) in Muslim countries but our contention concerning the conservatism and fundamentalism of the Church is borne out by these possibilities and alliances being entertained at the highest levels of the Church.)

The final article (p. 14) is the conclusion of Jacques Martineau's critique of Guy Durand's commentary on VERITATIS SPLENDOR. We have already reviewed Professor Durand's work and our criticism at that point more or less parallels, the comments in Jacques Martineau's article, albeit from a different perspective. Thus we will end with the comment of John Paul II, quoted at the end of his article by Jacques Martineau: "One cannot ignore all the signposts and still pretend to be on one's way."²¹

With this we close our review of the print media's reaction to the work of John Paul and leave the proof of our contention to speak for itself in the words of the journals and newspapers we have sampled.

Section Two: Survey on the reaction to John Paul II's VERITATIS SPLENDOR

Having explored various examples of Canadians' reaction to John Paul II's encyclical VERITATIS SPLENDOR as expressed in the print

²¹ "On ne peut pas passer par-dessus les balises le long d'une route et, en même temps, prétendre être encore sur cette route." (no source is given so we refer to Ibid., p. 14)

media,⁷² we will now turn our attention to the survey mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. We canvassed 500 potential subjects and received replies from 221, for a percentage return of 44 percent. This fact allows us to make our first observation (based on several personal encounters with the respondents), that the majority of people approached neither knew of the encyclical nor were interested in taking the time to fill out a questionnaire, such as the present one, that dealt with papal teaching.⁷³ It would seem to be valid to draw the conclusion from this situation that people neither value nor are the least bit interested in papal teaching and that their knowledge of it (even, as we shall see, for Catholics) is virtually nonexistent. It is within this context that the following data must be read. In terms of its representative value, it would seem that, given the negative response to our questionnaire,⁷⁴ the rather startlingly small number who were able to identify the encyclical displayed in the completed forms⁷⁵ can be taken as quite indicative of a general attitude in Canadian

⁷² It is interesting to note that, in our survey, 10 percent of respondents noted they had heard of the encyclical from newspapers and another 20 percent from other sources, excluding 10 percent who had learned of it from television and 3 percent who heard of it over the radio. A staggering 60 percent had never heard of it from any media.

⁷³ In fact, the most difficult task in the completion of this part of the project was to convince people that their opinion would be germane to the questions posed.

⁷⁴ As we have noted, only 44 percent of those approached consented to respond.

⁷⁵ This is to note that only 13 percent of the total number responding had ever heard of the VERITATIS SPLENDOR.

society towards the Papacy and its teaching. If these facts are added to the situation we saw in the print media and the incidents surrounding the Human Life International conference in Montreal, which we will treat below, then it would appear that our survey, though admittedly limited, is in a very real sense representative. We may now turn to the results of the survey itself.

The survey was conducted in Montreal during the spring of 1995 and was targeted primarily at postsecondary students attending two CEGEPs in that city. One, the English-language Dawson College, rendered more respondents than did the French-language André-Laurendeau.⁷⁶ There were a few other subjects canvassed, all with a postsecondary education⁷⁷ and thus fitting within the parameters of the target group. The survey, then, can be seen as a sample of the type of reaction to the encyclical in question among people who are involved in intellectual issues and who can be expected to have an informed opinion about moral matters in general. Further, it would seem natural to expect student opinion to be symptomatic of general opinion concerning the relevance of papal teaching on moral matters. Lastly, the present pontiff feels a special closeness to youth and sees them as being of particular significance in his apostolate. For these reasons, then, it may be said that our survey is helpful in assessing the influence of papal moral

⁷⁶ Dawson was the source of 77 percent of the replies while André-Laurendeau was responsible for 23 percent. Given the language mix in Canada as a whole this may be taken as a representative sample.

⁷⁷ In both groups these subjects accounted for 13 percent of the overall total.

teaching.

Turning to the results themselves we find that only 13 percent of the total answering the survey had, in fact, heard of VERITATIS SPLENDOR, and when questioned as to its contents only 4 percent were able to identify it as a document concerned with morality, while a full 76 percent admitted frankly that they did not know what it dealt with. In short, the document is not well known nor are its contents studied - at least among our target group - in any depth. However, by posing questions relating to both the perception of papal authority and related moral concerns, it was possible to glean a profile of what the 'average' educated person holds concerning morality and the Magisterium's relation to it.⁷⁸ By paralleling these answers with the doctrine of VERITATIS SPLENDOR, it is possible to deduce the position held by the Pope's ethical teaching in the general intellectual climate tested. (By extension, one may see this climate as, perhaps, indicative of a mental set of our time. Of course, this statement must be textually documented, and this we will attempt in Chapter Three of the present project.) However that may be, a comparison of the results of our survey with the sample of media attention and reaction to the encyclical in Canada will put us in a position whereby we may come to some conclusions concerning the general attitude in regard to the encyclical as exists specifically in Canada.

⁷⁸. See below, appendix one for the complete list of questions posed. Appendix two gives an overview of the results both in their totality and as catalogued according to language used by respondents.

Concerning the results of the questions posed by our survey and the relationships between these results, there seemed to be virtually no significant relation between the gender of the respondents and their answers.⁷⁹ In fact, the overall distribution by gender was more or less equal.⁸⁰ In terms of religious affiliation, while 52 percent of those responding identified themselves as Roman Catholics, 8 percent called themselves Protestant and 39 percent were 'other' (with 2 percent not classifying themselves at all), the number of those who were acquainted with the document was low, surprising in light of this high a degree of Roman Catholic respondents. Part of the explanation for this discrepancy may be found in the fact that only 45 percent of the respondents saw themselves as moderately committed in religious matters, while a full 43 percent admitted to no commitment whatever. In addition, those who felt an intense commitment were a mere 7 percent, leaving a group of 6 percent who did not answer the question. Based on this, there does not seem to be a relation between religious identity and knowledge of that religion. It is, rather, the intensity of the commitment that seems definitive.

Turning to the social status of the respondents, we find that the description of our target group is confirmed. That is, 62 percent earned under \$25,000 annually while 13 percent gave their

⁷⁹ Virtually the same situation prevails in terms of the linguistic breakdown. See Appendix Two.

⁸⁰ Overall the respondents were 52 percent male and 41 percent female, with 2% failing to specify their gender.

earnings as nil - so we may see that the majority of the respondents were students. Since however 24 percent earned more than \$25,000, there would seem to be an indication that there is not much of a relation between income (and social status) and knowledge of the document in question. Having established these findings in terms of identifying the target group, the survey turned directly to the question of morality and its basis. We will now look at these findings.

There are two series of questions to be dealt with. The first has to do with the knowledge of the encyclical and the position the Pope holds as a moral authority. The second group concerns the type of criterion that is used in making moral judgements. As we have noted, a comparison of these two series will yield indications as to the moral authority (actual influence) of the Magisterium. That is, we will, in the first instance, be able to see how closely the Pope's moral teaching consciously influences moral activity by assessing his influence through actual acceptance of him as a moral authority and by the extent of the knowledge of his teachings. Then, by inquiring into the type of moral reasoning used by those who participated in our survey, we may see how profoundly the Church's moral notions unconsciously influence moral thought and consequent action. We will first look at the actual direct influence the Pope seems to have.

In regard to the moral authority of the Pope, overall 41 percent accept the Pope as such, but only 16 percent of those questioned feel his teaching to be binding. If one remembers that

only 13 percent actually had heard of VERITATIS SPLENDOR,¹¹ one is left with the impression that the Pope's authority is more symbolic than real. By the same token, the knowledge of the type of moral thinking that the Papacy underwrites would seem to be very sparse. To gauge the extent of this knowledge a series of questions was asked having to do with the basis of moral decision making. We will now turn to this second series.

As we noted in the first chapter of the present project, the ethics of the Catholic Church is based on the natural law as understood by Scholasticism. Thus we asked our respondents whether they felt there was a 'natural' moral way to act, and a surprising 64 percent answered that they did. However, when asked if humans can know reality completely (a necessary condition, as we have seen, to comprehending the 'natural' law¹²) only 38 percent answered that this was possible. This would seem to show that the notion of 'nature', in the case of many of those who believe in a

¹¹ It is interesting to note that only 11 percent answered that they had heard of the document later than its first appearance (12 percent stated they had heard of it when it first appeared). This indicates that there was little reflection on its contents. Again, the fact that only 4 percent knew it dealt with morals indicates its real influence on moral teaching to be virtually nonexistent either positively or negatively. Unconcern seems to be the most dominant attitude here. Since 11 percent answered that the encyclical dealt with both morality and Church doctrine, the results would seem to betray a guess.

¹² Here we mean that reality must be understood in a metaphysical and thus absolute sense, as for example Saint Thomas felt he understood reality by knowing the definition of things which rendered their essences known in their entirety.

'natural' way to act, is, to say the least, unclear."³ The respondents were next asked to state whether there were some acts that are always 'evil'. Again the positive reply of 58 percent indicates a similarity with papal teaching that some acts are intrinsically evil by reason of their nature. However, when queried as to the reason for this intrinsic evil, only 29 percent felt that it was because of nature. A large group (52 percent) chose the fact that these acts would be harmful to people as the reason for their viciousness. Interestingly enough, 14 percent did not respond to this question and 5 percent felt that a combination of the two alternatives would explain the viciousness of the act. This would seem to indicate that 'the good of the person' is more important in people's moral thinking than 'natural law' and that, while there is a residue of it in people's consciousness, a rather unclear union of Kantianism and utilitarianism dominates moral thinking. In our third chapter we will develop this finding in its theoretical implications for the Pope's moral teaching.

The last questions dealt with the issue of the necessity of consulting a moral authority. Forty-three percent of those polled felt that one should consult such an authority, while 49 percent stated that one need not. An insignificant 4 percent did not answer. The survey ended by asking the nature of this moral

³ In many cases of morally natural acts, the meaning obviously refers to a statistically normal occurrence in a culture rather than nature in the Scholastic sense of 'essence' or 'substance.' What is natural tends to vary with time and place when used in this sense - a point that is strengthened by the fact that only 27 percent of those responding felt that science could be used in moral decisions.

authority, that is, the question attempted to find out if people saw this authority as being either scientific or religious or whether, in the final judgement, it was neither but rather the individual conscience. As we have seen, 27 percent opted for science and 40 percent for religion. However, a significant group (24 percent) did not answer and 10 percent noted that both sources should be consulted. This would indicate that there still is a certain 'objectivity' in moral reasoning, but the large number of those who did not answer would seem to point to the existence of a rather 'subjective' notion (in the Pope's sense) of moral reasoning. Lastly, this idea of 'personal' choice was posed in terms of the place of conscience in moral decision making. Fifty-nine percent stated that conscience is, indeed, the final arbitrator. Thirty-eight percent disagreed and 3 percent did not respond. This would again indicate that moral reasoning is no longer based upon an objective notion of 'natural' law but upon a culturally conditioned notion of the 'good of the person' as perceived by conscience.⁶⁶

By way of conclusion, it seems that, at least in terms of our admittedly limited sample, the moral teaching of the papacy has lost almost all of its conscious influence and much of its unconscious power to influence moral activity in the present-day world. All in all, then, our analysis seems to lend strength to our thesis concerning the Church's strategic social position, at

⁶⁶ In this instance it would seem obvious that 'conscience' is a cultural construct.

least in terms of ante(i)modernity and its mutation from a 'Church' to a 'Sect.' Such a finding makes this 'Church' a perfect candidate for being seen as an alternative to modernity and, hence, of being capable of inclusion within the 'plurality' of postmodernity without retaining its once preeminent position as a moral authority wielding social binding power as it did in the European Middle Ages.

Section Three - An analysis of the significance of the Human Life International convention in Montreal and the reaction to it as a 'public' reaction to the 'social position' of the Church.

We will end our discussion of the Canadian reaction to VERITATIS SPLENDOR with a look at the events surrounding the Human Life International (HLI) convention that took place in Montreal in the summer of 1995. This convention, as we will attempt to show, highlights both the Pope's message and the difficulties it has experienced in the (post)modern situation.

Human Life International and papal teaching

The convention of the seemingly radical prolife society HLI held in Montreal in April 1995 (week of 16 to 22), generated not only a certain media reaction, but also tended to polarize opinion concerning the Church's general doctrine of sexuality and its position on reproductive activity. Thus, we will end this discussion of the reaction to VERITATIS SPLENDOR by viewing the convention of HLI both in terms of the organization's beliefs and the reaction these beliefs have given rise to.

In any exposition of the beliefs of HLI it is important to distinguish what we will call the 'official Catholic component' of their beliefs from other beliefs that stem, it would appear, largely from right-wing Christian (non-Catholic) and non-Christian sources. As we have seen, the official Catholic positions on sexuality and reproduction are clear and easy to comprehend. One need read only the texts we have read to learn that the 'official doctrine' of the Church is that sexual activity can be validly pursued only within marriage, and when such action is of a nature as to be open to procreation. In relation to abortion, the Church is adamant: it is murder. The same is true of so-called 'mercy-killing' or euthanasia. These doctrines are rationalized in the traditional Scholastic sense in *VERITATIS SPLENDOR*, and abortion and euthanasia are 'biblically and homiletically' opposed in *EVANGELIUM VITAE*. While this teaching is unmistakably that of the Magisterium, this same Magisterium in the same documents also rejects, as we have argued above, any reliance upon violent action⁶⁵ to put these beliefs into practice, nor does the Church underwrite any racial slurs or policies in this regard.⁶⁶ Thus,

⁶⁵ It should be noted that this is also the 'official' stance of the those organizations under the umbrella of 'Prochoice.' The 'violence' of those 'prochoice' supporters who reacted violently to the HLI gathering is not to be taken as either sanctioned by the policy of Prochoice or their leaders.

⁶⁶ In fact, the Church's position on population control at the Cairo Conference would seem to indicate a profound sensitivity to the 'racial' implications of population control policies. Granted, the controversial nature of the Church's position and her alliance with fundamentalist Muslim groups does point to a certain inconsistency in the Church's position; nonetheless, at the Montreal HLI convention one of the charges against its (Catholic)

much of the negative feeling directed at the Church because of its beliefs is, in fact, more guilt by association and misunderstanding than the result of Church teaching. Finally it must also be noted that, as we argued in our first chapter, the Church accepts the principle of 'freedom of religion' and is only 'negatively' opposed to laws supporting homosexuality, abortion and euthanasia." That said we will now attempt to outline the beliefs of HLI (both those of an 'official' Catholic nature and those whose status in relation to Catholicism is less secure), and then examine the demonstration in Montreal as a symbol of a much wider cultural polarization generated by these issues, a polarization which we will discuss in our concluding chapter.

The various media sources that report on Father Paul Marx, the founder of HLI, all seem to agree that he is a Benedictine monk, holds a Ph.D. and founded HLI, "based in Maryland, but with 53 branch offices in 39 countries on 6 continents . . . in 1981 . . . with encouragement from the Vatican." (Karen Branan and Frederick Clarkson, "Extremism in Sheep's Clothing: A special report on Human Life International," Front Line Research, vol. 1, no. 1 [June

teaching was its racist attitude to Islam. Both sides, it seems, are guilty of political unclarity and the willingness to use a 'buzz' word like racism with a certain irresponsibility.

" That is, as we have seen in our analysis of EVANGELIUM VITAE, Catholics are not bound by laws which are against the moral law of nature; nevertheless, this means only that they cannot obey them, not that they must use 'violence' to invalidate them. It goes without saying that in any democracy, citizens are allowed to lobby as they see fit. This applies to Catholics as well as any one else. Often, those who oppose the Catholic position have a tendency to see the Church's political involvement as somehow different from (and more sinister than) their own.

1994], p. 1.) Just how much encouragement the Vatican offered is never stated, and as we have observed, much of the controversy surrounding the group stems more from their connotations than direct Catholic influence. For example, the group is routinely accused of anti-Semitism, and it does seem to be so. For example, in his book Confessions of a Pro-life Missionary (NP: HLI, 1988,), Father Marx states in essence that the abortion movement is more or less led by Jewish doctors." The fact that HLI tends to use right-wing speakers and inflammatory titles for its conferences also adds to its notoriety. For instance, Dr. Siegfried Ernst, a convicted neofascist, and Stanley Monteith are members in good standing and are, of course, well known racists and anti-Semites. Further, there is the HLI connection with people like Joe Sedlak of STOP International who have "led and inspired violent right-wing demonstrations" (Ibid., p 3), a connection which tends to place the abortion debate, as sparked by HLI, in an awkward position. (The 'violence' of the Prochoice people in the Montreal incident of 19 April 1995 was justified by many as an appropriate answer to a violent group.) (See The Gazette [Montreal], 20 April 1995, pp. A1

" Father Marx does, at times, modify this stance by referring to these doctors as 'so-called' Jews. However, the intent seems plain and must, in terms of his association of abortion with the Holocaust in a provocative way, seem to link Father Marx and his group with a well-documented tendency in right-wing Catholicism to be anti-Semitic. (The wartime phenomenon of Father Coughlin and his movement springs to mind in this regard.) That Pope John Paul II rejects such an attitude would seem clear. (The recent Vatican accord with the state of Israel is the latest in a long line of 'reaching out' to Judaism by the Catholic Church.) Thus, this anti-Semitism is to be credited to HLI, not to the Catholic Church. In that light, one wonders at the group's 'Vatican support.'

and A2.) Other people of a 'violent' mind connected to the group are Joan Andrew-Bell, John Burt (recently of Rescue America) and Michael Griffin (convicted slayer of Dr. David Gunn, a doctor who performed abortions). All in all, once one separates Father Marx's Catholic and other sourced doctrines, the case of those who see Father Marx's group as fascist and racist seem to have a point. Finally, there is the link of some of Father Marx's members with the American theologian R. J. Rushdoony, founder of the doctrine of Christian Reconstructionism, which advocates the abolition of democracy and the adopting of what is called "Biblical Law" as the foundation of a "Christian theocracy." (Branan and Clarkson, p. 5) It is interesting in this context to note that Father Marx himself is quite worried about the spread of Islam which he sees as bent on the destruction of the Christian West. (Ibid., p.1) In the light of the above, then, it must be noted that HLI seems to operate within a context of right-wing extremism that is biased by racism and marked by a propensity to violence. It is this image that sparked the Montreal demonstration."

" The Gazette for 15 April 1995 (pages A1 and A10) printed a rather extensive expose on the HLI, which confirmed the point made in the body of our essay. Then, of course, on April 19, 1995 the group was "hit by tomatoes, eggs and sticks as they quickly walked the four blocks between Place d'Armes and their hotel on University Street." (p. A1) The 'violence' shown by the Prochoice opposition is, of course, not condonable, and the general opinion of all the media on the 'content' of the HLI's convention was that it was "pretty doctrinally pure" (see, for example, New Catholic Times, 22 April 1995). There is also the statement of Archbishop Turcotte referred to above that seems to indicate that the HLI did not represent Church opinion, at least in the Montreal Archdiocese. Whatever the final decision may be on the group, they do not, on the strength of the present analysis, appear to represent a Catholic position in any way except that they reject abortion as

Now that HLI's position vis-à-vis the Catholic Church has been established, we may offer some comments as to the symbolic clashing of those who oppose and those who support what Pope John Paul II has described in *EVANGELIUM VITAE* as the 'culture of life' and the 'culture of death.'

Symbolically, the demonstration outside Notre Dame Basilica may be seen as an icon of the postmodern situation. By this we mean that the problem of 'power' has not been solved inasmuch as opposition to oppression (in this case the emerging 'norm' - Prochoice - is confronting the waning 'norm' - Prolife) finds the Church - part of the waning 'norm' - caught in the middle of a power struggle. That is, the Church (as is her right) opposes Prochoice and supports Prolife. Nevertheless, Prolife⁹⁰, for

murder. The other ideological positions they espouse seem to be non-Catholic in origin and justification.

⁹⁰ It is interesting to note two factors in the actual HLI convention in Montreal. First, according to the report in the Montreal Catholic Times ("HLI Weathers Protest," May 1995), the HLI is "the world's largest prolife, profamily organization; its mission is to educate countries about "the evils of abortion, sterilization, infanticide, euthanasia, contraception and other modern threats to life and family." (p. 3; emphasis added) The same edition of this paper reports that "the inside was prayerful, while outside, in Place d'Armes, a boisterous crowd of about 2,000 young demonstrators displayed their strong opposition to the group's Montreal visit." Secondly, there is the question of the reference to 'official' Church support. All that is mentioned is that "a message [was read] from Bishop Jean-Guy Hamelin, president of the Canadian Conference of Bishops, which outlined seven characteristics found in *EVANGELIUM VITAE* that mark a commitment to life." So the situation in Montreal was much like the general situation HLI finds itself in in relation to the Church. There is no wholehearted endorsement of the organization by the Church. We might also note that according to the report of Professor Christopher Gray contained in the same edition of the paper, "There was little said at the Human Life International conference that

whatever reasons, has become identified with a 'violence' that the opposition Prochoice feels must be confronted with violence and suppression. In such a situation the Church emerges as the underdog and the victim of a violence she rejects. It is this ambiguous position of minority rights as 'moral norm' that has become the Church's claim to a hearing, and that we will develop at the conclusion of the present project. The Church, that is, by sticking to her premodern antimodernity, has been transformed into a postmodern proponent of freedom and, by the necessity of protecting her own existence, of plurality.

Conclusion

Having taken a sample of the reaction to Pope John Paul II's encyclical VERITATIS SPLENDOR, we may draw the following conclusions. First, and in our context perhaps most importantly,

would have driven local Catholics to join the ranks of those shouting "racist, sexist, anti-gay . . . go away." ("Conference Fell Short of Opponents' Claims", p. 3) While this may be true, it is, to say the least, not a very illuminating statement given the variety of opinion among Catholics on these issues and also the obvious implications that it was a 'certain type' who demonstrated and by implication this 'certain type' was antifamily and antilife. Gray did admit that there was opposition to the HLI communications strategies and that "Many of these strategies reflect the self-styled approach of HLI founder Paul Marx." So, all in all, the criticisms of the founder of the organization and his 'associates' seem, by deduction, to be roughly true, but for Gray, the saving grace is: "HLI itself and its work is clearly not attached to one man but is institutionally sound and dispersed, and, even more importantly, incorrigibly attached to the Lord of life and not his servant." This is a truly valid sentiment but does not seem to address the problem of distinguishing HLI from a respect for life which is the basis of the protestors as well as the protestees. The point is not respect for life but the existentialization of this respect. This existentialization HLI seems to envision in right-wing terms and, as we have seen, is not necessarily the position of the Holy Father and the Catholic Church.

the Pope is seen as a moral authority in so far as the media considers his statements newsworthy. When this 'journalistic' interest is translated into reality, however, we see that for the secular press and the liberal religious press this authority is more or less a polite nod of recognition which does not extend to the point of actually dictating action. We also found this to be the case among those we surveyed. Once the moral authority of the Pope is accepted it becomes evident, judging from the reaction of the conservative Catholic press (and certain other conservative religious groups), that he is 'preaching to the converted' and that it becomes correct to see his overall social effect as being rather restricted. However, the overdetermined reaction to the HLI convention in Montreal shows that the Pope does, at least on issues of sexuality, still merit consideration as a moral force in the domain of public ethics. But all in all, it must be admitted that the Pope's moral authority, outside of what we are proposing to call a 'sect', is virtually nonexistent except as a 'historical survival' or even as a 'religious' oddity. The total impact of this state of affairs will become evident in our third chapter.

EXCURSUS

Pope John Paul II's own reflection on the intrinsic evil
of abortion and euthanasia in his EVANGELIUM VITAE

Introduction

After our dealing with the Canadian media's reaction to John Paul's VERITATIS SPLENDOR and assessing the findings of our survey, John Paul himself may be referred to as a source regarding the implications of his teaching on 'natural law' ethics. This is simply to note that on 30 March 1995 the pontiff issued an encyclical entitled EVANGELIUM VITAE concerning his teaching on abortion and euthanasia. This encyclical, as we will argue below, while not a sophisticated work of theology and philosophy like his former work, nonetheless bases itself on that work and presupposes its doctrine on morality. As a result, the new document much more a homily and 'call to action' can be seen as what the pontiff hoped to accomplish with the more 'intellectual' document. It is in this spirit that we will now take a brief look at Pope John Paul II's EVANGELIUM VITAE - THE NATURAL RIGHT TO LIFE (Pope John Paul II's reflection on his text VERITATIS SPLENDOR).²¹ This encyclical deals specifically with "the value and inviolability of human life" (EV, title) and thus, while it presupposes the 'doctrine' of VERITATIS SPLENDOR, it does not embody such a comprehensive

²¹ A note on language. The Latin text of the encyclical was not available in Montreal at the time of this writing. Therefore we have used the English version. Obviously the appropriate linguistic adjustments will be made when the Latin version becomes available.

approach. As we have seen, VERITATIS SPLENDOR dealt with the moral law in general and exists therefore as a theoretical underpinning of the matters dealt with in EVANGELIUM VITAE. As we stressed in our treatment of VERITATIS SPLENDOR, the Pope's teaching on morality is what may be called a 'natural law' ethics, and this doctrine of the 'natural law' is at the basis of the teaching of the new encyclical. Consequently, what follows will be more an outline of a content, an outline that is more an assertion than a reasoned argument. That is, the reasoning of VERITATIS SPLENDOR must always be kept in mind as the backdrop of the teaching of EVANGELIUM VITAE.

The main emphasis of the Pope's latest letter is on the problems posed by the increasing frequency of the practices of abortion and euthanasia. Both these practices are explicitly forbidden to Catholics and, indeed, the Pope sees these developments as giving rise to what he calls 'a culture of death' and to which he opposes 'a culture of life.' Hence the title of the Encyclical EVANGELIUM VITAE, a term John Paul admits "is not found as such in Sacred Scripture. But it does correspond to an essential dimension of the biblical message." (EV, 2) Further, in keeping with his belief in the 'natural law' and reason's ability to find the truth of this law, John Paul continues by observing that "every person sincerely open to truth and goodness can, by the light of reason and the hidden action of grace, come to recognize in the natural law written in the heart (see. Rom. 2:14-15) the sacred value of human life from its beginning until

its end, and can affirm the right of every human being to have this primary good respected to the highest degree. Upon the recognition of this right, every human community and the political community itself are founded." (EV, 2) In other words, the right to life is based on the natural law and is universal in its imperative." And this 'right' is based upon "the dignity of the person" (EV, 2), a position we have seen argued for consistently in VERITATIS SPLENDOR. In short, the 'Gospel of Life' is an extension of and founded upon the papal teaching concerning the 'natural law.' That this doctrine is also found in Scripture is seen as incontestable. Again, the Pope admits that the issues of abortion and euthanasia are not treated directly in Scripture but they are implied as being unthinkable to the people of God. What we are presented with in the present letter, then, is intellectually a 'fait accompli,' and the Pope more or less confines himself to what may be called a homily on the evilness of abortion and euthanasia, and by association he restates the traditional teaching of the Church on artificial contraception and the use of embryos (even if artificially grown) in scientific work. Moreover, the Pope condemns capital punishment as being almost never appropriate. He

" Pope John Paul II does admit that neither abortion (EV, 44) nor euthanasia (EV, 46) are directly treated in the biblical text. However, as he puts it: "this can be easily explained by the fact that the mere possibility of harming, attacking, or actually denying life in these circumstances is completely foreign to the religious and cultural way of thinking of the People of God." (EV, 44) At this point the work of Ernst Troeltsch comes to mind as to the employment of the natural law to link the 'church' with the 'world'. Of course, in this case such an understanding of natural law alienates the Church from the world.

even implies that heroic means should be employed in the question of self-defense. In other words, he sees the 'right' to life as an absolute that excludes any taking of life. We will now follow the Pope as he develops these doctrines in the immediate context of Scripture and as backgrounded by the teachings of VERITATIS SPLENDOR.

EVANGELIUM VITAE

It is difficult to summarize the Pope's thoughts on the threats to life he sees in the 'culture of death.' But the main message is clear. In order to clarify this message we will treat the issue under the following headings. First, the Pope presents the biblical explanation of how death entered the world. As one would expect, John Paul bases his explanation of the fact of death in the world on the Scriptural account in Genesis (EV, 7-9), with particular stress being laid on the story of Cain and Abel. The pontiff concludes from his reflection upon this tale that every attack on life cries out to God for vengeance, and thus the taking of a life is seen as an act which is universally condemned by God. (EV, 10). The Pope lists what may be called the 'traditional' threats to human life from both nature and man (EV, 10), but he then observes that there is "another category of attacks, affecting life in its earliest and its final stages, attacks which present 'new characteristics with respect to the past and which raise questions of extraordinary seriousness'. It is not only that in generalized opinions these attacks tend no longer to be considered as 'crimes'; paradoxically they assume the nature of 'rights,' to

the point that the State is called upon to give them 'legal recognition and to make them available through the free service of health-care personnel'." (EV, 11) The Pope is of course referring to the growing legalization of both abortion and euthanasia. This situation gives rise to the question of a proper understanding of the nature of 'right' and its relation to 'freedom.'¹⁷ The Pope, in effect, while using moving rhetoric and making a point that has a certain basis in reality, reiterates his arguments in VERITATIS SPLENDOR concerning the growing trend in the modern world to disassociate freedom from truth and to elevate subjective norms to a universal level. The whole of Chapter One of the present Encyclical is devoted to this issue. (EV, 7-28) Having more or

¹⁷ As we have seen in our treatment of VERITATIS SPLENDOR, nature dictates duty which in turn defines right. Freedom is, then, the recognition and acting upon this nature which is the truth as existing. Thus, the 'right' to life is objectively based upon the 'nature' of life which seems, according to the Pope, to imply the imperative to preserve it as a good. From a purely rational position it seems hard to accept what the Pope is teaching. For example, the 'natural law' as taught by the Stoics allowed suicide in cases of extreme disgrace and sickness (both rejected by the Pope), and the exposing of children was also accepted by them, as was birth control and abortion. The Pope, then, seems obliged to fall back on religious ideas (biblically based) that God is the Lord of life and only he may dispose of it. Also, of course, the fundamentalist reading of the term 'nature' found in VERITATIS SPLENDOR comes into play here. Yet it must be confessed that, outside of the assertion that life from the beginning of conception is human and that suffering takes on meaning within the history of salvation, it is difficult to see the 'rationality' of John Paul's position on both abortion and euthanasia. (The case of artificial birth control seems a parallel position in terms of the confusion of biological 'nature' and human 'nature'.) That there is a culture of death is also difficult to accept in terms of the reasons given for abortion and euthanasia. It is for these reasons that the present encyclical seems, from a secular critical perspective, an exercise in rhetoric and, from the religious side, a homily. In short, the Pope seems to be appealing to a natural obviousness that is not all that obvious.

less declared the sanctity of life as he feels it proclaimed in the Old Testament and noting both the negative and positive aspects of the modern world in regard to this sanctity," the Pope turns to the New Testament in order to flesh out his position. (We are stressing the religious basis of the doctrine of the present encyclical for two reasons: i) it seems obvious from even a superficial reading of the text; and ii) to show that EVANGELIUM VITAE both complements and is based upon the prior VERITATIS

" Among the negative signs, the Pontiff notes a "contraceptive mentality" (EV, 13) and "artificial reproduction . . . [which he says] are morally unacceptable, since they separate procreation from the fully human context" (EV, 14), and the ever-increasing resorting to euthanasia (EV, 15). All of the above, as we have seen, occur "[w]hen freedom, out of a desire to emancipate itself from all forms of tradition and authority shuts out even the most obvious evidence of an objective and universal truth." (EV, 19) (Note the use of authority rather than reason. Such an attitude sets the tone of the present encyclical and separates it sharply from the tone of VERITATIS SPLENDOR which was, as we have attempted to show, much more the product of reason. True, it was a scholastic reason, but, reason nonetheless.) All this leads to an "eclipse of the sense of God and man" (EV, 21), and the result is that "Birth and death, instead of being primary experiences demanding to be 'lived,' become things to be merely 'possessed' or 'rejected' (EV, 22) leading to a "'practical materialism' which breeds individualism, utilitarianism and hedonism" (EV, 23) - all of which were attacked rationally in VERITATIS SPLENDOR.

Among the positive signs, veiled as they are by the dominant culture of death, the Pope sees: the charity of many married couples both to their own children and those who need their care; medical science's growing respect for life and the increased opposition to war; the growth of public charity; the growing opposition to the death penalty; and the interest shown in the 'quality' of life and the ecological movement. (EV, 26-28) Of course, the Pope (even with his use of personalistic rhetoric) fails to see that these movements in the postmodern situation often, if not always, include an aggressive population control programme of abortion and artificial contraception in addition to a feminism that wishes to empower women to share with males a position of domination and complete equality (see EV, 99, where Pope John Paul seems to have a different goal in mind). We will discuss this ambiguous relation of the Church to postmodernism in Chapter Three.

SPLENDOR and thus may be seen as the Pontiff's popularizing reaction to his own more technical work." In any event, the stated goal of the later work - "to create a new culture of life" (EV, 100) - is a logical conclusion of the intellectual vision which the Pope put forth in VERITATIS SPLENDOR.⁹⁰ Hence our contention that EVANGELIUM VITAE is a reaction to and commentary on VERITATIS SPLENDOR.⁹¹

Chapter Two of the document continues the discussion of the Gospel of Life in its New Testament context. In terms of our present concern, sections 42 to 47 are of particular interest,

⁹⁰ Interestingly enough, the press seemed to expect a rather vigorous reaction to this papal letter, but so far there has not been much more media reaction beyond the mere reporting of the issuing of the encyclical. Perhaps, the most noteworthy is that found in Newsweek for 10 April 1995, which does summarize the doctrine of the document and predicts a groundswell of reaction that at this writing has not materialized. In Quebec, the choice of Montreal by the HLI for their convention and the extreme negative reaction (CBC News broadcast) they received would seem to show that the Pope's teaching is, to say the least, not popular. However, there is a growing 'Christian Right' which would be expected to approve John Paul and his doctrines. For example, Billy Graham has lauded the encyclical and Father Marx, head of HLI, uses the rhetoric of the letter in his public pronouncements. Further, allowing the group the use of Notre Dame Basilica for their Mass would seem to put the hierarchy of Quebec behind them. Nevertheless, the public statement by Archbishop Turcotte (CBC News broadcast) that he wished he had investigated the matter more carefully amounts to a virtual apology and distancing from the group. Later we will present a more detailed discussion of the HLI and their relation to the Church.

⁹¹ As Connor Cruise O'Brien puts, it the Pope wishes to protect the Church from the Enlightenment. Or, as we have argued, keep the Church antimodern by rationalizing its premodernity.

⁹² With tongue somewhat in cheek it may be noted that this creates a self-reflective aspect to the Pope's work that stamps it with that self-referentiality so dear to the heart of postmodern writers. This could be another example of the Church's ability to be both contemporary and medieval at the same time.

dealing as they do with the arguments for the humanity of the unborn fetus and the reasons against euthanasia. Beginning with the preciousness of life as underwritten in the Bible, the Pope then relates the parenthood of married couples to that of God. (EV, 42-43) He first notes that the question of abortion is not treated directly in the biblical text, but that it is an obvious biblical point, (EV, 44-45) and he makes the same point concerning euthanasia. (EV, 46) In short, he agrees that "No one, however, can arbitrarily choose whether to live or die; the absolute master of such a decision is the Creator alone, in whom, "we live and move and have our being (Acts 17:28)." (EV, 47)

Now that the biblical teaching on the taking of human life has been clearly expounded, the Pope turns to a discussion of the commandment "Thou shalt not kill." In this section of his letter (Chapter Three) John Paul gives a compound of biblical and quasi-'rational' reasons why not only murder as commonly understood but also abortion and euthanasia are to be considered grave matters of conscience, that is to say mortal sins. Before beginning our look at John Paul's exposition, it is well to remind ourselves that the teaching of VERITATIS SPLENDOR is presupposed here, as it has been throughout the document, and that the moral object discussed is "the direct and voluntary killing of an innocent human being" (EV, 57), and this constitutes the 'nature' of the act. Thus, the moral rule being violated by this act is an act which 'by its nature' is 'against nature,' as by 'nature' human life's only master is God. (EV, 55) However, the strength of this argument from 'nature'

seems to be one by extension rather than by direct reasoning. That is, the Pope tends to argue from the fact that man is made in the image of God (an appeal to faith; EV, 53) and it is this datum of faith, rather than any obviously rational argument, that dictates the absoluteness of the command in question. Nonetheless, once the absolute value of human life is accepted, the nature of the act of killing obviously violates the natural law of life.

It is within this that the pontiff discusses the viciousness of three acts that take away human life: capital punishment, abortion and euthanasia – acts that in some jurisdictions are legal and, in fact, encouraged. The Pope's treatment of capital punishment is one that allows such an action only if it is absolutely necessary as an indispensable means of self-defense. (EV, 53-57) This is perhaps the place to answer those who accuse the Pope of encouraging violence against those persons involved in 'taking' human life. We are thinking primarily of those acts of aggression against health-care workers in abortion clinics. (CBC News broadcast, 13 April 1995) Now, in the light of the Pope's teaching on capital punishment alone, this charge would appear false. Further, the very tone of the present encyclical calling for "conscientious" opposition (as implied in EV, 86) and "education" towards a proper understanding of "life, sexuality, suffering and love" (see, for example, EV, 88 and 96) would give the lie to the Pope's approval of such violent actions. Further, his call "to oppose them by conscientious objection" (EV, 73) would

seem to remove any ambiguity in this matter."² In any event, due to the 'rhetorical' nature of the present letter it seems important to grasp its intent in all its nuances, the chief of these being the Pope's intent, as we have noted, to create a new culture of life. Such attempts in the past have always involved not only the authority of the state but the use of violence, and one is tempted to see the present call as one that, while it ostensibly decries the use of violence, by the very logic of its imperative nevertheless opens the door to this possibility. Whatever may be the Pope's 'real' thoughts on this matter, we will leave this matter as we have exposed it and return to the reason for the grave viciousness of abortion and euthanasia.

The foundation of the Pope's opposition to 'taking' human life is, as we have seen, God's Word in Scripture. There God is declared lord of life (EV, 53), and the tradition of the Church has upheld this truth. (EV, 57) So it is that the Pope states: "I confirm that the direct and voluntary killing of an innocent human being is always gravely immoral." (EV, 57) We have already seen how this affects the Church's attitude to capital punishment; let us now apply this law to abortion and euthanasia.

² The same may be said concerning the affiliation of Catholics (who oppose abortion) with 'right-wing' groups that include opposing abortion with programmes supporting racism, totalitarianism, and violence. That is, the opposition to abortion does not allow those other points which the Pope and the Church have condemned. It must however be said that just as there is ambiguity concerning violent opposition to abortion, so too is there ambiguity in this regard.

Aware of the modern approach to the problem of abortion,"³ the Pope notes that "we need now more than ever to have courage to look the truth in the eye and to call things by their proper name." (EV, 58) To those who wish to see the fetus as nonhuman, at least in the early stages of development (which would mean there is an acceptable time for abortion, which would not involve the taking of an innocent human life),⁴ the Pope simply points out that both reason and science indicate that "from the first instant there is established the programme of what this living being will be: a person"; (EV, 60) and, thus, "the human being is to be respected and treated as a person from the moment of conception" (EV, 60). In the light of the teaching concerning 'nature' in VERITATIS SPLENDOR one can appreciate the spirit if not the letter of this reasoning. Consequently, in keeping with Christian tradition and the Magisterium of the Church (EV, 61-63) the Pope forbids any

³ In section 58 of EVANGELIUM VITAE, the Pope notes the laxity that modern people have towards abortion, which he feels has led to a situation where "The acceptance of abortion in the popular mind, in the behaviour and even in law itself, is a telling sign of an extremely dangerous crisis of the moral sense, which is becoming more and more incapable of distinguishing between good and evil, even when the fundamental right to life is at stake." (EV, 58) Note that, as we have argued, the Pope has not shown by 'reason' that life is a fundamental right. Of course, that it is such in his religious context goes without saying. Yet in terms of modern critique of the papal position such a position, no matter how laudable, would need to be rejected, as indeed it is by many thinkers who see the future of the fetus as totally the concern of the mother.] (EV, 58) For John Paul's answer to those who question the 'humanity' of the fetus in terms of its development, see the body of our text.

⁴ The document defines procured abortion (in opposition to a miscarriage) as "the deliberate and direct killing, by whatever means it is carried out, of a human being in the initial phase of his or her existence, extending from conception to birth." (EV, 58)

intervention with the development of the human embryo, including experiments with artificially conceived embryos as well as in-vitro fertilization. (EV, 63) In short, "direct abortion, that is abortion willed as end or as means, always constitutes a grave moral disorder." (EV, 62) Thus stands the matter on abortion; we will now follow the Pope's discussion of euthanasia.

That euthanasia is the taking of a human life either through the act of the person him- or herself (and is, therefore, suicide) or through the act or assistance of another (assisted suicide), no one would deny." The problem revolves around the question of 'personal right' to what in effect for the Pope is suicide. Now the tradition of the Church has always rejected suicide as foregoing one's responsibility to self and community and as a denial of God's lordship of life. Rather than having the 'right' to die, one has the 'duty' to live (EV, 66), and suffering must be accepted in terms of the history of salvation." However, just as it is permissible to refuse extraordinary treatment, so too it is

" The Pope defines euthanasia as involving that act "to take control of death and bring it about before its time, 'gently' ending one's own life or the life of others." (EV, 64) He adds that "Euthanasia must be distinguished from the decision to forego so-called 'aggressive medical treatment,' in other words, medical procedures which no longer correspond to the real situation of the patient, either because they are by now disproportionate to any expected result or because they impose an excessive burden on the patient and his family." (EV, 65) This is to recognize the present state of medical practice. The principle being applied here is the familiar one of double effect, which has gained such notoriety in the debate about artificial contraception. However, we are still left with the question of the 'right' to die, and for this discussion see body of text.

" That is, suffering must be seen as atoning for sin and as 'filling up' the sufferings of Christ. (EV, 67)

acceptable to use painkillers that may shorten life. (EV, 65) The situation then is clear in that "euthanasia is a grave violation of the law of God." (EV, 65)

The last item to be dealt with in the present context has to do with civil laws that do not conform to the teaching we have outlined above. The Pope is quite clear on this issue. He underwrites John XXIII's notion that there must be a "a necessary conformity of civil law with the moral law" (EV, 72) and since abortion and euthanasia are immoral (as the Pope feels he as proven) and, indeed, are the result of "ethical relativism" (EV,70), they at least by extension go against the natural law and thus cannot be the subject of a valid civil law." In other words, "there is no obligation in conscience to obey such laws; instead there is a grave and clear obligation to oppose them by conscientious objection." (EV, 73)

The Encyclical ends with a call for a new culture of life which includes a social and political situation that would promote the Catholic vision of the Pope. (EV, chap. 4) This call constitutes what may be termed a pastoral application and need not detain us in the context of our present project which is to understand the 'doctrine' being 'taught' rather than the 'means' to bring it about.

" The pontiff, here, is explicitly following the principle of Saint Thomas when he declared that "Every law made by man can be called a law insofar as it derives from the natural law. But if it is somehow opposed to the natural law, then it is not really a law but rather a corruption of law." (ST, I-II. q. 95, a. 2., as quoted in EV, 72)

APPENDIX ONE

SURVEY ON THE REACTION TO JOHN PAUL II'S VERITATIS SPLENDOR
(Please answer all questions)

1. Educational level: grade school ___: high school ___: diploma or first degree ___: graduate work ___: final degree ___:
2. Gender: male ___: female ___:
3. Religious affiliation: Roman Catholic ___: Protestant ___: Other ___:
4. Religious commitment: nil ___: moderate ___: intense ___:
5. Income: to \$25,000 ___: to \$50,00 ___: Above: ___:
6. Do you feel the Pope to be a valid moral teacher? yes ___: no ___:
7. Do you feel his teaching to be binding ___ or merely, advisory ___?
8. Have you heard of VERITATIS SPLENDOR (Pope John Paul II's THE SPLENDOR OF THE TRUTH)? yes ___: no ___:
9. Did you heard about it when it first appeared? yes ___: no ___:
10. Have you heard about it since then? yes ___: no ___:
11. When you heard about it, did you hear about in a newspaper ___: on the radio ___: on television ___: other ___:?
12. Does VERITATIS SPLENDOR deal with morals ___: Church doctrine: ___: both: ___: do not know ___:?
13. Do you feel there is a 'natural' and thus, moral way to act? yes ___: no ___:
14. Is there, in your opinion, any act that is always evil? yes ___: no ___:
15. Would this act be evil because of its 'nature' or because 'it hurts others'? nature ___: hurts others ___:
16. Can humans know by reason the complete meaning of reality? yes ___: no ___:
17. Does man have the duty to be informed by an authority in moral matters? yes ___: no ___:
18. Would this moral authority be scientific ___: religious ___?
19. Is conscience always the final and ultimately correct judge of

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moral actions? yes __: no __:

(Français au verso)

SONDAGE SUR LES REACTIONS SUSCITEES PAR L'OEUVRE VERITATIS SPLENDOR DE JEAN PAUL II

(Veuillez repondre a toutes les questions)

1. Scolarite: cours primaire ___: secondaire ___: collegial ___: universitaire 1er cycle ___: 2e ___: 3e ___:
2. Homme ___: Femme ___:
3. Religion: catholique romaine ___: protestante ___: autre ___:
4. Engagement religieux: aucun ___: modere ___: fort: ___:
5. Revenu: jusqu'a 25,000\$ ___: entre 25,000\$ et 50,000\$ ___: superieur a 50,000\$ ___:
6. Reconnaissiez-vous dans le pape une autorite en enseignement moral? oui ___: non ___:
7. Considererez-vous son enseignement comme obligatoire ___ ou purement consultatif ___:?
8. Avez-vous entendu parler de l'ouvre VERITATIS SPLENDOR (La Splendeur de la Veritate de Jean-Paul II)? oui ___: non ___:
9. En avez-vous entendu parler au moment de sa parution? oui ___: non ___:
10. En avez-vous entendu parler depuis lors? oui ___: non ___:
11. Lorsque vous en avez entendu parler, etait-ce par les journaux ___: la radio ___: la tele ___: autrement ___:?
12. Est-ce que l'ouvre VERITATIS SPLENDOR traite de morale ___: doctrine de l'Eglise ___: les deux ___: ne sais pas ___:?
13. Croyez-vous qu'il y est une facon 'naturelle' et, donc, morale d'agir? oui ___: non ___:
14. D'apres vous, y a-t-il une action qui soit toujours mauvaise? oui ___: non ___:
15. Cette action serait-elle mauvaise en vertu de sa 'nature' ou parce qu'elle "blesse autre"? oui ___: non ___:
16. Les humains peuvent-ils, a l'aide de la raison, connaitre le sens de la realite? oui ___: non ___:
17. L'homme a-t-il le devoir de s'informer aupres d'une autorite en matiere de morale? oui ___: non ___:
18. Cette autorite morale serait-elle scientifique ___: religieuse ___:?
19. La conscience est-elle toujours l'arbitre final et ultime en matiere de morale? oui ___: non ___:

(English on reverse side)SONDAGE SUR LES REACTIONS

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: An Overall view of results in terms of percentages

TOTAL NUMBER: 221
SURVEY ON THE REACTION TO JOHN PAUL II'S VERITATIS SPLENDOR
(Please answer all questions)

1. Educational level: grade school 24%: high school 60%: diploma or first degree 8%: graduate work 5%: final degree 4%: NA: 4%
2. Gender: male 57%: female 41%: NA: 2%
3. Religious affiliation: Roman Catholic 52%: Protestant 8%: Other 39%: NA: 2%
4. Religious commitment: nil 43%: moderate 45%: intense 7%: NA: 6%
5. Income: to \$25,000 52%: to \$50,000 11%: Above: 13%: NA: 13%
6. Do you feel the Pope to be a valid moral teacher? yes 41%: no 54%: NA: 5%
7. Do you feel his teaching to be binding 16% or merely, advisory 74%? NA: 9%
8. Have you heard of VERITATIS SPLENDOR (Pope John Paul II's THE SPLENDOR OF THE TRUTH)? yes 13%: no 85%: NA: 2%
9. Did you hear about it when it first appeared? yes 12%: no 78%: NA: 10%
10. Have you heard about it since then? yes 11%: no 81%: NA: 8%
11. When you heard about it, did you hear about in a newspaper 10%: on the radio 3%: on television 10%: other 20%: NA: 60%
12. Does VERITATIS SPLENDOR deal with morals 4%: Church doctrine: 4%: both: 11%: do not know 76%: NA: 9%
13. Do you feel there is a 'natural' and thus, moral way to act? yes 64%: no 29%: NA: 6%
14. Is there, in your opinion, any act that is always evil? yes 59%: no 38%: NA: 3%
15. Would this act be evil because of its 'nature' or because 'it hurts others'? nature 29%: hurts others 52%: Both: 5%, NA: 14%
16. Can humans know by reason the complete meaning of reality? yes 38%: no 58%: NA: 4%
17. Does man have the duty to be informed by an authority in moral matters? yes 43%: no 49%: NA: 4%
18. Would this moral authority be scientific 27%: religious 40%: Both: 10%; NA: 24%
19. Is conscience always the final and ultimately correct judge of moral actions? yes 53%: no 38%: NA: 3%

NA - No Answer
(Francais au verso)

APPENDIX TWO: Linguistic break down in percentages

TOTAL: French language - 46. (1)

23% of total

SONDAGE SUR LES RÉACTIONS SUSCITÉES PAR L'OEUVRE VERITATIS SPLENDOR DE JEAN PAUL II
(Veuillez répondre à toutes les questions)

1. Scolarité: cours primaire ___: secondaire 4%: collégial 64%:
universitaire 1er cycle 2%: 2e 7%: 3e 2%:
2. Homme 43%: Femme 57%:
3. Religion: catholique romaine 67%: protestante 4%: autre 9%:
4. Engagement religieux: aucun 67%: modéré 22%: fort: 9% NA: 2%
5. Revenu: jusqu'à 25,000\$ 85% entre 25,000\$ et 50,000\$ 22% supérieur à 50,000\$ NA: 7%
6. Reconnaissez-vous dans le pape une autorité en enseignement moral? oui 30%:
non 67%: NA: 2%
7. Considérerez-vous son enseignement comme obligatoire 11% ou purement
consultatif 85%? NA: 4%
8. Avez-vous entendu parler de l'oeuvre VERITATIS SPLENDOR (La Splendeur de la
Verité de Jean-Paul II)? oui 13%: non 85% NA: 2%
9. En avez-vous entendu parler au moment de sa parution? oui 15%: non 78%: NA: 7%
10. En avez-vous entendu parler depuis lors? oui 11%: non 80%: NA: 9%
11. Lorsque vous en avez entendu parler, était-ce par les journaux 20%: la radio
11% la télé 9%: autrement 7%: NA: 57%
12. Est-ce que l'oeuvre VERITATIS SPLENDOR traite de morale 7%: doctrine de
l'Église 2%: les deux 11%: ne sais pas 70%? NA: 1%
13. Croyez-vous qu'il y est une façon 'naturelle' et, donc, morale d'agir? oui 74%:
non 13%: NA: 13%
14. D'après vous, y a-t-il une action qui soit toujours mauvaise? oui 43%: non
52% NA: 4%
15. Cette action serait-elle mauvaise en vertu de sa 'nature' ou parce qu'elle
'blesse autre'? oui 37%: non 33% NA: 30%
16. Les humains peuvent-ils, à l'aide de la raison, connaître le sens de la réalité?
oui 74%: non 22%: NA: 4%
17. L'homme a-t-il le devoir de s'informer auprès d'une autorité en matière de
morale? oui 43%: non 52%: NA: 4%
18. Cette autorité morale serait-elle scientifique 35%: religieuse 37%? Both: 9% NA:
20%
19. La conscience est-elle toujours l'arbitre final et ultime en matière de
morale? oui 65%: non 33%: NA: 2%

(English on reverse side)

iiA -no Answer

Linguistic break down in percentages 191

TOTAL: English language - 175 (2)

77% of total

SURVEY ON THE REACTION TO JOHN PAUL II'S VERITATIS SPLENDOR
(Please answer all questions)

1. Educational level: grade school ___: high school 29% diploma or first degree 53% graduate work 9% final degree 6% NA: 5%
2. Gender: male 61% female 37% NA: 2%
3. Religious affiliation: Roman Catholic 43% Protestant 9% Other 47% NA: 2%
4. Religious commitment: nil 37% moderate 51% intense 6% NA: 6%
5. Income: to \$25,000 57% to \$50,00 13% Above: 15% NA: 14%
6. Do you feel the Pope to be a valid moral teacher? yes 44% no 50% NA: 6%
7. Do you feel his teaching to be binding 16% or merely, advisory 71% NA: 10%
8. Have you heard of VERITATIS SPLENDOR (Pope John Paul II's THE SPLENDOR OF THE TRUTH)? yes 13% no 86% NA: 2%
9. Did you hear about it when it first appeared? yes 16% no 78% NA: 6%
10. Have you heard about it since then? yes 11% no 61% NA: 6%
11. When you heard about it, did you hear about in a newspaper 2% on the radio 1% on television 10% other 21%? NA: 61%
12. Does VERITATIS SPLENDOR deal with morals 3% Church doctrine: 0% both 11% do not know 77%? NA: 9%
13. Do you feel there is a 'natural' and thus, moral way to act? yes 62% no 34% NA: 5%
14. Is there, in your opinion, any act that is always evil? yes 63% no 34% NA: 8%
15. Would this act be evil because of its 'nature' or because 'it hurts others'? nature 27% hurts others 57% both: 6% NA: 10%
16. Can humans know by reason the complete meaning of reality? yes 25% no 67% NA: 4%
17. Does man have the duty to be informed by an authority in moral matters? yes 43% no 48% NA: 3%
18. Would this moral authority be scientific 26% religious 41% Both: 10% NA: 26%
19. Is conscience always the final and ultimately correct judge of moral actions? yes 57% no 40% NA: 3%

(Francais au verso)

NA: No Answer

CHAPTER THREE

The Confrontation of Natural-Law Ethics with
Modern and Postmodern Ethical SystemsIntroduction

As we have seen, the Catholic Church holds to an ethics based upon what it calls the 'natural law.' Of course, the meaning of the term 'nature' and the concept of 'law' are a matter of some debate in the current intellectual climate. Thus, the first task in our examination of the confrontation between the ethics of the Church and those of the modern and postmodern worlds is to make precise the meaning of 'nature' and of 'law' as these terms are currently used in relation to the meaning we have elaborated for the Church's use of them. Once we are sure of our terms, we may then advance to an examination of the ethical systems which have emerged from the modern and postmodern context.

In regard to the modern world we may categorize these systems as two: what we will call the ethics of 'obligation,' exemplified by the work of Immanuel Kant, and the ethics of 'use' put forth by the utilitarian thinkers such as Jeremy Bentham. It is not a simple matter to characterize postmodern ethical systems; as a beginning paradigm, however, we may note that postmodern thinkers tend to reject both the utilitarian and obligatory notion of modern ethical thinking in favour of a more 'integral' approach to reality in general and to ethics in particular. That is, the postmodern thinker tends to place more value on entities as they exist in

themselves and less value upon their 'use.' Further, the notion of obligation for postmodern thinkers is often absorbed into the notion of fulfilment and pleasure, or, for lack of a better term, the moral is the 'natural.' It goes without saying that this use of 'natural' is not quite the same as its use by the natural law ethicists, although, as we shall argue, there is in fact a broad area of agreement between these two seemingly opposing camps. We will begin our discussion with an elaboration of the terms 'nature' and 'law' in their modern and postmodern uses.

As we have seen in some detail, the term 'natural law' refers to those actions which are dictated by the 'nature' of an existent. For example, the proper use of sex is to be known by a knowledge of the 'nature' or 'definition' of sex. Since sex is for procreation, every sex act must be open to that possibility, which is derived from its very nature. That is, the 'nature' gives rise to a 'law' or, if one likes, an effect that is of the very essence of the existent. Now, whatever one may think of this meaning of 'nature,' it is the one that the scientific revolution destroyed. This notion of 'nature' in the context of 'science' is nonexistent. And this is so for two reasons. First, there is no 'nature' known from the activity of abstract reasoning and logical formality. Rather, the term 'nature' refers to a 'state' that is opposed to the artificial (man-made) and that therefore exists in a context of being 'unsullied' by man's intervention. Here we have our first problem. For the Catholic 'natural law' thinker, to be natural is to follow a given which is knowable by reason and which reflects

problem. For the Catholic 'natural law' thinker, to be natural is to follow a given which is knowable by reason and which reflects God's plan for the universe and, is thus to be moral. Consequently, 'nature' is an 'abstract' being that organizes and defines each existent as to what it is and how it should either act or be acted upon. For the modern thinker, coming after the scientific revolution, the will of God is beside the point (God is not needed to explain reality), and to be moral is something that is of a different realm than knowledge of - nature which becomes either an unknown factor in itself (Kant) or the sum total of observable characteristics of a particular existent (positivism). In either case, what can be known is only the existent as observed (Locke), and what can be said about it flows not from the 'nature' of the existent but from the observable operations of it in empirical situations. Nature, then, is not a 'being' but takes on a rather shifting meaning which makes it, to speak rhetorically, an 'adjective' rather than a 'noun.' Likewise, law is based not on logical deduction but upon observation. Obviously, a new ethic is required. We can no longer speak of a natural ethical action springing from the 'nature' of, let us say, man, as there is no 'nature' in that sense. All that exists for the 'modern' thinker are observable traits and the regularities of actions observed in relation to these traits. To take our example of sex, it is no longer a matter of the 'nature' of sex but rather either a question of the 'use' of sex in relation to observable factors such as health (Freud and the utilitarians) or of seeing sex in terms of

natural law ethician. For one thing, sex will be seen in a much wider context than it was seen by the traditional moralist, and its 'natural' meaning will be explained more by 'scientific' thought than by moral laws. Indeed, the very notion of the 'laws of sex' may militate against those of the natural law.

If the above discussion is granted, then we may suggest the following definitions of 'nature' and 'law' in the context of modernity. Nature would be that state or condition which is neither the result of human intervention (this is obviously a Romantic concept referring to the uncultivated growth of flora and fauna) nor produced as a synthetic (chemical technology would seem to be a case in point). Secondly, nature, as well as the adjective 'natural,' would also refer to that state of human existence that flows from a noninterference with desire. This said, we must immediately note that the former definition is more an 'artistic' than a 'scientific' one and that the latter is malleable in its signification, since what is 'natural' in desire is often what is reenforced either by society's approval or disapproval. Homosexuality would be an appropriate instance. For a society that values heterosexuality, homosexuality appears as a creation of cultural sophistication (understood either in a positive or negative way), while heterosexuality appears 'natural.' To the homosexual person, however, the reverse would appear to be true. So it is that the term 'nature,' in a scientific cultural context, is often (if not always) a matter of perspective and frequency of occurrence. It follows from this that law is no longer, in the

scientific context, that which flows from the very 'essence' of an existent but is either a question of regularity of result of controlled situations (empirical laws) or a rule of procedure (moral and positive law) based either on 'profitable' use (utilitarians) or on extent of applicability (Kant). With these definitions in mind, we may now look at the two types of ethical thinking found in modern thought.

Having suggested definitions for our terms in the context of modernity it behooves us to now offer a few notes on what we mean by the term modern. We will then turn to a discussion of modern ethics and their relation to the ethical teaching of the Catholic Church or, more technically stated, natural law ethics. The term modern, as is evident, is relative to the era being discussed. Thus, the Middle Ages in comparison with the ancient Greek period could be termed modern, as could the Renaissance in relation to the Middle Ages, and so on through history. However, for our purposes we will take as our model the divisions of history according to Auguste Comte.¹ Comte, of course, is dividing reality epistemologically, or working in what we may term 'intellectual territory.' For him, the human race began its explaining of the

¹ It is important to note that we are using Comte in a loose sense and in no way underwrite his entire corpus. The work of Troeltsch in this area is also helpful inasmuch as he sees the modern world as beginning for many of the same reasons that Comte mentions. In a less complex manner of expression, we may say that the world of thought (at least, the world we are dealing with) is either metaphysical (the world prior to the sixteenth century and that of VERITATIS SPLENDOR) or scientific (the world up until the Second World War). Below we will be in more favourable position to develop the concept of the world after the Second World War.

epistemologically, or working in what we may term 'intellectual territory.' For him, the human race began its explaining of the universe by attributing causal force to 'gods,' who were held responsible for all that happened in the world. These beings resembled natural objects (both inanimate and animate forms) and were normally given human capabilities, in a classic case of personification. The resulting 'explanations' were expressed in myths and were seen by Comte as a sort of 'pseudo-knowledge.'² Now this type of attitude was characteristic of all societies that either chronologically or culturally predate the philosophical age in Greece.³

This stage was followed by the 'metaphysical,' which is exemplified in the natural-law thinking of Pope John Paul II. To reiterate what we have already stated at length, this type of thinking quite simply holds that 'nature' is a real, transcendent and independent existent which is the substance defining and informing any particular being. It is John Locke's 'I know not what,' and its apprehension is not the result of empirical experience but the product of 'logical thinking' and leads to deductive truths such as the moral precepts we have enumerated above. We will now move from this stage to what Comte called

² We will see below that postmodern thought tends to view myth not so much as primitive or false science but as a type of knowledge which is normative in perception. For the modern, of course, it is not science at all, as it is based on a belief in a world that 'transcends' direct perception.

³ Cours de philosophie positive (Paris: Bachelier, 1842), 6 vols.

'positive' thought or modern thought.' (We may remark here that we will leave our discussion of postmodern thought to a later section of the present project.)

Scientific thought, in opposition to philosophical or metaphysical thought, holds that there is no 'essence' (in a traditional Scholastic context this would be called 'nominalism') as an existent and that things are known by way of those traits revealed through 'controlled' empirical investigation. Relations are seen as laws, and thus one is forced either into an idealism stemming from Kant or a scepticism coming from the work of David Hume. However, this type of knowledge does reveal certain truths which may be exploited in producing technological operations, and modern thought then is characterized as a technique for the exploiting of 'nature' in the modern sense we have attempted to elaborate above. The final result of this 'modern' stance is the object of postmodern critique, which we will reserve for the present. For our present purpose it is sufficient to note the meaning of modernity and to apply it to ethical knowledge. Obviously, if there is no 'nature' in the Scholastic, philosophic sense, then, by the same token, there is no 'natural law' ethics either. What follows will look at two possible ethical systems that are offered by modern thinkers both to maintain an ethical stance and to overcome the problem posed by modernism. We will begin with the ethics of obligation (exemplified by the work of

' In Comte's usage, 'positive' is synonymous with 'scientific' and "philosophie positive" equals "Sociology of scientific knowledge."

Kant) and follow that discussion with a look at utilitarian ethics (shown in the work of, among other thinkers, Jeremy Bentham).

Ethics of Obligation

We will commence our examination of modern ethics by looking at those theories which take their point of departure from some notion of absolute obligation. Perhaps it is Immanuel Kant more than any other thinker who exemplifies this type of moral consciousness. We will therefore first set out the teachings of Kant on morality, and then present what innovations his system has undergone in the course of the development of modernism. We will then move on to the ethical doctrines of utilitarianism, the examination of which will complete our look at the modern situation. The consequence of this view of modernity will make possible the elucidation of those moral theories that 'oppose' modernity either in the pre-, post- or anti- sense.

In considering Kant's moral system it is necessary to keep two points in mind. First, morality for Kant and indeed for all moderns is a question of 'intention' and springs, not from the 'nature' of the act, but from 'the reason for which' or 'the result of' an act. In consequence there are no acts which are evil in themselves, nor are there any moral decisions capable of being made outside the context of the agent acting. Thus, altruism and obligation are attributes of the moral subject and not existents in themselves. So Kant's ethics is as much a result of his decision to reject a 'metaphysical' basis of truth as is John Paul II's ethics the result of his acceptance of Scholastic metaphysics.

Secondly, Kant's insistence upon the willing of an act for the sake of the law itself (its own obligatory function) implies that it is not the act itself which is moral but the subject willing the act. In other words, it is the attitude shown by the person rather than what the person actually does that is the gauge of morality. This would seem to be the 'question of fundamental option' which the Pope has declared a grievous error in moral thinking. In short, the ethics of obligation (while it may condemn much the same acts as does the ethics of the natural law) contains within itself the seeds of the destruction of an objective sense of evil. With these thoughts in mind we may now examine Kant's system.

We will base our analysis of Kantian ethics on his two main ethical works, the FOUNDATIONS OF THE METAPHYSICS OF MORALS (FMM) and CRITIQUE OF PRACTICAL REASON (CPR). We will first establish the type of moral knowledge Kant is after and then develop the implications of this type of knowledge.

In the Preface to FMM, Kant quickly sets the scene by proposing the following question/answer couplet: "Is it not of the utmost necessity to construct a pure moral philosophy which is completely freed from everything which may be only empirical and thus belong to anthropology? That there must be such a philosophy is self-evident from the common idea of duty and moral laws." (p. 5) In other words, Kant is distinguishing his 'moral' as 'transcendental' or 'non-empirical' and making it a discussion of 'morality understood as 'pure respect for law in se.'

And Kant continues, "not only are moral laws together with

their principles essentially different from all practical knowledge in which there is anything empirical, but all moral philosophy rests solely on its pure part." (FMM, Pre., p. 5) It is this 'freedom from empiricism or physicality' that constitutes the 'purity' of the moral knowledge, or what he calls 'metaphysical' knowledge.⁵ In short then we must look for what it is that constitutes morality independently of any reference to experience whatsoever. In his FOUNDATIONS OF THE METAPHYSICS OF MORALS Kant attempts to establish the conditions that will allow for a transition in moral knowledge from what he calls "the Common Rational Knowledge of Morals to the Philosophical" through the "Transition from the Popular Moral Philosophy to the Metaphysics of Morals" and, finally, to make the "Final Step from the Metaphysics of Morals to the Critical Examination of Pure Practical

⁵ For Kant, this type of 'pure' knowledge is 'a priori' properly speaking. As he puts it in his CRITIQUE OF PURE REASON: "In what follows . . . we shall understand by 'a priori' knowledge, not knowledge independent of this or that experience, [that is, the type of metaphysical knowledge admitted by Scholasticism] but knowledge absolutely independent of all experience." (CPR, B 3) Thus, moral knowledge is not this or that command but rather the principle whereby moral judgements are made. This approach immediately separates Kant from a 'natural' law approach to morality. In Kant's view, such an approach would rely upon nonexistent criteria (the true knowledge of nature). As Kant says in regard to placing an 'ought' or 'obligation' upon nature, "We cannot say that anything in nature 'ought to be' other than what in all these time-relations it actually is. When we have the course of nature alone in view, 'ought' has no meaning whatsoever. It is just as absurd to ask what ought to happen in the natural world as to ask what properties a circle ought to have." (CPR, A 548; B 576) In other words, obligation and its resultant causal willing does not come from empirical knowledge or 'metaphysical knowledge' in the realist sense of Scholasticism. Thus, a 'natural law' morality is a monstrosity of dogmatism.

reason" (FMM, Pre., p. 9) We will follow Kant, in a summary fashion, on this journey.

On the first stage of the journey Kant attempts to find what "can possibly be conceived which could be called good without qualification," and this he finds in "a good will." (FMM, I, p. 9) This being the case, it is necessary to find what it is that makes this will good. (FMM, I, p.13) Kant examines various individual goods and finds that they all are practised, not for themselves, but for some end (personal advantage) and therefore are not 'pure.' (For example, if I act from the desire for 'happiness,' I am acting for myself and my particular advantage which, in the long, term may be disadvantageous either to myself or others. Thus, to claim such actions to be moral is to misunderstand the problem.) He finally hits upon the idea of duty, which he says is "the first proposition of morality" (FMM, I, p. 16), by which he means that it is done simply for itself. Since this is true, it becomes possible to enunciate a principle whereby one may act morally. Again to quote Kant: "I ask myself only: Can I will that my maxim become a universal law?" (FMM, I, p. 19) In short, I must act from a good will which is guaranteed by the fact that I act in such a way as to make my act capable of functioning in all cases at all times as moral instead of its being merely advantageous. (FMM, I, pp. 19-22) This principle Kant has derived not from the empirical but from the metaphysical.

Kant continues his search for an 'a priori' principle of moral action and finds it once again in the good will acting for the sake

of the law itself. As Kant puts it: "We can now end where we started, with the concept of an unconditionally good will. That will is absolutely good which cannot be bad, and thus it is a will whose maxim, when made a universal law, can never conflict with itself. Thus this principle is also a supreme law: Always act according to that maxim whose universality as a law you can at the same time will. This is the only condition under which a will can never come into conflict with itself, and such an imperative is categorical." (FMM, II, p. 55) We have come to the crux of the issue. A categorical, as opposed to a hypothetical imperative, is what consists in the possibility to will with a good will and thus to be moral. Now this concept gives rise to the notion of the moral actor as a legislator, since "every rational being must be able to regard himself as an end in himself . . . for it is just the fitness of his maxims to a universal legislation that indicates he is an end in himself." (FMM, II, p. 56) As a result, then, we may introduce the necessity of free will as the condition for moral action and once again man must act in such a way that his act can become a universal law. (FMM, II, pp. 59-60) The question of free will, at this point in the discussion, is implied as necessary. Its exact status will be discussed below. Kant ends this section by noting that neither the principle of happiness (an empirical principle) nor the principle of perfection (a rational one) can act as the basis of moral reasoning, since "the imperative is in th[ese] case[s] conditional, stating that if or because one wills this, one should act thus or so. Therefore the imperative can

never command morally, that is, categorically. . . . In them it would be really nature that would give the law, a law that always represents the heteronomy of the will; the will does not give itself the law, but an external impulse gives it the will according to the nature of the subject which is adapted to receive it." (FMM, II, p. 63) Therefore, as Kant observes: "The absolutely good will, the principle of which must be a categorical imperative, is thus undetermined with reference to any object." (FMM, II, p. 63)

We have established the 'metaphysical' stage of moral discussion. It remains only to give an account of those conditions that are necessary for a 'critical examination of pure practical reason' – which Kant now proceeds to do. In this section, Kant proposes to outline (not prove) "transition from the metaphysical of morals to the critical examination of pure practical reason." (FMM, III, p. 64) He accomplishes this task by discussing the concept of freedom, the necessity of presupposing freedom as belonging to the will of all rational beings, and touches upon the interest man finds in ideas of morality. Next he discusses how a categorical imperative is possible, and, finally, he attempts to set the extreme limit of practical philosophy. We will take each of these themes in turn and present an outline of their main intents, after which we will be in a position to turn to Kant's CRITIQUE OF PRACTICAL REASON and offer a reasoned account of his ethical system.

According to Kant, we are to understand the term 'will' as "a

kind of causality of living beings so far as they are rational," and so it follows that "freedom would be that property of this causality by which it can be effective independently of foreign causes determining it." (FMM, III, p. 64) That is, unlike irrational beings, rational beings can determine the effects of their acts (at least in the moral arena) and thus be moral in the sense Kant has been developing in the preceding discussion. This gives rise to the concept of laws, and so it is that freedom is not lawless but is the condition which allows the free will to be a legislator, thereby acting as an end and not a means. (FMM, III, pp. 64-65) Thus, "the will is a law to itself . . . [which] only expresses the principle . . . of the categorical imperative." (FMM, III, p. 65) Further, this is a synthetical proposition, "because by analysis of the concept of an absolutely good will that property of the maxim cannot be found." (FMM, III, p. 65) To find the categorical imperative it is necessary to introduce a third 'cognition' in which both terms are found, and this is 'freedom.' (FMM, III, p. 65) Having achieved this insight we must halt our analysis for the time being, to take it up again when we have established the conditions for the CRITIQUE OF PURE PRACTICAL REASON. (Of course, the limits of knowledge are always for Kant the empirical. Therefore, we are, as we shall see, in the arena of 'rational faith' and understanding the reason for or not understanding.)

However, freedom and morality have been linked through the notion of an end (person) who is a legislator. This has the effect

of posing the possibility of a morality that is both the source of morality and the judge thereof. But it must be stressed that the person is not the norm of the ethical judgement – the categorical imperative is. (We mention this since there is a tendency in the papal theory to base its morality upon the 'dignity of the person' and thus claim kinship with 'modern' ethics. This is, of course, a misconstruing of the facts of the case.) Continuing his discussion of freedom, Kant makes the very important point that all rational beings must be free since, if they were not, they would not act according to reason but according to impulse, and thus according to necessity. (FMM, III, pp. 66-67) Kant is now in a position to show that freedom indicates that man is the inhabitant of the intelligible world as a member (albeit, one unknown to himself as noumenon) (CPR, B 306, B 308), and contingency puts him into the sensible world of empirical knowledge. That is, there is ethical thought (intelligible world) and anthropology (sensible world), and they should not be confused. Again, we see the difference between modernity (at least, as Kant expresses it) and premodernity. For the Pope, freedom is a proof that man lives in the world as a sensible being, while for Kant it puts him in another sphere of activity. The practical result of this is that, for the Pope man's acts are determined by nature and to be free is to accept determination, while for Kant, freedom is to legislate in the moral order as undetermined. For Kant there is the problem of God and his holiness, but even here man shares in God's legislation in a way that is rational and 'liberated,' while in the papal

position man is most free when most bound.⁶

We are now in a position, with Kant, to pose the fundamental question: "How is the categorical imperative possible?" (FMM, III, p. 72) Expressed simply, the categorical imperative is possible because man is a member of the intelligible world. However, he is also a member of the sensible world, and as such his will is 'conditioned' by sensual desires, and therefore his accordance with his freedom as an intelligible being is an 'ought' rather than the 'necessity' it would be were he simply an intelligible being. (FMM, III, pp. 73-74) In Kant's own phrase of summation: "The moral ought is therefore his own volition as a member of the intelligible world, and it is conceived by him as an ought only in so far as he regards himself at the same time as a member of the world of sense." (FMM, II, p. 74)

Kant is now left with the problem of 'proving freedom.' That is, freedom is a capacity of a rational being, but a rational being belongs to the world of noumena which, as we have seen, cannot be understood since all knowledge (as has been demonstrated throughout the CRITIQUE OF PURE REASON) must be empirically based. At the same time, however, freedom is necessary for morality since morality must be motivated by itself (respect for the law which is the characteristic of the good will which is the good in se), and thus moral action requires freedom. That is, man must act without

⁶ Saint Augustine and, after him, Luther, have of course made much of this metaphor. As we have seen, it is fundamental to John Paul II's vision and a cause of much confusion (as one would expect) among modern thinkers reacting to the Pope.

a motive for his own advantage to gain moral merit. This, then, becomes the limit of moral knowledge in that man must see himself as free to be moral (based upon a rational faith) and yet not seek knowledge of morality in empirical reality where he acts and for the sake of which he must not act. (FMM, III, pp. 72-82) "And so we do not indeed comprehend the practical unconditional necessity of the moral imperative; yet we do comprehend its incomprehensibility, which is all that can be fairly demanded of a philosophy which in its principles strives to reach the limit of human reason." (FMM, III, p. 83)

We may now turn to the CRITIQUE OF PRACTICAL REASON to complete our discussion of Kant's ethical teaching. In this text Kant wishes to show that there is a pure practical reason, and, in order to do this, "it critically examines reason's entire practical faculty. [And] . . . if pure reason is actually practical, it will show its reality and that of its concepts in actions, and all disputations which aim to prove its impossibility will be in vain." (CPR2, Pre., p.3) Thus, the type of 'proof' which is available to science, is not available for moral knowledge, which is 'metaphysical' in the sense Kant has outlined above.⁷ That is,

⁷ We are to understand by the term 'practical' what it has traditionally meant in ethical thought, a type of knowledge that finds its issue and truth in action. In the present instance, Kant will not prove so much as illustrate from the necessities of the moral life that man is free, God exists and the soul is immortal. This gives rise to what he has called above "rational belief."

moral decisions are based upon an 'a priori'" which necessitates the condition of freedom. (CPR2, Pre., p. 4) A 'critique' is called for in this area because man inhabits two spheres: that of the noumena and that of the phenomena. As such he is both determined (subject to causality) and free (the cause of laws or necessity); as a result, it is necessary to examine the type of knowledge man has of the nonsensible world. (CPR2, Intro, pp. 15-16)

Part One of the CRITIQUE OF PRACTICAL REASON attempts to establish the analytic of pure practical reason. As we have noted, Kant is looking for a type of reason completely free of the empirical and therefore pure. By noting that the human being can effect principles that are objective and causally universal, (CPR2, I, i, 1 Def., p. 17) Kant goes on to reject 'self-love' as the basis of morality since it is determined by the material world rather than determining moral action. (In Kant's terminology, a 'maxim' rather than a 'principle.')

(CPR2, I, i, 3-5, pp. 21-28)

The point here is that moral action must be free, and thus cannot be within the realm of the material or phenomenal world, which is determined. (CRP2, I, i, 6, pp. 29-30) Now if the fundamental

* It should be kept in mind that the proof of moral activity is its goodness which is guaranteed by a 'good will' approving a 'categorical imperative.' However, it seems that the proof of the 'goodness' of the moral act is to be found in its suitability to the situation conceived as universal. In other words, the form is 'a priori' but the 'content' would seem to be pragmatic and individual (that is to say, a posteriori). Reasoning such as this is followed by the Pope John Paul II in his critique of 'non-natural law ethics' and would also seem to be the point of departure for 'situation ethics'.

principle of morality is to act so as to make one's act universally binding, (CPR2, I, i, 7, p p. 30-31), then the act must be one that is not determined by individual needs (sensible reality) (CPR2, I, i, 8, pp. 33-42), the chief among which is self-happiness, and there must be a knowledge of the practical (in the moral sense) that is pure. As Kant puts it: "This Analytic [what we have summarized above] proves that pure reason can be practical, i.e., that of itself and independently of everything empirical it can determine the will. This it does through a fact wherein autonomy is the principle of morality by which reason determines the will to action." (CPR 2, I, i, 1, p. 43) In short, Kant has established a type of practical knowledge that is pure. This type of knowledge gives rise to two very important questions: "How can pure reason know objects a priori?" and "How can pure reason be a directly determined ground of will, i.e., of the causality of a rational being with respect to the reality of objects, merely through the thought of the universal validity of its own maxim as a law?" (CPR2, I, I, p. 43)

The first of our questions has been answered, Kant tells us, in his CRITIQUE OF PURE REASON (CPR2, p. 46) and the second will be answered by the present 'critique.' In Kant's words: "This . . . [question] concerns itself only with whether and how reason can be practical, i.e., how it can directly determine the will." (CPR2, p. 47) Theoretically, Kant is quite clear that reason cannot 'prove' how practical reason can determine the will. (CPR2, pp. 50-51) "Thus," as Kant notes, "reason uses this concept only for a

practical purpose, transferring the determining ground of the will to the intelligible order of things, at the same time readily confessing that it does not understand how the concept of cause can be the condition of the knowledge of these things." (CPR2, p. 51) In sum then, it seems that on the practical level it behooves 'rational faith' to accept the existence of freedom in the noumenal world. This cannot be proved, but it does become known 'a priori.'⁹ Thus man acts morally with freedom, and this is a postulate of pure practical reason.

Having shown that freedom can be known as 'a priori' knowledge of practical reason we must now enquire into how causality can be applied to the noumenal sphere. Now for Kant, causality applied to the empirical (phenomenal) world would be empty of content and of no use; however, the concept of causality still remains valid and when applied to the noumenal world "has a real application exhibited 'in concreto' in intentions or maxims; that is, its practical reality can be pointed out." (CPR2, p. 58) In other words, it is possible to presuppose the existence of cause in the noumenal world as it is necessary for the occurrence of the moral

⁹ One could argue from the fact of morality and the belief that moral action is free to the 'a priori' necessity of their mutual implication of each other. However, this reasoning would seem circular and arbitrary. Whatever may be the case in this instance, it does seem Kant must show why morality should exist and what its content should be. Without this, it seems the whole edifice exists on a gratuitous acceptance of conventional morality both as a need and a content. Thus he seems to be a Deist who holds for a type of universal morality that is always reasoned to, if not always practised. This position, viewed from the standpoint of the natural-law theorist in morality, is of course idealism in its pristine condition.

act. This is because the 'morality' of an act is due to its intention. This is simply to note that nothing is good except a good will. (CPR2, p. 59)

Kant next poses the question as to the object of practical reason, and he states that its object is the effect of the act of freedom. Now these objects are 'a priori' and related to the noumenal world, and are therefore what would normally be called 'abstract.' (CPR2, pp. 59-60) Kant expresses this fact in these simple terms: "The sole objects of practical reason are thus those of good and evil." (CPR, p. 60) He then defines these terms as "[good], [which] one understands [as] a necessary desire, and [evil as] a necessary object of aversion." (CPR2, p. 60) In other words, the object of practical reason is the condition or ground which determines the nature of the act, not the act itself. Now, Kant reinforces the point that it is good and evil, not well-being and woe, that he is referring to; and thus the subjective nature of good has nothing to do with making a decision moral. Moral decisions must always be, as he has insisted throughout, objective. (CPR2, pp. 61-63). Consequently, the pure will acts out of respect for objective good and does not regard individual good as definitive. Morality is therefore the result of 'a priori' reasoning and free choice. (CPR2, pp. 64-70)

It is important to keep in mind that the objects of practical reason are determined as to their ground by something that precedes them, if good and evil refer to acts which are under the control of the natural law which renders them determined and, as such, amoral.

Therefore there need be a law in the noumenal sphere which conditions or grounds the will as cause, and this is the categorical imperative, which is the rule under which the pure practical reason is judged. For Kant intention defines the action, and thus morality is idealist in the sense that intention grounds the empirical act and renders it moral. (CPR2, 59-74) As Kant puts it: " empiricism uproots the morality of intentions, while the highest worth which human beings can and should procure for themselves lies in intentions and not in actions only." (CPR2, p. 74) Kant feels that he is appealing to the proper ground of morality by appealing to intention and, thereby, avoids the extremes of 'inclinations' (acts without intention) and 'mysticism' (intention without acts). (CPR2, p. 74)

Kant next turns to the question of incentives in moral actions, and in so doing continues his fundamental distinction between the subjective (sensuous) and the objective (pure respect for the law). As Kant puts it, avoiding any ambiguity: "The essential point in all determination of the will through the moral law is this: as a free will, and thus not only without cooperating with sensuous impulses, but even rejecting all of them and checking all inclinations so far as they could be antagonistic to the law, is determined merely by the law." (CPR2, p. 75) This is merely to expand the discussion along the lines we are already familiar with. To act in accordance with the law, then, but without objectivity, is to be legally correct but not morally so. (CPR2, p. 74) Kant

next develops the question of moral feeling.¹⁰ As we have seen, moral feeling, understood as the subjective desire for happiness or indeed any other aspect of well-being, cannot be the incentive for moral action. However, there is a type of incentive for moral action (what Kant will call respect for the law) which may be called 'moral feeling.' In the words of Kant: "respect for the law is not the incentive to morality; it is morality itself, regarded subjectively as an incentive inasmuch as pure practical reason, by rejecting all qualms of self-love, gives authority and absolute sovereignty to the law. " (CPR2, pp.78-79) Moral feeling, consequently, is not subjective or, in fact, any type of feeling, but is "produced solely by reason." (CPR2, p. 79) Respect gives rise to duty, since "duty . . . requires of action that it objectively agree with the law" (CPR2, p. 84) As a result, duty becomes the very basis of the moral life. One acts out of duty and is rendered a moral being who acts rationally and properly out of respect for the law."¹¹ (CPR2, pp. 84-92) In effect, then, moral feeling is entirely beside the point. It goes without saying that

¹⁰ Kant would seem to have Hume and the 'English' school of moral thought in mind here. Indeed, the whole thrust of his moral discussion seems to be the attempt to divorce morality from anything that is dependent upon human happiness. Morality, for Kant, is that objective conformity to the law for its own sake. He also seems to feel that this is in accordance with the biblical command to love God and neighbour.

¹¹ The basis of law is, of course, the categorical imperative; yet one is left in doubt as to the basis of this imperative. That is, is the law a given (by society) or is it something responding to a given situation? If it is a given of society, one wonders if it can be universally applicable (say in another society); and by the same token, if it is a response to a situation one may query: What makes the situation universal?

this respect for the law leads to a free submission to it, and thus is man's moral activity assured (at least theoretically). (CPR2, p. 83)

Kant is now in a position to elucidate an analytic of pure practical reason which, by means we are by now expecting, reveals that freedom in the noumenal sphere is the ground of morality and is attested to by the 'fact' of morality. However, as to the 'understanding' of this condition, we are, as noted above, denied direct access and are back in the realm of 'rational faith.' (CPR2, pp. 92-110) Kant will develop this problem in Book II of the present CRITIQUE by his doctrine of the postulates of practical reason. That is, he will discuss the questions of God, freedom and the immortality of the soul. Again we note that so far he has proven the existence of freedom by the possibility of moral act (whose existence he seems to take for granted) and morality by freedom, when he approaches the problem analytically. Dialectically he will rely more on his distinction of the phenomenal and the noumenal, but when all is said and done, Kant seems to say we must accept both freedom and morality on the basis of their necessity for human dignity, or for what he would call anthropological (empirical) reasons. It is clear he has deduced the 'nature' of morality and the 'necessity' of freedom for it in an 'a priori' manner; yet the fact of it and, indeed, the content of it, seem still to be in the realm of possibility or what we have called, with Kant, 'rational belief.' As we turn to his dialectical treatment of these matters, the same problem seems to

occur. 'Natural law' ethics has a distinct advantage in this regard; its weakness in the scientific milieu is that it cannot account for both 'a posteriori' and 'a priori' knowledge.

The dialectic of pure practical reason presents us with the impossibility of understanding things in themselves, and so we are put into a condition where traditionally 'dogmatic' truths are found to be unsolvable contradictions. (CPR2, pp. 111-114) In short, we are in the presence of the famous antinomies²² which Kant has resolved by his use of the phenomenal and noumenal distinction. (CPR2, pp. 114-117) In effect, this distinction allows for a situation where the idea of God, immortality and freedom can be called postulates of practical reason since it can be shown that, in the traditional manner of metaphysics, they cannot be 'proven' to exist (CPR, A409, B 436 ff.); nevertheless,

²² Antinomies are those 'facts' which are contradictory in themselves. For example, the existence of freedom and causality, which, if one is shown to exist, cancels out the other, but which can be reconciled by applying one term to the phenomenal world and one to the noumenal world. Now in the present context we are also concerned with the existence of God and the soul. Both these terms are contradictory in that in the phenomenal world they cannot be proven, can in fact be shown not to be possible, as they demand the existence of the supersensuous. Yet in the noumenal world they can be postulated, and indeed are necessary for the existence of morality. In the context we have been developing, this situation is the supreme example of Kant's 'rational belief or faith'. Christianity also becomes possible by the same token. That is, it cannot be 'scientifically' proven but it can be shown to be a necessary postulate of practical reason. It is then placed in the position of being a purely moral system, which it more or less became in liberal Protestant circles. This is somewhat the same situation we have hinted would be the fate of morality itself. Always there is the question of content, which has, as we shall see below, become the bugbear of liberalism in the modern world. Again, the 'natural law' thinker has an answer, but it is an answer supplied within a different context to a question posed in a different manner.

given another approach, they cannot not be proven. (Ibid.)²³ Thus, we are left with the fact of God, immortality and freedom in the second CRITIQUE, where they function, as we have seen in the case of freedom, as necessary postulates for a rational moral life. (CPR2, pp. 126-136) So for Kant, even though Christianity loses its 'metaphysical' basis, nonetheless it reemerges as 'necessary' as an example of the 'content' of ethical action. In short, Kant seems to usher moral certainty out the door with his insistence upon empiricism as the basis of all certain knowledge (the phenomenal level) and then reintroduces it through the back door of the 'a priori' (the noumenal). Hence the reason for the two CRITIQUES, and such an approach certainly gives rise to a new way of seeing morality - if not a new morality, which must grapple with the problem of an intention that seems to float free of action. At the level of criticism, such a procedure has given rise to two currents: that of the natural-law ethicists and that of situational ethics. We have dealt with the 'natural law' ethicists above and we will have occasion to deal with situation ethics below. For the moment we will turn to those ethicists who did not reject human happiness as the basis of moral action but rather embraced it and attempted to build a moral system upon it. It is important to bear in mind here that these ethicists objectified human happiness with Kant but did not divorce it from the feelings of the moral subject. That is, rather than respect for law, social (and limited personal)

²³ God and the immortality of the soul are naturally necessary in morals as reward and guarantor of reward, which is to say, the rationality of the moral life. (CPR2, pp. 118-136)

utility became the norm for moral action.

Ethics of utility

As we indicated earlier, the notion of 'nature' in the traditional philosophic (metaphysical) sense is lacking in modern thought. Further, when examining Kant's ethical system we saw that, for Kant, ethical acts are based upon an 'a priori' that is independent of empirical reality in general and, indeed, even of the individual moral act. In other words, the notion of 'nature,' even of that of the moral act, does not come into the picture. This is simply to say that 'intention' governs act and, in a very real way, renders it moral. Turning to the Utilitarians, however, we discover that the term 'natural law' is reintroduced but with a different meaning than the one we have become accustomed to. Since this is the case, before examining the ethics of utility as codified and rationalized by Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill, we will attempt to make precise the meaning 'natural law' holds for modern thought.

Even though modern thought has rejected the notion of 'metaphysical nature,'¹⁴ thinkers continue to speak of man's nature and the imperatives that flow from this nature.¹⁵ Now, as we have seen, this use of the term 'nature' refers not to a 'substance' but to a collection of traits that are displayed, as it were, on the surface. When, for example, the great legal theorist Grotius

¹⁴ We are using the term 'metaphysical' in the Kantian sense of nonempirical.

¹⁵ Thus we talk of natural and unnatural acts. Of course, when the term 'nature' is used in this sense, it would seem more accurate to speak of 'socially' acceptable and nonacceptable.

speaks of the nature of man as being one that desires society and a peaceful and tranquil life lived according to reason (Grotius, De iure bellis et pacis, Whewell's ed., vol. 1, p. xli), he is referring to what he observes in empirical reality rather than appealing to the substance of man in the premodern manner of, let us say, the papacy.¹⁶ Now, Grotius is opposing those (like Hobbes) who hold that man, by nature, is an egoistic rather than an altruistic being (which he would have to be to allow for Grotius's social programme to be workable), and Grotius is put in the rather uncomfortable position of opposing one 'nature' against another — a situation that could never develop in premodern essentialist thought. It follows, then, that those modern ethical systems which are based upon 'natural law' are vulnerable to criticism from a dual source. First, there is the question of what constitutes true observation, and secondly there is the interpretation of this observation.¹⁷ And once one has decided what is natural in terms of the nature of man (what man desires, that is), there is the problem of how to assess what will give to man what he desires. Here 'natural' takes on a further meaning of 'in accordance with

¹⁶ Even the term 'reason' takes on an empirical pragmatic meaning whereby experience is needed to assess the rationality of an act. For example, one could, in such a context, justify abortion as a 'rational' means of population control inasmuch as experience shows that it works and does not threaten the 'peace and tranquillity' of society. Indeed, it could be said to guarantee it.

¹⁷ For example, man obviously lives in society, but why he does so is not so clear. That is, the opposing interpretations of Hobbes or Locke are equally possible if one sticks solely to what can be observed.

right reason' or, in less grandiose terms, what agrees with common sense. In cases like that of Hobbes's system, man is seen as irrational and therefore in need of direction from an authority that will impose its laws (dictates for peace) upon all other men. So in cases like this, one speaks of law being nonlaw or the 'natural state' being one of unreason and chaos. In short, it is important to always query who is using the term 'natural law' and to always exactly specify its connotations. In our discussion of the ethics of utility we will use the term 'nature' to mean what man desires (based upon empirical observation) and speak of 'natural' as that which seems to agree with common sense and pragmatically produces that which man desires.

Having established, as it were, the 'metaphysical' parameters of our discussion of utilitarianism, we will now look at this ethical theory as it was developed, first, by Jeremy Bentham in his INTRODUCTION TO THE PRINCIPLES OF MORALS AND LEGISLATION, and then at how the principle of utility (the concept of pleasure) was elucidated by John Stuart Mill. The principle of utilitarianism is well known and is expressed quite simply by Bentham: "That principle which approves or disapproves of every action, whatsoever, according to the tendency which it appears to have to augment or diminish the happiness of the party whose interest is in question: or, what is the same thing in other words, to promote and oppose that happiness." (IPML, I, 1) That is, an action (by which he means any action public or private [IPML, I, 1]) is moral inasmuch as it contributes to happiness. We need now only define,

with Bentham, what he means by 'happiness,' and we have the whole system. That is, once the form (that which defines the standard of moral judgement) of the system is ascertained, it then concerns itself with the application of the standard to specific problems and legislations which are all to be judged, as it were, before the same bar. We will now attempt to enunciate the form of the system.

Bentham more or less assumes, or so it would appear, that the meaning of pleasure, pain, and its cognates are known to his readers. Thus when he defines 'utility,' as "that property in an object, whereby it tends to produce benefit, advantage, pleasure, good and happiness," (IMPL, I, 3) he tends to reduce all notions of the good to a common notion of usefulness or of pragmatic reward. Or what has come to be known as hedonism. Now this 'good' can be private or common to a community, but a community is "a fictitious body, composed . . . of members" (IMPL, I, 4) and thus the interest of the community is "the sum of the interests of the several members who compose it." (IMPL, I, 4) In short, the gauge of all morality is the pleasure of the individual either in his own private sphere or as a member of a community. (IMPL, I, 5) It follows from this that any good is good in so far as it promotes either private or public pleasure. (IMPL, I, 6, 7, 8) Further, all moral obligations spring from this principle (IMPL, I, 10) which is a self-evident one (IMPL, I, 11) and which, according to 'common sense,' should produce the greatest happiness (pleasure) to the greatest number. (IMPL, I, 12, 13, 14)

Right and wrong, as we have seen, are to be decided upon a

basis of pleasure and pain to the greatest number. Now all other systems of morals either offend this principle and are thus, misleading (IMPL, II, 1), in that they either advocate asceticism (IMPL, II, 2-10) which quite obviously countervenes our principle, or they are objections based upon sympathy and antipathy, that is, "that principle which approves or disapproves of certain actions . . . merely because a man finds himself disposed to approve or disapprove of them." (IMPL, II, 11) For Bentham, "The various systems . . . of right and wrong . . . may all be reduced to the principle of antipathy and sympathy . . . [since] they consist . . . in so many contrivances for avoiding the obligation of appealing to any external standard." (IMPL, II, 14) And this external standard which always guarantees that all will benefit most is utility. (II, 15)

Bentham turns next to a consideration of the meaning of pleasure and then devotes the rest of his work to specific legislative projects." In Chapter Four he attempts to describe what constitutes

" The work of the utilitarians in general and that of Bentham in particular are what, today, would constitute more a political or social programme than a discussion of morality in the sense of either the Catholic Magisterium or of Kant. This is the case with Mill also. An illustration of this is found in the opening of his work ON LIBERTY, where he declares that "The subject of this essay is not the so-called 'liberty of the will,' . . . but civil, or social liberty." (L, I, intro) In other terms, the interest of these writers is not the theoretical one of personal and social ethics but squarely one of the place of the individual in society. This is in keeping with the modern age, which sees man not as this isolated substance but as an empirical person in communion with other empirical persons. This intellectual condition renders a description of utilitarianism somewhat problematic as it assumes (as we have noted with Bentham) the validity of its position and the legitimacy of its proposals. In a word, it appeals to 'common sense' and, so it would appear, to 'a sense of morality.' That is, if pleasure is the norm and the norm is for the greatest good, then social good in terms of 'utility' would be the final gauge of

a valid pleasure. In general, pleasure that is consistent and noncontradictory is best for both the individual and group. In terms of group pleasure, of course, it must not compromise an individual's pleasure in the group. Thus, the greatest pleasure to the greatest number stands, and all theories of punishment and government flow from this, as do all moral judgements. We may now turn to the elucidation of this 'hedonist' theory by John Stuart Mill.

Unlike Jeremy Bentham, who tended to declaim the obviousness of 'utilitarianism,'¹⁹ John Stuart Mill attempted to place it upon more rational or critical²⁰ grounds by contrasting its results with those of other systems. However, let it be clear from the outset that there is here no question of a metaphysics of morality. Mill rejects all theories of morality except the utilitarian on the

judgement. However, what gauge is to judge the socially useful if not the power to implement it, and thus power not pleasure would be the norm. If the notion of 'common sense' is retained, then power would be subordinate to proper pleasure. One then must ask how this notion of 'common sense' differs from a 'moral sense' - and the circle begins again. In this regard, the 'natural law' thinker would ask for, and not receive, an objective notion of good and evil.

¹⁹ The term 'utilitarianism' was first used by Mill to designate a single idea in ethics, which we are now dealing with. However, Mill, as he tells us, took the term from Galt's Annals of the Parish. (U, p.471)

²⁰ As Mill puts it in regard to the type of proof he is employing in this case: "We are not . . . to infer that its acceptance [the acceptance of the doctrine of utility as equal to the good] or rejection must depend on blind impulse, or arbitrary choice. There is a larger meaning of the word proof, in which this question is as amenable to it as any other of the disputed questions of philosophy." (U, P. 405) We suggest that Mill is referring to the 'common sense' nature of the doctrine in question, which Bentham also exploited.

basis that they do not "support their [he has, primarily, Kant and Hume in mind] pretensions . . . [with] one fundamental principle or law, at the root of all morality." (U, p. 403) As we have seen when dealing with Bentham, this is exactly what utilitarianism does. Mill, without a detailed analysis of the various moral systems, goes to what he considers the heart of the matter and notes that either one accepts the principle of utility or, like Kant, falls into a situation which "fails to show any logical (not to say physical) impossibility in the adoption by all rational beings of the most outrageously immoral rules of conduct." (U, p. 404) That is, if the question as to what effect an act has in terms of happiness is not posed, then the understanding of what is allowed loses any real contact with human reality and thus human morality. (U, p. 405)²² Since Mill now feels he has established the system, he will turn his attention to the meaning of 'utility' or 'happiness.' He will, of course, underwrite the meaning given this term by his mentor, Bentham, but he will also add, as we shall see, new notes to it.

With Bentham, Mill defines 'utility' as the promotion of pleasure and the avoidance of pain. (U, pp. 407-408) Further, he places himself with Epicurus, of whom he says: "the comparison of the Epicurean life to that of the beasts is felt as degrading, precisely because a beast's pleasures do not satisfy a human being's conceptions of happiness." (U, p. 408) This is a quite

²² Obviously, by his acceptance of the nonexistence of the 'substantial' in favour of the 'empirical' Mill, like Bentham, has ruled a 'natural law' ethics out of court.

common observation, but still does not provide an absolute criterion for judging what are truly human pleasures, although the notion of 'avoidance of pain' does indicate that 'moderation' would be advisable in the pursuit of pleasure. At this point the doctrine is still, as it was for Bentham, 'hedonistic.' But Mill, as he continues the discussion, does introduce a hierarchy of pleasures that approaches the 'eudaemonian' concept of Aristotle.

Mill is interested in making two points about the type of pleasure sought by the Utilitarians. The first point is that the intellectual pleasures are higher than physical ones (U, pp. 408-412)²² and secondly he wishes to show that the doctrine does not lead to a complete egoism at the expense of the good of others. He does this not by maintaining that happiness comes from sacrifice considered absolutely, but rather by teaching that happiness is the end of the sacrifice; and thus it is not the sacrifice but the happiness gained (for the greatest number) that motivates and 'justifies' the act. (U, 9p. 418-419) So we see that Mill, while accepting the general context of Bentham's argument, tends to develop the notion of 'pleasure' in a somewhat more 'refined' sense.

²² This type of reasoning presupposes a notion of man's 'nature' as a creative, imaginative, intellectual being who pursues art and culture as goods. While obviously in some cases this is empirically verifiable, nonetheless there are facts to support the evil 'nature' of man and other moral systems are perhaps more realistic in that they admit the existence of evil and abnormality in both the world and in man's action. The 'natural law' ethics of Christianity are a very telling example of this in that they do not flinch from attributing to man the possibility of deliberate immorality - something liberals, in general, and utilitarians, in particular, are prone to do.

Mill next turns to the question as to "the source of its obligation." (U, p. 429) He notes that there are external and internal reasons to obey the imperative of utilitarianism. The former is quite simply one of punishment in terms of pain rendered and pleasure denied. This would be to make a travesty of the principle of action itself. In regard to the latter source of obligation, Mill notes that there is an internal feeling of pain when the moral agent violates the dictates of the principle. Pain experienced (either internally or externally), then, motivates the moral action.²³ Such an attitude requires a belief in 'moral progress' and the necessary moralizing effect of education. We may end this section by noting that the hoped for 'moral progress' has not been forthcoming nor have cultural progress and the availability of education developed apace. Nevertheless, Mill maintains that goodness and happiness and virtue are, in fact, one; and given the nature of man there can be no other way to live and no other path to it than the 'utilitarian.' (U, pp. 438-470)

Having made the above doctrine clear, Mill, in his ON LIBERTY, discusses the place of the individual within this system and concludes - quite within the context of Bentham - by noting that

²³ The importance of moral education is evident here, as is the notion of guilt. There appears to be a further naivety at work here, as there are obviously people who do not feel remorse at 'immoral' actions. The necessity of 'moral' sentiment would therefore seem to be needed, at least by implication. Whatever the case, that this type of moral obligation requires social training is held by Mill to be both necessary and natural. (U, p. 432) The 'training,' when internalized, would become the 'sentiment.' This doctrine does not, in any event, explain the voluntarily evil actor.

the "mischief begins when, instead of calling forth the activity and powers of individuals and bodies, it [government, in general, and institutions, in particular,] substitutes its own activity for theirs." (L, p. 142) In conclusion, then, it may be said that while utilitarianism does lack a 'hardnosed' view of evil, it underwrites the value of the individual and in this sense is, perhaps, closer to the 'natural law' ethics of John Paul, with its stress on human dignity, than is the system of Kant. However, neither system gives an account of the nature of the moral act, and thus both systems fail to render a clear notion of right and wrong that is not, in some way, socially conditioned. With this point of relativism in mind, we will now turn to what has been called the postmodern situation and, as we have done with modernity, attempt to see this phenomenon in relation to the Church and her teaching.

Ethics in the postmodern situation

What follows will be an attempt to define the meaning of postmodernism in relation to both premodernism and modernism as regards ethical teaching. From there we will try to place the Catholic Church and its ethics in their appropriate historical position vis-à-vis this particular method of categorizing the history of thought, in general, and that of ethical reflection, in particular.²⁴

²⁴ One should bear in mind that 'periodization' is always abstract and, in a very real sense, 'a priori'. Thus it is difficult to achieve a consistent consensus concerning terminology and parameters of inclusion. In the present case we are more or less following Auguste Comte's periods, with the addition of the ambiguous term of postmodernism. Such a schema presupposes the overcoming of 'ontological' thought by 'scientific' thought and the

Introduction

As we have seen, the premodern world of thought was an intellectual climate that saw essentialist understanding as both the goal and the possibility of human comprehension and held that this knowledge was absolute and definitive. In the field of ethics it was felt that there were 'natures' or 'essences' which not only revealed the meaning and thus the use of things but also of acts; and consequently an ethics was evolved that led to the laying down of mandatory behaviours that were 'natural' in the radical sense of that word. So it is that we speak of 'natural law' ethics. This doctrine, which was first enunciated by Aristotle and later elucidated by the Stoics, was inherited in the Middle Ages by Scholasticism, and in contemporary times is the proud possession of the Roman Catholic Church and its Magisterium. However, as the Middle Ages in Europe waned and the period known as the Enlightenment dawned, the notion of 'essentialist' knowledge as 'scientia' was replaced by the 'modern' idea that 'science' should be the result of empirical investigation and mathematical ordering. This revolution in knowledge did away with (or overcame) the notion that things were internally and 'metaphysically' organized, and saw the 'surface' analysis of things and their relations as the highest type of knowledge man could have. In ethics this meant that there could no longer be an appeal to the 'nature' of things and acts as

collapse of science's absoluteness on the contemporary scene. We are doing intellectual history rather than philosophy. Or, in more contemporary terms, we are interested in 'exposition' and 'internal development' rather than the rendering of a 'truth judgement.'

the definitive norm of moral judgement. As we have attempted to show two different but related, ethical theories arose in this context of modernity. These two theories we have called the 'ethics of obligation,' which looked for an a priori principle upon which to base moral judgement; and a school of 'utility,' which attempted, by the use of 'common sense' to ensure that man always acted in such a way as to render the utmost happiness (understood as pleasure in the human sense) to the greatest number.²⁵ Both theories rejected the 'natural law' ethics of their immediate past and led to an understanding of ethics which, like all 'scientific' knowledge, is progressive and tentative (although it took advances in the allied 'sciences' of anthropology, sociology and biology to make this characteristic of 'progressing' clear). As a result, the stability and certainty of the premodern and to a great extent of the early world have been lost. But this is not the whole story. Modern man, for one thing, began to doubt the certainty and unimpeded progress he felt he had achieved with empirical science, including the very basis of his 'assumed' certain knowledge. Now this doubting took various forms, but characteristic of all these forms is the questioning of modernity as the final achievement of humanity. (That premodernity has been overcome and, indeed, ruled out of court is taken by postmodern thinkers as axiomatic.) In the present context we will examine this 'questioning' on two levels.

²⁵ The terms 'common' and 'human' sense were, at the time of their use, understood to mean what was obvious to the senses as 'natural to humanity.' Postmodern criticism of this understanding reveals it of course as time-bound and not therefore 'scientific' in the absolute sense.

First, we will attempt to present what may be called the 'metaphysical'²⁶ basis of this questioning of the end of modernity and the initiation of postmodernity. Then we will apply this 'metaphysics' – or 'epistemology,' if one prefers – to the question of human behaviour in terms of values or what throughout this project we have called ethics. This two-pronged analysis will be followed by an application of its results to the Catholic Church's ethics in its relation to both modernity and postmodernity. We will begin our analysis with a look at the work of two prominent postmodern theorists, Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault. These authors have been singled out because their interest in postmodernity tends to foreground 'philosophical concerns' rather than 'artistic' ones.

Jacques Derrida and the death of absolutism

What follows is an attempt to put forth an understanding (an elucidation of the signified) for the neological signifier DIFFERENCE created by Jacques Derrida. It is necessary, or so it would seem, to describe this signifier by means of an unravelling of its methodological functioning within what is, to all intents and purposes, a method of apprehending²⁷ the history of

²⁶ By 'metaphysics' we mean to imply the foundation upon which postmodernity is based. This is 'metaphysical' in the Kantian sense of those nonempirical items upon which one judges a type of certainty (either moral, as in Kant's case, or 'epistemological' in the case of 'postmodernism'). The use of this term is perhaps more one of convenience than clarity.

²⁷ For Derrida the act of knowing is always 'poetic' in that it is metaphoric, and thus as a theory of apprehension is in fact a poetics of meaning, or, as we shall see below, is using a metaphor of knowing to describe its own knowing. With such sense of

philosophy."²⁸ Thus the locus of the functioning of DIFFERENCE is those metaphysical systems of the past which (at least in terms of critique) are taken to be metaphysical in the sense of not being grounded 'scientifically' in empirical reality."²⁹ Now the point of the exercise is to use DIFFERENCE (as a methodological tool in the reading of the history of philosophy) to show that there are unconscious aspects (in the general sense) to a theory (any theory which is, in fact, using the metaphor of theory as its frame of reference to render knowledge) upon which it builds and which,

knowing, it is difficult to be precise (logical), and one must note that his readings are always poetic (interpreting metaphors) and are always intuitively connective rather than chronological or deductive. Given his habit of seeing the text as a 'thing' in the sense of Aristotle's POETICS and thus as both the locus and arbitrator of signification in terms of its existential reality, it would seem that 'induction', if used by him, would be rhetorical and metaphorical and not 'scientific' in the modern sense. Indeed, we shall argue for such an understanding of the method and 'harvest' of DIFFERENCE.

²⁸ For Derrida the history of philosophy is that body of explanations which is the totality, both as a unified and individual intellectual project, of interfacement with 'reality' that has been (up until Kant, at least) conducted in Western thought.

²⁹ Systems of 'realist' metaphysics, like that proposed by Pope John Paul II, would seem to be problematic here. That is, while they are metaphysical in the sense of placing their truth value in an appeal to 'abstract substance', nonetheless their principle is "nihil in intellectu, sine in sensu" - which would place them in an ambiguous stance vis-à-vis 'idealism.' However, the 'scientific' critique of these systems by Locke and his followers would place them, at least in Nietzsche's sense, in the boat of idealism. But in the light of Derrida's 'poetics of meaning' and thus when applied to history of 'critique,' the ambiguity must be noted; its suggestiveness will be followed later.

therefore, makes it not an explanatory event based upon reality³⁰ but rather the interpretation of a linguistic construction/reconstruction of that reality. This critique, which we have called 'poetic,'³¹ functions on two levels: the level of textuality and the level of the unconscious. The question of textuality will be treated below, and, for the present we will offer only a very brief commentary upon the notion of the unconscious. Suffice it to say, at this point, that DIFFERANCE does not perform a psychoanalysis upon textuality. That is, the goal of the strategy is to reveal not the 'motivation' of the thought system³² but the 'intellectual' (for want of a better term)

³⁰ Any attempt to 'define' reality is, quite properly, received as arrogance. In this context, however, 'reality' would seem to be that complex of life which constitutes the 'history or narrative' of the individual human life span. It is this which is missed by philosophy and indeed by poetry, as both disciplines are forms of writing and constitute an existent in se which, even in the case of 'realism', takes its meaning and 'essence' from the formal properties of rhetoric as conceived by the culture. Autobiography and case histories would seem an exception but they are not as the form of the narrative is preconceived and consequently perceived.

³¹. By poetic we mean two things. Firstly, we accept, with Aristotle, that the poem is a thing like a painting etc. Thus, it is a formal structure with rules of expression and reception. In short, the poem is a discourse (a semiotic complex) on reality, rather than, reality itself. Secondly, by 'poetic' we mean methodology. That is, the poet furthers the poetic discourse by metaphoric elucidation and by the making conscious (though not necessarily obvious) unconscious connections. (The waking dream of Freud). In this sense, poetry is illogical and unscientific. Of course, it needn't be meaningless for all of that. As a result, we maintain that, for Derrida, there is no distinction in essence and, thus, method of knowing, between poetry and philosophy. He would then disagree with Aristotle's notion that the two are, indeed, quite different. Given the Saussurean base of Derrida's thinking, such a position seems naturally his.

³² Thus, the method is 'philosophical' and not 'psychological' in the Freudian sense.

preconceptions of the system." In other words, it deals with intellectual overdetermination³⁴ of a text (in the sense of an Aristotelean 'aporia') rather than with emotional overdetermination (the neurotic seen as text, in the sense of narrative retelling, to the receptor as analyst). We will now try to undo this 'aporia' of DIFFERENCE.

³³ Of course, Husserl attempted a project that, at first sight, seems to be of the same type. However, as Derrida shows in his reading of Husserl, even Husserl had preconceptions and made 'life' a seeming base datum, a transcendental. Indeed, Husserl ended his project by underwriting 'idealism'. This type of reading is the act of 'deconstruction,' which is the application of DIFFERENCE.

³⁴ We realize that we are using the term 'overdetermined' in a rather loose (if not metaphorical) way. It is appropriate, however, to apply this term to the authors in question since it seems axiomatic of postmodern texts (due to their extreme self-consciousness and self-referentiality) to be excessive in both enunciation and concern. (One could also refer to a 'return of the repressed' in the case of these texts inasmuch as that 'which is assumed' functions as a motivating force in the retrieving of these assumptions. In this regard one may note the well-known almost painful exactness of Derrida's discourse; and it is this rhetorical characteristic that we are terming 'overdetermined' and which we have suggested should be approached 'poetically' and not 'logically'.) In this context, these texts, besides resembling 'poetic' texts, also resemble the 'neurotic' text as revealed in analysis. To express this theoretical explanation practically, we are referring to the fact that the texts under consideration (cf. end of this note) are very dense and utilize a method of development that makes quoting parts of the discourse and still retaining the context almost impossible. In our exposition, therefore, we have followed the technique of summary (that is, making use of interpretation and application of the total text to 'our' context/text as one would when dealing with poetry), and thus we make virtually no specific references.

The chief textual sources for our discussion are the following:

Jacques Derrida, De la grammatologie (Paris: Minuit, 1967).

-----, L'Écriture et la différence (Paris: Seuil, 1967).

Martin Heidegger, Being and Time, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper & Row, 1962).

Ferdinand de Saussure, Cours de linguistique générale (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1967-1974).

Proximate background to differance

Jacques Derrida stands on two foreground columns of the postmodern edifice, which are Martin Heidegger and Ferdinand de Saussure. We will expound in summary fashion the doctrines of these two thinkers as they intersect with Derrida's methodology, rather than concern ourselves with the valid (but thorny) issue of how faithful Derrida has been in his interpretation of the text of his mentors. We will commence with a look at Derrida and de Saussure and then see how Heidegger has shaped (or been shaped by) Derrida.

The fundamental point in de Saussure's Cours de linguistique générale is that language³⁵ is not a mirroring of reality. Now this point has become more or less commonplace in linguistic theory,³⁶ although it has taken some time to be accepted. In the context of our project, John Paul II's philosophical orientation would be an example of a thinker who sees, with Aristotle (among legions), that reality is reflected (mirrored absolutely) in language (definitions are real as substance) and that logical relations are true relations, not only of linguistic (rhetorical) connections, but of reality itself. So, for John Paul, language is an absolute, as is

³⁵ The question of terminology is important here. For de Saussure language is made up of 'langue' (the structure of the language) and 'parole' (the individual utterance). Now this seems to mean that there is both a historical and a contemporary aspect to language (the diachronic/synchronic complex of existent) and that the latter is controlled by the former. We are suggesting that this is, in fact, the reading of de Saussure that Derrida accepts. Further, 'parole' as utterance is metamorphosed by Derrida's understanding into the written sign, which he privileges contrary to the opinion of de Saussure.

³⁶ The influence of Anglo-American analytical philosophy cannot be overlooked here.

its meaning. This is not the case for de Saussure, and Derrida takes this from him. In fact, Derrida will maintain that nature is an absence and, consequently, that discourse creates all inhabiting realities, and by extension, is these realities. This brings us to the important question of meaning as de Saussure and, after him, Derrida, understand it. We will now turn to this most important problem.

For both our thinkers, meaning is the result of 'difference.' This 'difference' expresses itself (for de Saussure) in the opposition of sound units of any particular sound system of communication. That is, bat is not dat, and we can distinguish meaning by opposition. This point must be the 'point de départ' for all thinking concerning meaning within the postmodern situation. Now Derrida does not depart from this notion of difference but he feels that there is an error here. That error is de Saussure's certainly, but can be traced back to Plato and Socrates. All these thinkers have privileged speech over writing"

" This privileging of speech over writing is, of course, rather general. For example, most poetics hold that poetry was first sung and then written down. Also, from an anthropological point of view it would seem normal. (There are no nonspeaking human groups, but there are illiterate ones). Indeed, the individual's linguistic history would seem to be an insurmountable objection. Derrida, however, is not analyzing linguistic evolution, but rather is concerned with the emergence of meaning. Viewed from this perspective, it seems justifiable to hold that meaning is the result of 'gridding' (the form of the utterance) and the 'grid' is the 'written' over the 'spoken,' which must follow the preconceived 'grid' to render meaning. Oral poetry, for example, follows a form which preexists the individual poem as both 'form' and arbitrator of 'meaning.' It is in this sense that one should understand Derrida's departure from what, at first sight, seems the evident truth of de Saussure's statement. Derrida also notes (following suggestions made by Emil Durkheim) that meaning comes from

and thus have failed to see the true force of 'presence,' a term that Derrida takes from Heidegger" and a discussion of which we will now turn to in an attempt to understand this notion, at least as Derrida conceives of it. Again the question of fidelity to originals will be bracketed.

The Heideggerian link

The influence on Derrida's theory of the work of Martin Heidegger is, as are all influences upon Derrida, indirect; or perhaps it is more accurate to speak of 'digestion of influences' by Derrida's discourse. That is, there is a family resemblance between the theories, but, Derrida makes Heidegger's insight uniquely his own. In the present case, Heidegger's influence upon Derrida is one of metaphysics being both constructed and deconstructed. By that we mean that the notion of 'presence' so dear to Derrida and a prime component in the understanding of DIFFERENCE is not found, as such, in the work of Heidegger. We will attempt to summarize Derrida's reading of Heidegger on this important point. (As we have noted, it is difficult to quote Heidegger in a meaningful way. Besides the general reliance of Derrida upon the Heideggerian corpus, two references to Being and Time would seem to be pertinent. The first, dealing with the notion of sign and signification is found in BT, I, 3 , 17, pp. 107 ff.; and the second, having to do with

primitive 'mapping,' 'totem signs' and so forth.

" Like Derrida, Heidegger sees discourse and being as coterminous, at least in terms of knowledge. The question of being, in itself is, as is well known, foregrounded by Heidegger. In Derrida's case, it would seem to be a background consideration, while at the same time a formative one.

the notion of 'logos,' is located in BT, II, b, p. 55.)

In terms of general influence, there is the notion of Heidegger that being is a phenomenon beyond any particular instance thereof. (It is helpful, in this regard, to keep in mind that Being is not God in any sense of cause or hierarchy but merely is, and thus is 'present' in the radical sense of that term.)³⁹ This 'presence' (to use Derrida's term) explains why there is, in a text, an existence of something that is unconscious but influential. Indeed, it seems to be the ground of meaning. This 'presence' (the general ontological condition which is being) gives Derrida the further notion of 'trace' (the presence, in the text, of the residue of the general condition [logos] by which we mean the naming of the thing as opposed to its being within its historical position as prior),⁴⁰ which it is the duty of the reader (that is, the critical and historical adroit reader) to make explicit in the reading of any particular text.⁴¹ This is the act of deconstruction and the object of the exercise.

The operation of deconstruction seems to be made up of, and of activating, the following components. Being (in the sense

³⁹ BT, Part I, chap. 2.

⁴⁰ It is important to note that 'prior' in the epistemological sense need not be immediately prior in the chronological sense. Western thought has grown as the exhibiting of various outgrowths and not as a smooth evolution. This is precisely the position of John Paul in his relationship to postmodernism, a position he acquired by 'sidestepping' modernity, as it were.

⁴¹ Derrida, as we have said, seems to be most interested in 'philosophical' texts, but literary texts have also been deconstructed.

developed by Heidegger) as the primary ontological existent gives rise to 'logos' or 'discourse,'⁴² which is (following Derrida) existentialized in the text, and this act (for Derrida, if not Heidegger) gives reality to reality, so to speak.⁴³ Now, this reality is known in terms of its meaning (name or logos) as emerging from the text, which in turn depends upon the trace (made possible by 'presence') of the 'logos,' which is seen (in the written form) as ground (unconscious) of meaning. In this sense it is metaphysical and is explained by a metaphysical theory. (Again we follow Derrida rather than Heidegger.)

There is yet another level, and that is the 'trace,' which influences the detection of the 'logos' in terms of its forming a frame of unconscious referentiality. In other words, the text (as discourse) is seen as reflecting reality (as, for example, the 'real' reflects the 'really real,' in terms of the Platonic ideas which function, in this case, as 'logoi') at least as it is handled by the intellect. In this sense, as we have already noted, Derrida appears to be an 'idealist.'

The above, however, is exactly the case of Western thought (metaphysics) in that the historical development (not necessarily 'evolution') of that thought is producing the meaning of its discourse in terms of the 'trace' in the text which reflects the unconscious logos (as having been priorly understood) upon which

⁴² The two terms seem more or less synonymous in Derrida, as both refer to the only 'reality' that can be dealt with intellectually.

⁴³ One cannot help noticing the 'idealism' implied here.

the meaning present in the text is understood. When this situation is made explicit (through deconstructing the discourse) it is shown that prior decisions (noncritical) contribute - indeed, (in)form - the meaning of the logos and the meaning of the text (discourse); and therefore the entire project of metaphysical knowledge is one of subjective construction (both in terms of meaning and, so it would appear, reality) rather than the objective reporting of reality. In Kantian terms, the limits of reason have been violated, and this is revealed by what Derrida refers to as 'castration' of the text as assertive and authoritative. That is, the text is the 'thing' and the text is the result of construction/deconstruction of reality as known, not itself as a nonhistorical, objective item in itself (in the context of our present project, John Paul's Scholasticism would be an example of what knowledge is not) - but rather, items exist, at least to consciousness, as 'known' within a history which deconstructive discourse makes conscious by elucidating the 'trace' as rendered 'presence.' Thus, the notion of DIFFERENCE is extended not only to include what is opposite (this meaning and not that meaning) but also to include textual meaning as 'family resemblance' (that is, the real as known) is included in it (the text) as 'presence' and 'trace.'

So it is that Derrida can see textual analysis as the metaphysical analysis of reality as it has been understood in the West. The result of this analysis is that textuality always involves history (through 'presence' and 'trace'), and the making

explicit of this involvement always renders metaphysics as the creation of the individual encountering history with decisions (largely unconscious) about the basis of his or her construction/reconstruction of reality as text. We will now apply this 'discovery' to our present project.

The death of absoluteness and the ethics of the catholic church

It would appear that the work of Jacques Derrida has sounded the death knell of the metaphysical basis of the Catholic Church's ethics and, consequently, put that ethic out of contention in the postmodern situation. However, Derrida has noted that his work of deconstruction is only that, and that the question of 'truth' is not directly addressed by his methodology.⁴⁴ This would seem normal inasmuch as his critique is only to make conscious the unconscious and, in the case of Scholastic metaphysics, this is merely to note that the Scholastic philosopher takes the evidence of his senses and the operation of abstraction as givens that need not be justified; and this, what he is unconscious of (indeed, his anthropology denies the existence of the 'unconscious'), is in a way made invalid by its being made conscious.⁴⁵ In short, since Scholastic metaphysics both predates (chronologically) and opposes (as contemporary with) the revolt of Kant in epistemology, it is 'unaffected' by deconstructionism and presents itself as one

⁴⁴ One is reminded of Freud and his statement that even a 'religious' believer could use psychoanalysis.

⁴⁵ As a matter of fact, given the Scholastic anthropology, one wonders if the whole operation of deconstruction can have any 'real' meaning.

possible alternative in the postmodern situation. Indeed, it offers a system of rational explanation that includes both science (as a type of discourse that is valid but not exhaustive) and metaphysics as an 'empirical' decision in the face of reality as presented to the human consciousness. Further, by its critique of the tentativeness of modern philosophy and science, deconstruction reinforces the 'sensibleness' of deciding in favour of Scholasticism. By the same token, the deconstruction of modern thought makes 'an act of faith' (both philosophical and theological) not only 'sensible' but necessary. So the ethics of the Catholic Church emerges from the subjective tangle of the postmodern situation by offering an objective mooring and a certainty that leads not only to a secure set of values in a world set adrift but also, as we have seen, to a cultural possibility that is founded on human dignity (as grounded by Scholastic metaphysics) and, based upon this dignity, to an ethic of natural law which guarantees this cultural possibility as one of life, hope and human fulfilment."

In such a situation, the Church emerges not as ante(i)modern but as a compelling contender for offering a viable and human cultural construct within the postmodern situation and on the terms of that same situation. The work of Jacques Derrida, in short, by undercutting 'modernism' becomes an underpinning for the Church to once again appear as the bearer of the 'Good News' of redemption

" This is clearly the option that John Paul II offers in his two encyclicals VERITATIS SPLENDOR and EVANGELIUM VITAE.

from the malaise of a culture (modernism) turned against itself."

Michel Foucault's postmodern analysis of power and the Catholic Church's ethical impact

We have put forward the suggestion, following upon the insights of Jacques Derrida, that the postmodern situation is one in which the individual's view of the world (one's 'metaphysics' in the sense we have developed that term) is based upon largely unconscious presuppositions. Once this situation is made conscious, through deconstruction, the same individual is placed in a position where 'subjective' decisions must be made concerning that worldview and its consequences. In other terms, there are only subjective truths and the Catholic Church and her ethical system (perhaps better termed 'lifestyle' in the contemporary context) is one more contender within a situation where plurality of viewpoints is theoretically grounded (and legally guaranteed) and in which personal decision becomes the basis of both truth and the subsequent identity and lifestyle that flow from that decision."

" The notion here expressed is derived from the fact that 'postmodern' criticism is the result of a revolt against the 'absoluteness' claimed by modern science and that its critique, at least as practised by Derrida, is a turning of 'modern' techniques of analysis against the origins of these techniques. For example, the modern critique of medieval and ancient metaphysics is based on the conflict between the faith/reason and abstract/empirical complexes - on the feeling that the latter system rejects presuppositions of the former. Derrida seems to follow the same 'technique' in regard to 'modern' thought by unearthing its unconscious presuppositions. That is, modern thought, including science, makes assumptions that it cannot verify.

" This complex of truth, identity and lifestyle has figured highly in our discussion of the Pope's encyclicals, which deal with the central question of sexuality and reproductive activity. Now

In other words, in order to existentialize a lifestyle within a plurality of 'truths,' the question of 'power' arises quite normally. It is precisely this question which has been taken up by Michel Foucault,⁴ and the main concern of the question deals with

and lifestyle. The Pope, of course, offers a patriarchal paradigm of sexuality and all that such an attitude implies. The 'gay rights' and 'Prochoice' movements are counters to this Papal vision, and thus the Church is placed in a position of extreme ambiguity. That is, in a pluralist situation she must either have social control (which she has largely lost in the contemporary scene) or she must support minorities (including sexual minorities which she theoretically opposes) in order to safeguard her own identity. Such a stance involves groups which the Church must oppose as well as other groups whose right to exist she can support. (We are dealing with this problem on the moral level. The political situation of the Church is something else again. On this level the Church, as history amply shows, has been nothing if not almost cynically pragmatic.) On the moral scene we may note the example of religious freedom which, as we have noted, has been 'taken care of' by Vatican II, and the question of 'human rights' (in the broad political sense, as for example the question of racial minorities), which has also been judged unacceptable by the Church several times. However, the question of sexual minorities (this term currently and popularly refers to 'gay men' and Lesbian women with the common understanding that other 'orientations' are to be seen as perversions on the basis that they are 'harmful' either to the individual or others) is one that places the Church in an ambiguous position. That is, she supports the 'right' to be 'gay', but, at the same time, given her doctrine on the nature of sexual activity, forbids the actions that would make this proclivity existential. In this sense the Church's postmodern contention is, perhaps, compromised for those who do not share her 'fundamentalist' conception of the natural law. Nevertheless, given the teaching of Pope John Paul II on the natural law and the cultural project flowing from it, this position of the Church on sexuality is 'logical,' and, within the given context of the Church's understanding of being and identity, does allow 'gays' to be, if not to act as such. Thus, 'gays' in the Church are in the same position as unmarried heterosexuals who, in keeping with the 'essentialist' or 'fundamentalist' thinking of the Church, can be but not act.

⁴. Foucault has treated the question of power and its relation to truth in several of his works. Perhaps, the most striking example of this treatment is found in Histoire de la sexualité (Paris: Gallimard, 1976).

The first volume is particularly useful in our present

the postmodern condition where, as we elucidated above, everyone is a custodian of a 'truth.'⁵⁰ It is 'power' and its possession, then, not 'truth' and its righteousness that will define the social fabric. We will complete the present work with a few remarks — under the auspices of Foucault's notion of 'power' and 'truth' — that relate to the Church's position as one 'truth' among many and how this postmodern situation of the Church affects the perception society in general has of her.⁵¹ We will then have witnessed the

discussion. Foucault, taking his cue from Nietzsche, makes his point of departure that truth, as definitive and subsequently politically and publicly regulatory, is based on the possession of power, and it then follows that the latter 'confirms' the former. This is a point that should seem obvious to any unbiased observer. The question of power has been with the Catholic Church since Constantine and with the Protestant churches from the inception of the Reformation with Luther and Calvin. It is the situation of the contemporary Catholic Church that concerns us here, and to all intents and purposes one may simply say that this Church, except perhaps in parts of the Third World, has either lost or is in the process of losing her political — and thus her real — power. So it is that its truth becomes debatable and a matter of personal commitment. We will argue below that a church, in such a situation, following the definitions of Ernst Troeltsch, is no longer a 'Church' but, a 'Sect.' However, despite this reality of power holding by the Church and despite Troeltsch's contention that a belief in 'natural law' as the 'law of Christ' is characteristic of a 'Church,' which sees this belief as linked to its real power, the Catholic Church still clings to the 'natural law' and calls for a cultural project that presupposes political power. These insights will be treated in detail when we discuss The Nature of the Church in a Pluralist Society.

⁵⁰ To speak of the 'Truth' in a postmodern context would seem to be done at cross-purposes.

⁵¹ It would seem that our prior discussion of Derrida and his 'metaphysics' of subjectivity grounds this situation for the Church. This is merely to underwrite the point that in any plurality of 'truths' where each claims its 'rights,' then the plurality itself becomes self-justifying. That is, the right of the 'plurality' to be 'plural' becomes the ground of all rights. As a result, this 'truth' — which is held by the state as collective 'power' and claimed by members of that 'collective,'

Catholic Church and her ethics in its journey from ante(i)modernity to postmodernity.

The nature of the church in a pluralist (postmodern) society

If one views the postmodern social situation as we have outlined it above, then it becomes axiomatic that this situation is, by its very definition, committed to a plurality of opinions and to a type of 'power/truth' relationship which will be a respecter and guarantor of the 'plurality' of rights generated by this plurality. Now, one may see this situation as either denying all truth, or one may, as we have contended, take 'plurality' itself as truth (or, at least, as 'social' truth) and reason to the existence of several 'truths' existing simultaneously. Of course, we still have not answered the question of conflict among these various truths. It would seem possible to dispense with this 'problem' by noting that the very concept of 'pluralism' implies mutual respect for and tolerance of 'difference,' and this necessitates a self-policing effect that would purge any particular 'truth' of its socially harmful traits. Such a position militates against the notion of Truth held by the Catholic Church but would seem to mirror the present situation more or less accurately, at least in North America. Further, the latest encyclical, *EVANGELIUM VITAE*, with its call for the use of only legal and nonviolent means by protestors

which is in fact the 'plurality' — meets Foucault's contention that 'power' confirms 'truth'. We are not claiming that Foucault draws such a conclusion explicitly (it would seem he does not), although in his discourse, 'power' and, thus, 'truth' often describe an empowered 'majority's' failure to guarantee the 'rights' or the 'truth' of a minority. Nevertheless, it seems that he was working to (or simply implying) such a position.

against laws permitting abortion, would seem to make this position that of the Catholic Church. Obviously in the situation we have outlined it is always possible to refuse compliance to a negative law (refuse, for example, refuse to have an abortion demanded by a policy of birth regulation), but such a law would seem to contradict the principle we have elucidated in our exposition of postmodernism as understood by Jacques Derrida. We have also grafted the above considerations onto the thought of Michel Foucault regarding 'power' and 'truth' and found that the 'state' has co-opted both 'power' and, as we have attempted to show, what might be called 'social truth.'⁵² We may now turn our attention to how this postmodern situation has affected the Catholic Church and her ethics.

We have seen that truth is not an item of disinterest but is an intrusion into society, where it desires to be definitive (that is, to exercise power in relation to itself). This ability the Church once possessed and is, at present, either completely denuded

⁵² The argument for a self-justifying plurality is the normal liberal one and suffers from the weakness that its criterion (we have made it the 'good of the person') requires amplification in terms of defining 'person' and his or her 'good.' (In contemporary thought such problems are often solved within the context of a 'medical' model - for example, the work of Sigmund Freud.) In the case of the postmodern situation, this 'good' would seem to be self-development understood as contributing to the success, prosperity and general 'health' of the individual and the group. By way of criticism of this position, one may note that it becomes a type of 'utilitarianism' reminding one of John Stuart Mill, whom we discussed above as a 'modern'. What makes the present position 'postmodern' as opposed to 'modern', we would argue, is the foregrounding of the 'self-justifying plurality' and the radicalism of its 'individualism'. This is merely to note that, unlike the Utilitarians, who see use as the primary consideration, postmoderns tend to take a Nietzschean psychological and moral position.

of it or, with the spreading of postmodernism in the guise of Americanism, in the throes of losing it. This places the Church and her ethics in an ambiguous, if not downright contradictory, position. If she admits the plurality as the norm of truth, then she loses her place as sole possessor of the truth. From the other side, if she refuses to comply to what, at least in the West, has become an imperative, she risks self-destruction. It is to overcoming this ambiguity that Pope John Paul II has dedicated his pontificate. As we have seen, he is attempting to do so by holding onto the 'natural law' (in VERITATIS SPLENDOR) and by calling for a new culture of life (EVANGELIUM VITAE) based upon the dictates of what we have termed a 'fundamentalist' interpretation of this same 'natural law.' In doing this, John Paul obviously feels that the Roman Catholic Church is somehow more influential than it would appear to be. In order to better understand this seeming dichotomy we will apply the categories of investigation of Ernst Troeltsch in his magisterial study The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches.

According to Troeltsch we may distinguish two types of religious organizations, the 'Church' and the 'Sect.' In addition to this distinction, Troeltsch holds that, as Christianity went from being a 'Sect' to becoming a 'Church,' it took the Stoics' notion of 'natural law' and identified it with the 'law of Christ,' and by so doing was able to exercise political power in the world. We will develop each of these contentions in turn.

According to Troeltsch, it is necessary to distinguish between

a 'Church' and a 'Sect' when discussing the development of Christianity in the West. The main difference between these two structures is that a 'Church' "is that type of organization which is overwhelmingly conservative, which to a certain extent accepts the secular order, and dominates the masses; in principle, therefore, it is universal, i.e., it desires to cover the whole of human life." (T, vol. 1, p. 331) In contrast to this is the 'Sect,' which is organized into "comparatively small groups; [that] aspire after personal inward perfection, and they aim at a direct personal fellowship between the members of each group. From the very beginning, therefore, they are forced to organize themselves in small groups, and to renounce the idea of dominating the world." (Ibid., p. 331) In short, the 'Church' is what the earlier primitive 'Sect' of Christians became in the Middle Ages in Western Europe. (This is obviously a 'sociological' judgement and not a 'theological' one.) What we are now witnessing is a reversal of this situation, as the Roman Catholic 'Church' is becoming less and less influential with the masses and, by historical necessity, is becoming more like a 'Sect' which, unlike its former stance of "utiliz[ing] the State and the ruling classes and weav[ing] these elements into her own life . . . [and] becom[ing] an integral part of the existing social order . . . [by which she] both stabilizes and determines the social order . . . [and] becom[ing] dependent upon the upper class, and their development," is becoming, like a 'Sect,' "connected . . . with those elements in Society which are opposed to the State and to Society; [and she must] work upwards

from below." (Ibid., p. 331) This is certainly true of the Catholic Church in a worldwide context, where her main support comes from Third World countries and which leads her to oppose, for example, the greedy economic activity of the First World." From this situation we may note that the Church is losing its 'universal' status and becoming sectarian in its social position. Further, she is also beginning to express this change in her spirituality. Like a 'Sect' and unlike a 'Church,' the Roman Catholic Church "refers their members directly to the supernatural aims of life, [VS Part III] and in them the individualistic, directly religious character of asceticism, as a means of union with God, is developed . . . [and] the attitude of opposition to the world and its powers . . . [is] tend[ing] to develop a theoretical and general asceticism [as expressed, for example, in EV]." (Ibid., pp. 331-2) In this way, the 'life' of the Catholic 'Church' is no longer integrated into the world and its 'life' directly. (Ibid. pp. 331-2) In other words, asceticism becomes a way of "being separated from the world" (Catholic sexual morality is an obvious case in point) rather than "a way of acquiring virtue." (Ibid., p. 332) Of course, this change is gradual and locally differentiated. Nevertheless, the Roman 'Church' is becoming more and more 'Sect'-like and this for a reason which at first glance appears contradictory but which Troeltsch does in fact allow for in his discussion under consideration. This brings us to

³³ Such an attitude is evident in John Paul's 'social' and 'economic' pronouncements and in his well-known distrust of Western culture in general and the North American in particular.

the question of the 'natural law' as the moral basis of the 'Church' as opposed to the 'Sect.' We will examine this development in the moral thinking of the 'Church,' and then relate it to the contemporary Roman Catholic Church.

Troeltsch tells us that the early (primitive) Christian community (a 'Sect' in his terms; Ibid., pp. 110 ff) developed its ethical teaching in opposition to the then worldly conceptions of life and thus presented a counter 'lifestyle' to that world, the world of Judaism and Hellenism. However, as the Christian community became more and more 'Church'-like and society commenced its acceptance of at first the existence and later the necessity of that community for political and social stability (for example, in Constantine's bold move in legalizing Christianity), the world, having become more accommodating to the Christian community, appeared more amenable to this same Christianity – and therefore a 'way out' of Christianity's opposition to the world was needed. As Troeltsch puts it: "The Stoic idea of Natural Law, which the Apologists regarded as identical with Christian moral law, provided the way out of the difficulty." (Ibid., p. 150) Now as we have seen, it is this same 'natural law' that still underpins Catholic morality but which is due to historical developments in thought (the rise of modernism) that have put the 'Church' at odds with the society it once directed, placing it in a position of being a 'Sect' rather than the triumphant 'Church' she once was. It must immediately be noted that this statement needs qualification inasmuch as the Pope still writes in his encyclicals to the world

at large and that his call, in *EVANGELIUM VITAE*, for a universal cultural project that would make 'Natural Law' the basis of a new cultural construct does seem to indicate that the Magisterium, at least, has failed to 'read the signs of the times.' However, from the other side there is the 'caveat' that John Paul II has refused any capitulation to 'modernism'⁵⁴ and has positioned his 'Church,' as we have argued, as a counter to 'modernism' and a possible alternative to it (due to its intellectual questioning) in the context of 'postmodernism.' We will now draw what appear to us to be the logical implications of Troeltsch's insights for the future course of the Roman Catholic Church and her ethical teachings.

To conclude this brief discussion of the Church and its becoming a 'Sect,' we will limit ourselves to its ambiguous relationship to the 'natural law.'⁵⁵ One caveat must be introduced at this point. We have argued that Pope John Paul II is calling for what we have termed a 'fundamentalist' reading of this law.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ It should be kept in mind that the terms 'natural' and even 'natural law' can be - indeed, have been - reincorporated into modern thought (for example, the liberal movement in Catholic theology), and thus our observation, following Troeltsch, that there is a 'relative' reading of the 'natural law' (favoured by the 'Church') and an 'absolute' (favoured by the 'Sect') gives an historical and social orientation to our insistence that Pope John Paul II is putting forth a 'fundamentalist' understanding of 'natural law.'

⁵⁵ A separate study would be necessary to assess the effects this change would have on Catholic spirituality.

⁵⁶ By taking this 'fundamentalist' approach to the 'natural law' the present pope is missing the opportunity to truly accommodate to the world. For example, the teaching on sexuality (which was salutary in the Greco-Roman world but is, obviously, at odds with society's feelings on the matter, at least in the West), if reinterpreted along the lines suggested by many theologians,

In that light the present pope is, in a sense, not seeing the 'law of Christ' and the 'natural law' (understood in the liberal sense) as the same thing - in other words he is admitting that his 'Church' is a 'Sect' and possibly adopting an attitude that Troeltsch sees as one in which "the sects swept away the idea of a relative (liberal) Natural Law altogether, substituting for it the idea of the absolute (fundamentalist) Natural Law which is regarded as identical with the Divine Law of the Bible" (Ibid., p. 345). If the Pope is indeed engaged in this metamorphosis, the discussion is ended. Yet, given Troeltsch's notion that "since they [Sects] have no desire to control and incorporate these forms of social life [the secular life of the world]; on the contrary, they tend to avoid them; their aim is usually either to tolerate their presence . . . or even to replace them," (Ibid., p. 331) then the Pope's call for a new culture could be seen in this light. Whatever the 'truth' may be in this case, a strategy to save the Roman Catholic Church and her ethics as a 'Church' in the Troeltschian sense seems to be opposed by the very fabric of history itself; and whether she

would go far in reinserting the Church into the mainstream and in making her a force in culture once again. Yet in the light of EVANGELIUM VITAE this would seem to be the exact opposite of the Pope's intentions. Viewed from a traditional point of view, the Pope is going for all or nothing. (An attitude of the 'Sect' to the world rather than that of the 'Church,'; Ibid., pp. 332 ff.) However, the point of the postmodern position would seem to be that there is neither all nor nothing but rather, as Jacques Derrida expresses it, only DIFFERENCE. A situation that would reduce all ideological influences (except that of the State, understood in the terms we have elucidated above) to the level of 'Sect,' leaving the State a secular 'Church'. This, it is evident, would require a redefining of society and the 'natural law' - but the postmodern intellectual project seems to have done just that.

wishes it or not, the Church must bow, as we all must, to the power and thus the Truth (in concrete practical terms) of the 'plurality' which negates the 'Truth' in favour of 'truths' based upon tolerance of difference."⁵⁷ (One could differentiate here between two levels of truth, social and the private, and note that Foucault is talking about the social realm and its function while John Paul is concerned with the private or individual commitment and its consequent world view and lifestyle. Even though both influence each other, the former grounds the latter and guarantees, as we have argued, both its existence and social utility, which quite evidently limits it and its power.) What effect this fact will have on the ethics of the Catholic Church remains to be seen."⁵⁸ It seems that even though the Church holds onto the 'natural law' she is fast becoming, first, a 'fundamentalist' interpreter of this 'natural law' and, secondly, by adopting this stance (which, in a sense, changes the exact meaning of 'natural' in reference to

⁵⁷ We have already noted the dual tendency in this conception towards either a 'utilitarian' or 'Nietzschean' moral attitude in terms of the ground of decisions. The Catholic moral system also offers a very 'attractive alternative once its 'Sect' status is accepted.

⁵⁸ A situation of 'absolute' opposition between the two is possible, and this gives rise to the possibility of renewed 'persecution'. Without overdramatizing the point, the activities of those opposing HLI in Montreal recently indicate the thinkability of such a possibility.

See the following:

Montreal Gazette, 15 April 1995, pp. A1-A10.

New Catholic Times, 22 April 1995.

Montreal Catholic Times May 1995, p. 3.

law)" she is taking herself out of the mainstream of historical development. So it is that the she formerly had with the world and which allowed her power in that world is becoming the very thing (due to the pressure on her to change her notion of the 'natural law' and become a part of the 'plurality')⁶⁰ that is separating her from the mainstream and changing her status from a 'Church' to a 'Sect'. This is an interesting reversal in that historically 'Sects' have normally lost their status by becoming 'Churches' (something that happened to the Catholic Church from at least the time of Constantine) – unlike the present case, where the Catholic Church (it would seem) is in the process of becoming a 'Sect.'

The future of the Catholic Church's power in the context of postmodernity

What of the future power of this 'Church/Sect'? In terms of moral power, the present doctrine of the Church is very positive in its affirmation of life. Despite her rather harsh views on sexuality, the Catholic Church does reenforce, with an emphasis that is lacking in other contemporary doctrines, the value of children and

⁵⁹. We have already noted this 'change' in our citing of Troeltsch's thoughts in this matter. The debate we saw in Chapter Two regarding nature and morality in regard to the understanding of these terms by the 'People of God' (especially, in relation to sexual ethics and reproductive practice) constitutes another area of discourse concerning the notion of 'the changing 'nature' of 'nature'.

⁶⁰ It goes without saying that many 'postmodern' thinkers speak of what is 'natural' in a sense that gives rise to a notion of 'natural law'. This 'nature' is not an abstract substance but a much more amorphous and empirical type of entity. The conservation of species is 'natural' in this sense. The notion also emerges in legal discussions, but again, 'natural' is much closer to 'nurture' than 'substance'.

the dangers of racism and class discrimination in programmes of population control that uncritically accept such actions as unmitigated goods." By cautioning against unbridled sexual activity, the Church underlines the heartlessness of selfish relationships and the harm of uncommitted sexual intercourse. By opposing abortion and other forms of arbitrary intervention in the normal course of human life (through capital punishment and euthanasia) she of course reaffirms the sanctity and seriousness of life and the right to it. Her respect for nature (both in its metaphysical and material manifestations) and its innate value (that is, the value of being as well as doing) aligns her with those contemporary movements dedicated to the preservation of the planet as a place of health and happiness for all forms of life (both human and nonhuman). However, the Church, by her seeming move to an increasingly 'fundamentalist' stance does run the danger of developing a fanatical commitment to the literal meaning of her teaching, and thereby runs the risk of ignoring truly human and, in consequence, Christian needs.

If the above analysis is valid, we may conclude by noting that

⁶¹ Recent popes, including John Paul II, have repeatedly warned against what they call a 'contraceptive mentality' - That is, a feeling that children are a burden to be avoided and that reproduction is not a 'necessary' but an 'optional' requirement in the sexual life that is sanctioned by marriage. Linked to this notion is the idea that sexual activity, even in marriage, should be governed by a degree of chastity and restraint. Whatever one may think of artificial contraception and the 'necessity' of a successful and full sex life, the pontiffs do seem, in the present situation and especially with regard to children, to be making a much needed and valid point. On the negative side is the tendency of the Magisterium to ally itself uncritically with movements that appear to agree with their policy on reproductive activity.

the Church will survive either as a full-fledged 'Church' (a possibility that becomes increasingly remote as John Paul unfolds his programme for the Church) or as a 'Sect,' a status she seems in many respects to have already acquired. In whatever form she survives, this survival is guaranteed by the very 'plurality' which she opposes and which is threatening to redefine her as a minority within this same 'pluralism.' The fact still remains that as ante(i)modern she remains a viable option in the postmodern situation of plurality and one that can contribute positively, if only through rigorous censure and heroic example, to the moral tone of that situation.

APPENDIX ONE

To comment further on this problem of a 'criterion' in ethical decisions, we may move from what may loosely be called the 'theoretical/abstract' level to what we will term the 'historico/pragmatic,'¹ and at this level the question of criterion becomes one, as we have noted, of the experiencing of injustice. Now as long as the conditions of opposition are defined within this context, then of course there can be little debate about 'morality' since the 'victims,' by their very definition, are wronged and their reaction and rejection of the status quo is tautologously justified. However, in the case of the plurality we now find ourselves in, certain 'victims' (for example, Prochoicers) have lost their minority victim status and have become the status quo. The events in Montreal in relation to the HLI convention show that this status of power has now expanded beyond the perimeters of 'protection' and has, itself, become 'oppressive.' Such a situation is becoming more and more conceivable for many minorities, at least in North America, and this condition, it would seem, re-poses the traditional moral question of 'criterion.' Obviously, to preserve the 'plurality' it will be necessary to

¹ By this term we mean to indicate that the ethical question under discussion has, so far, expressed itself as a practical problem in a specific historical period of a minority being oppressed by a majority whose moral guilt was obvious: the 'civil rights' struggle of the 1960s in the United States as led by Martin Luther King, Jr., for example. In short, the question of moral 'right' and 'wrong' has come from the situation and confirmed actual experience of 'oppression' as 'injustice.'

accept what Troeltsch has called the concept of 'polymorphous' truth, and this, again, puts the Catholic Church, which to cite Troeltsch once more maintains its 'monomorphoric' notion of truth, in a position where opposition from the 'pluralist' seems unavoidable. Of course, only time will answer this question, but from the present vantage point it appears that the Church's choices are limited: either she will come to some accommodation with the plurality (by 'relativizing' her current notion of 'natural law') or she will be forced to conquer or be conquered by that plurality. To end this note with an appeal to tradition, the Church, while she holds to a 'monomorphous' conception of truth, has always upheld the 'right' of conscience, and it seems this position will be upheld (indeed has been upheld, as we have seen). In fact, to be perhaps oversensitive to the present situation, it would appear opposition would be initiated not by the Church but by the plurality whose liberality is not sufficient to accommodate the Church's claim to 'freedom of religion.'

CONCLUSION

If we have read our texts properly, then we may put forth the following conclusions concerning the social position of the Catholic Church in general and her moral position in particular vis-à-vis the modern and postmodern situations. First, it would seem that the Church is antimodern in both its political structure (the Pope as unquestioned authority figure) and its intellectual climate (accepting an ontology of substance). In relation to the postmodern situation, of course, the position of the Church is more ambivalent in that it rejects the modern scientific bias but does not accept the subjectivism that we have argued the postmodern intellectual seems to have embraced. However, the Roman Catholic Church has turned this subjective stance to its own advantage by demanding to be a part of the 'pluralism' that this subjectivism gives rise to. Thus the Church, while remaining 'ante' as well as 'anti' modern, has taken her place within the ranks of those institutions that make available an alternative to modernity and so may be called postmodern. The first of our conclusions is, consequently, that the Church has indeed made a nonjourney from 'ante(i)modernity to postmodernity' in terms of her intellectual climate. The status of her political structure has not been a concern in the present project outside of its authority in underpinning the intellectual position of the Church. So it is important to note the infallibility the Pope enjoys, but only as an intellectual strategy and not as a political one.

Our second conclusion concerns the social position of the Church. The Church in the Middle Ages in Europe enjoyed a preeminent rank in cultural and political matters as well as religious ones. As we have tried to show, especially in our second chapter, the Roman Catholic Church no longer occupies this position, and calling upon the categories of Ernst Troeltsch we have argued that what was once a 'Church' has now become a 'Sect'. This change in social status has been both a drawback (the influence of the Pope is no longer what it was) and a potential advantage (the Pope may now act in a much 'freer' way in terms of ethical matters which imply political overtones). That the drawback has become real seems indisputable. On the other hand, it is not so clear that the Pope has made use of his potential freedom from political control. For example, while his encyclical *EVANGELIUM VITAE* does call for what we have termed a 'maximalist' approach to preserving life, the Pope has still left the door open for capital punishment and has not condemned war outright.¹ All in all, it would seem proper then to agree with Troeltsch that the Church has, to a great extent, left the mainstream of social life and become a 'sect,' however much she hankers after her old political authority. Nevertheless, and notwithstanding whatever

¹ The long-awaited encyclical on war has not appeared as of this writing. This proposed letter which would provide a perfect opportunity for the Pope to take an 'uncompromising' political stand. On the negative side, it may be noted that the Vatican's overtures to 'fundamentalist groups' in the matter of population control indicate an active engagement in political matters rather than the reverse. Nevertheless, whatever the agenda Pope John Paul II may have in these matters, the fact remains that his 'power' has waned significantly.

possible political aspirations the Papacy may entertain, there can be no doubt that the Church's self-image regarding her moral stance has been altered and in such a way as to be true to Troeltsch's contention that a 'Sect' rejects moral compromises with the larger society, compromises that a 'Church' would accept. We will turn to this self-image as the last of our conclusions.

To stay within the paradigm that Troeltsch has elucidated, the Roman Catholic Church, now more properly called a 'Sect,' has not only theoretically lost its mainstream status but in keeping with this exit from the mainstream has also changed its attitude towards its moral teaching. We have argued that Catholic ethics is based on the 'natural law' and, further, that in the hands of John Paul II, a 'fundamentalist' or 'uncompromising with the world at large' interpretation of this 'natural law' has become mandatory for adherents of the Catholic Faith. And although there is a certain ambivalence in this matter, the present pontiff has advocated what we have called a 'maximalist' moral attitude - which accords neatly with what Troeltsch has seen as characteristic of 'Sects' as opposed to 'Churches'.

So we have it. An analysis of the Roman Catholic Church's teaching on ethics has shown that the opportunity to 'modernize' was rejected by Pope John Paul II and that the Church, in his pontificate, has entered the postmodern era as a true alternative to modernity and has remained, intellectually, unchanged by her exposure to this modernity. Further, she has entered the postmodern situation as a 'sect' dependent for her survival upon

the very subjectivism she opposes.

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