

Elements of the Integral Vision of Human Person In The Wednesday Catechesis of John Paul II

P. Paulus Tolo SVD

Soverdi Ruteng, Jl Pelita

Ruteng 86508, Flores

ABSTRACT

Integral vision of human person lies behind of all Church teachings. Pope John Paul II dedicated his life in building a philosophical base the integral vision of human person. His philosophical works heavily owe to Thomistic strands. This study describes the integral vision of human person proposed by John Paul II. The phenomenological method was used to describe actual human experiences and also the experiences of the human being as presented in Sacred Scripture. The findings revealed that some elements of the integral vision of human person are presented to highlight the contribution of John Paul II in unending search for a sound perception of the human person. Looking at the integral vision of human person as such serves modern people in responding to massive propagation of objectivized vision of human person.

Keywords: Theological anthropology, modernism, phenomenology, person, subjectivism, objectivism, realism, Thomism, integral vision, communion of person, image of God.

The Author: Fr. Paulus Tolo, SVD is a religious priest of Divine Word Missionaries. He obtained his doctorate in Moral Theology from Accademia Alfonsiana in Rome, Italy, in 2017. Presently, he teaches at STIPAS St. Sirilus, Ruteng – an institute for pastoral and catechetical studies.

INTRODUCTION

Pope John Paul II was well known as a pastoral pope for modern times. His numerous pastoral visits gave witness to such a qualification. One important issue Pope John Paul II emphasized in his pontificate is a Catholic vision of the human person. His main concern was to establish a robust theological anthropology in the service of ethics. In his opinion ethics cannot be separated from anthropology. That is why he proposed a vision of the human person based on revelation and Catholic doctrine.

John Paul II's vision of the human person can be traced in his Wednesday Catechesis. This article will present a summary of John Paul II's argument in the Wednesday Catechesis and his integral vision of the human person. In the first place, a preliminary note will be presented to have a short overview of John Paul II's Wednesday Catechesis. It moves on, then, to explore the basic assumptions he had in the Catechesis. Based on these facts, an integral vision of human beings as proposed by the Pope can be seen.

PRELIMINARY NOTES

John Paul II chose the Wednesday Catechesis as a tool to diffuse his vision of the human person which was, in his opinion, of great importance for people today.¹ As a catechesis, it has a particular literary genre with a high level of exposition. Such a quality stems from the use of a phenomenological description which concentrates on human experience. Such a description tries, as far as possible, to approach the object in question to gain a more complete understanding of it.² Consequently, it should be approached with the appropriate method.

As a theological vision, then, the starting point of the Catechesis is revelation, that is, the words of Christ. Christ is seen as the ultimate and perfect revelation of God to human beings. The centrality of Christ in the Catechesis is evident because the reference to crucial topics is based on the words of Christ.³ The revelation of God in Christ sheds light on all aspects of faith, which helps the believer to understand and to adhere to the doctrine of faith. So it touches on the analogy of faith in the sense of explaining the doctrine of faith from various aspects where Christ is the centre. A particular verse of the words of Christ is analyzed in detail to have a comprehensive understanding of the concept in question. The word of Christ, furthermore, is confronted with the experience of the human being.⁴ Experience in John Paul II's view has a particular meaning since it is understood in the context of the philosophy of phenomenology. The human experience, in his opinion, is what one is conscious of (both inside oneself and something outside oneself: the world, action, object).⁵ The basic and fundamental experience the human being has is the experience of performing an action in which one reveals oneself. The present experience of the human being is used to highlight the experience of the past and also future generations. The actual experience, in turn, opens to a more profound experience. The confrontation between revelation and human experience plays an important role in developing his argument in the Catechesis.

The phenomenological method was used to describe actual human experiences and also the experiences of the human being as presented in Sacred Scripture.

BASIC ASSUMPTION OF THE CATECHESIS

In the first part of the Wednesday Catechesis 1979-1984 the words of Christ were taken as its point of departure to explore the vision of the human being. The basic idea of the vision of the human being in John Paul II's mind is that the human being is a person which is expressed in the different modes of being as man and woman. The concept of person presupposed in his Catechesis is what he had already elaborated in his philosophical work when he was a bishop and a cardinal.⁶ His philosophical conception of the person was rooted on the Aristotelian and Thomistic tradition, although he offered some new insights from phenomenological philosophy.⁷ Since the Catechesis 1979-1984 is a theological work, his concept of person is explained from the point of view of Christian revelation and tradition.

Moreover, the Catechesis has a clear goal, namely, to give a strong and reasonable foundation for the vocations of marriage and celibacy. Explaining the integral vision reiterated by *Humanae Vitae*, the Catechesis concentrates on the datum of the human being as male and female (gender difference). Thus, being male or female is a given fact which inherits *in se* a particular destiny and finality. This is a basic and fundamental experience of the human being. As reflected in the new and modern trends in biblical hermeneutics, every formula of revelation in Scripture has a particular meaning, sense, and significance which should be discovered or rediscovered according to new situations.⁸ It is precisely here that John Paul II, in perfect accord with the mind of Pope John XXIII, wanted to reformulate the perennial truth of the Christian vision of humanity for the modern mentality. In his mind, the Christian vision of humanity has something to offer to modern people in search of the meaning of existence and of being a person with one's sexual difference.

In his philosophical works John Paul II tried to make a synthesis of two main philosophical visions of the human person at work in the modern world: objectivization and subjectivization of the human being. The synthesis he proposed is the concept of person which has a slight difference in meaning in respect to that of the medieval concept. He develops the concept of the human being by stressing the subjective dimension which is, according to him, lacking in the

medieval concept of the person. So, the philosophical vision of the person undergirds his analysis of Christ's words.⁹

In line with the anthropological insight of *Gaudium et Spes*, John Paul II urged that Christ is the ultimate revelation regarding the human being. To comprehend perfectly who the human being is, one must turn to Christ.¹⁰ Consequently, the word of Christ regarding the condition of the human being is of great importance for an adequate reflection on the mystery of the human being. The centrality of Christ in the Catechesis is evident from the theological point of view because it follows the recall of Vatican II to put Christ as the centre of theological reflections. It can be said that his Catechesis is Christological. The use of Christ's words as point of departure for his reflection on the human being is clearly seen from the structure of the Catechesis.

INTEGRAL VISION OF HUMANITY

To grasp the integral vision proposed by John Paul II, we should recall his inquiry in his philosophical reflections on the human person. The context in which John Paul II lived was characterized by communism and war. In such a situation the life of human person is at risk of annihilation and humiliation. Moreover, through numerous modes of intellectual endeavor John Paul II tried to illumine his people about the dignity of human person. He chose philosophical and theatrical works to reach that goal.¹¹ Suffice here to affirm that an integral vision of the human person is needed to safeguard from deformation the human being as *humanum integrum*.

In this regard, it is important to keep in mind that an integral vision can be viewed from two aspects: theological and philosophical. Since John Paul's integral vision was expressed in his Wednesday Catechesis 1979-1984, his vision obviously obtains a theological character.¹² Saying this does not mean that his theological vision of the human person has no philosophical features. On the contrary, his theological vision is greatly influenced by his philosophical reflections.¹³

Taking into account this fact, the two aspects proposed by the Pope will be presented in this section. As John Paul II elaborated his philosophical vision of the human person before he was elected Pope, then, it is justified that this aspect of his vision be presented first. By so doing, two advantages are obtained: his theological vision of the human person will be comprehended more easily, and it becomes clear that his theological vision is a completion of his philosophical reflection. The way the Pope pursues the Catechesis is strongly influenced by philosophical terms so that one gets the impression that he is philosophically interpreting revelation.¹⁴ This is precisely a particularity of John Paul's Catechesis. Yet his theological vision of humanity elaborated in the Wednesday Catechesis 1979-1984 is his original reflection.

Philosophical Dimension

As previously mentioned, his philosophical vision had been elaborated by him during his service as a professor of ethics. His main issue was to develop an ethic which will be more person oriented. Since at that time the vision of the human person that prevailed was characterized by fragmentation, he proposed an integral vision based on the concept of person. In his opinion, the concept of person can be considered as a synthesis because it can be approached either metaphysically or phenomenologically.¹⁵

Based on his evaluation of the contemporary situation, he found in Thomas Aquinas and Aristotle a basic and fundamental concept of the person which could be proposed to the modern world. Yet in his opinion, the concept of person as commonly understood – the definition of Aristotle and Boethius – was insufficient. There is a missing dimension which did

not get sufficient elaboration. The missing dimension John Paul means is the subjective dimension of the person. He affirmed that the subjective dimension of the person he proposed is different from subjectivism and idealism. To achieve his goal, he saw that the new method of doing philosophy, that is, by phenomenology, could be a helpful tool to make evident the subjective dimension of the person. At the same time the philosophical vision of the human person in this phenomenological approach can be accepted by modern people.¹⁶

To present the philosophical vision of the human person in the philosophical work of John Paul II, I followed the presentation of Jameson Taylor¹⁷ where he based his presentation on a mature philosophical work of John Paul II: *The Acting Person*. Firmly rooted on the Aristotelian and Thomistic and Scholastic tradition, John Paul accepts the definition of person suggested by Aristotle and Boethius, that is, "*homo est animale rationale*" (Aristotle), "*persona est rationalis naturae individuae substantia*" (Boethius). In the Pope's view the full definition of person formulated by Boethius is broader than the concept of individual because individual and rational nature are expressions of a specific completeness of the concept of person. That is why Taylor suggested that the interpretation of John Paul is "maximalist" in regard to Boethius' definition of the term person, in the sense, that substance, rationality and nature are parts of something deeper, that is, a unity which includes subjectivity, consciousness and personal love.

In the light of Scheler's description of the person from a phenomenological point of view, John Paul II presents his evaluation of Boethius' concept of the person as inadequate. From Scheler, he owes the concept of the person as a concrete and essential unity of being of acts of different essences. In other words, the person is the foundation of all essentially different acts. Saying this, the person – in Scheler's opinion – is not a substance or a rational being. John Paul II does not fully follow such a concept of the person which Scheler holds. His main interest is the role of the person as a being, which is the basis of all acts. Based on the concept that the person is essentially an actor who undertakes diverse acts, John Paul turns to the concept of person in Thomas that every individual person must assume a body. So, the person who assumes a body as the principle of individuality is the actor of all acts. Furthermore, John Paul II focuses more closely on the phenomenon of action in which the person is evidently revealed as the actor and the efficient cause of an action. In the action the person as a substance, subject and agent is clearly seen and experienced. Here another term comes to the fore, namely, experience. In his analysis of the phenomenon of experience, John Paul affirms that the person recognizes his existence as both a subject and a *suppositum* in the human experience.

However, he was dissatisfied with the traditional explanation of the person because its vision focused on the objectivity of the agent or actor. In the line of this vision, the person understands himself as a rational being and an object among objects in the world or, more precisely, the person considers himself as 'something'. To say this means that the subjective dimension was absent in their reflections on the human person which, according to John Paul, is one of the essential aspects of a human being as a person. To fill the missing aspect left by the traditional concept of the person, reflection on the person should turn to the reality of personhood, that is, subjectivity. Phenomenology provides such an aspect because in a phenomenological description of the human experience, the person experiences himself not only as a member of a species (human being, *homo*) but also as a unique and unrepeatable being. Moreover, John Paul insists that only the person perceives his subjectivisms. This is possible because there are two essential elements which constitute personhood or one's subjecthood, that is, consciousness and intellect. Thanks to these elements, the person perceives his subjectiveness from three perspectives: as a being/subject of existence (metaphysical domain), a subject as object of knowledge (epistemological domain), a subject of experience (experiential domain). In other words, a person understands his personhood

through intellect (objective cognition) and experiences his personhood through consciousness (reflexive consciousness).¹⁸ So, it can be seen that the concept of person itself already covers or unites the two poles which philosophical reflections deal with in the human being. That is why, after presenting a description of the role of consciousness and intellect in the person, Taylor says:

*Thus we begin to see more fully the implications of man's dual possession of intellect and consciousness. [...] While both of these worlds possess their own integrity, their mutual reference helps establish man's unity as a person. Man's outer and inner worlds combine to form the one world of the person. Accordingly, any definition of the person must account for man's outer and inner dimensions as revealed by his objective and subjective activities.*¹⁹

The pivotal role of the concept of person in the philosophy of John Paul II leads him to be counted as a personalist philosopher in the Catholic tradition. His personalist vision of the human person is more evident in his successive reflections, especially in his Wednesday Catechesis 1979-1984. The integration of the objective and subjective dimensions in the vision of the human person, as far as presented up this point, met the need for a philosophical foundation of such a vision. This integral vision of the human person from the philosophical point of view helps John Paul to move on to theological reflection.

Theological Dimension

We can now present a summary of the integral vision of the human person proposed by John Paul II in the Wednesday Catechesis. He had already worked out a philosophical vision of the human person which is basically a synthesis of the Aristotelian, Thomistic and Scholastic tradition and the phenomenological tradition on the question of the person. Indeed, in the Wednesday Catechesis, he tried to apply his philosophical vision of the human person in theology. As far as the object of theology is concerned, the Catechesis focused on revelation (the word of Christ and Holy Scripture) and tradition. In this context, it is really a theological work.²⁰

John Paul II clearly said that his theology of the body (anthropological theology) aimed to establish a sound foundation for ethics and the sacrament of marriage and an explanation of the encyclical *Humanae Vitae*.²¹ The sound foundation, he intends, is an anthropology informed by revelation. The basic reason for such an endeavor is the questions put by people of every generation regarding marriage and all its consequences, such as in ethics (cf. *Humanae Vitae*). In his view, the foundation of a sound anthropology or, in his own term, "an adequate anthropology," which will contribute to a sound vision of marriage, can be found in the deposit of revelation, that is, the word of Christ.²² Christ's words, which are considered to be an answer to the perennial questions posed by people of every generation, are seen in his recall to the "beginning". This recall to the "beginning" leads John Paul II to search for elements or, as he put it, for the "essentially human experience," which refers to the basic characteristic of a human being.²³ Here John Paul's main interest is the basic human experience through which elements of the vision of the human person can be identified. The human experience which Genesis narrates is that of Adam and Eve. Focusing on their human experiences as reported by Genesis is the only way to grasp the essence or nature of a human being from the viewpoint of revelation. The human experiences of Adam and Eve constitute human experiences in general which can be applied to each human being in all ages. So the role of the human experience of Adam and Eve is of great importance in establishing his vision of the human person.²⁴

In fact John Paul II considers their experience as a corner-stone to obtain a complete understanding or a complete vision of the human being. By so doing, he wants to elucidate this

issue in the context of marriage. Referring to the words of Christ regarding the existence of humans as male and female willed by God, the Creator, John Paul concentrates his reflection on the human body as a sexual body of a male or a female. This basic leads John Paul to look for the meaning of the human body in the structure of the personal subject. The fundamental idea of the human body as an expression of the human person opens up to a further reflection on the meaning of the body either in the philosophical or theological sphere. Regarding the human body as an object of theological reflection, its fundamental basis is found in the Incarnation of Christ, the Word of God.

The basic idea which undergirds John Paul II's reflections on the human experiences in the texts of Genesis 1-4 is that the body expresses the person. Consequently, he focuses on some texts which refer directly to those experiences in order to capture some characteristics of the human being as person. In this context, John Paul pays much attention to the description offered by the Yahwist tradition²⁵ which, according to him, presents rich metaphysical elements of the human being, that is, personhood/subjectivity. The personhood of the human being (its subjectivity) is clearly indicated through some different stages. Firstly, the human being is a covenant partner with God. Secondly, the human being is called to work. Thirdly, faced with a commandment, the human being manifests his free will, self-determination and choice. Fourthly, the phenomenon of solitude leads the first human being to self-knowledge where the role of the body is of great importance. Fifthly, the phenomenon of the human body leads to a communion of persons (*communio personarum*). Moreover, he also touches on the Priestly and Elohist tradition which have a more metaphysical vision of humanity.²⁶ By doing so, John Paul shows clearly that his philosophical vision of the human person is at work in his approach to revelation.²⁷ Moreover, he introduces a new hermeneutic in comprehending creation (man, woman and earth and creatures) which he calls the hermeneutic of gift.²⁸ This new hermeneutic is applied more clearly in his endeavor to discover the meaning of the difference of the sexual body as male and female. The human body as male and female in its personal structure paves the way to reach its profound meaning which John Paul calls "a gift" to one another. Consequently, the fundamental meaning of the human body as gift plays an important role in the theological vision of the human person and his vocation to marriage, celibacy, and sanctity in the present and future world/eternal life.

In short, the integral vision of the human person from the theological point of view as proposed by John Paul is based on his philosophical vision of the human being as a person with its subjective, objective and experiential dimensions. In other words, he sees his philosophical vision of the human being as confirmed by the deposit of revelation in the first chapters of Genesis.

Revelation also highlights that the human being as a person is created in the image of God. The term "image of God" (*imago Dei*), which is fundamental in theological anthropology, gets a particular meaning in John Paul II's reflections. Its original meaning refers to every individual person (male or female) as being an image of God. John Paul widens the original meaning of the term to embrace the communion of persons as being image of God.²⁹ The argument he uses to demonstrate this is that the term "image of God" is commonly applied to every human being. He insists that every human being, thanks to its mode of being as male and female, is called to be a gift to one another, which is a basis for the communion of persons. Now, if being male and female reflects being an image of God, then the communion of persons, formed by two or more persons, is also an image of God. This new dimension of the meaning of "image of God" is of great importance for subsequent theological reflection. If the fundamental characteristic of the human being manifested in the body is called to be a gift to the other, then in the communion of persons the leitmotif of such a communion is a total self-giving.³⁰

Another point to be added is that his integral vision is based on the historical condition of the human person. The centrality of the historical condition is one of the pillars in his reflections. The focus of his reflection on the human person is the concrete person in whom are interwoven three dimensions: the past, the present and the future realms. In this regard, the role of the present or historical human experience cannot be neglected. Looking closely at the present situation of the human being, enlightened by revelation, John Paul highlights the origin of the present situation and the future condition of human beings. To comprehend the human condition in the present time, it is necessary to look back to the situation of the human person in the original condition.³¹ The reason is that, what the present condition looks like is rooted in what has happened in the condition at the beginning. What the human being has in his experiences of the present condition is a kind of missing or lack of what was in the beginning. John Paul singles out the human experience of sin and concupiscence which dwell in the heart of the human being. Precisely here is the core of ethics which opens up to a possibility of redemption.³² Consequently, the original condition of heart in the beginning, which was pure, is in contrast to the present condition which is overwhelmed by concupiscence and sins. So the present condition of the human heart is in need of redemption. The redemption has taken place through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, but its culmination will be reached at the end of time. The tension between what is already done and what will be completed characterizes the present condition of human beings. So it is clear that the present condition of human beings mirrors the condition of the beginning and at the same time inclines to the future condition. In other words, in a concrete human being there are three dimensions at work: past, present and future.

SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF AN INTEGRAL VISION OF THE HUMAN PERSON

The integral vision proposed by John Paul II is basically derived from his philosophical method in dealing with the human being. The main interest of Karol Wojtyła's philosophy had been built on an ethics as a science. In the progress of his endeavor he could not avoid touching also on anthropology. He claims that there is no ethics without anthropology and vice versa. Consequently, to establish an acceptable ethics, a robust anthropology should be construed. Based on the prevailing philosophical mainstream at that time, he proposed a new approach to doing philosophy about the human person, which is anchored in Thomas Aquinas, that is, using a phenomenological method. Although these two strands are completely different, Karol Wojtyła tried to use both of them in a new and original way. His philosophical project was to make an investigation of humans acting, in action. In his view, through action, human beings can be more adequately comprehended. An integral vision of human beings can be crystallized in the term 'person'.³³ This term person has a particular content in John Paul II's vision since it gains a wider meaning in respect to the traditional meaning based on Aristotle and Boethius. From the description made so far some characteristics of the term person can be singled out as follows.

Subjectivity-Objective of the Person

The existence of a subject in philosophical reflection on the human person as acting is evident. In the course of the philosophical tradition, a human being as actor of his own action has been meditated on in detail. Such reflection resulted in the recognition that the human being objectively is the actor of one's action. Its description is strongly characterized by objective data, in the sense that the main object of investigation is the one who performs such an action. There was little attention to the internal dimension of the actor who performs the action. John Paul II in his elaboration of his philosophical reflection on action stressed the importance of investigating what really happens in the internal dimension of the actor. Describing something that happens in the inner dimension of the actor of an action can be made thanks to the phenomenological method. Such a description provides a lot of evidence that the actor has

various experiences in performing an action. The description of what happens in the internal dynamic structure of the subject is very evident in the Catechesis, especially on Adam and Eve. The term subject in John Paul II's view has two meanings, namely, the actor of an action and the subject of the effect of the action performed. In other words, the person who performs an action is the same person who suffers or experiences the effect of that action.

The subjectivity of the actor can be recognized thanks to the consciousness of the subject. Consciousness as a capacity of a human being enables the actor of an action to acknowledge that the action one performs derives from one's will and choice. Accordingly, that action is under one's control and possession. From this very fact, the subject or actor of an action is responsible for the effects of such an action.

Unity of body and soul

Following the tradition of the Christian vision of a human being as a unity of body and spirit/soul, John Paul II enlarges its meaning which is rooted in the biblical vision of human beings. The unity of body and spirit is accentuated in order to tackle the one-sided view of human beings proposed by modernity. The human being cannot be considered merely in the category of the world.³⁴ Body and spirit as a union safeguard the dignity of the human being since the *compositum humanum* (body and spirit) guarantees the individuality of the human being. Enlightened by revelation, *compositum humanum* (body and spirit/soul) is an image of God (*imago Dei*). The concept of *imago Dei* in John Paul II's vision of the human being gets a new character. He stresses that the concept of *imago Dei* consists not only in the spiritual dimension but also in the corporal dimension.³⁵ This affirmation stems from the fundamental revelation of the Incarnation. This strong accentuation on the unity of body and spirit as image of God is to tackle the one-sided concept of image of God which touches only on the spiritual dimension of the human being.

Relation Man-Woman: the reciprocal gift

In John Paul II's view, man and woman have the same dignity as persons. Sexual difference is seen as a difference of mode of being.³⁶ Being male or being female is good in itself. The good of an entity is that it *is* (being). Consequently, the difference of the sexual being of persons (as male and female) is good.³⁷ So, each one depends on one another which paves the way to a particular relation. Then the relation that exists between them is a personal relationship. In the Catechesis, the relation of man and woman is considered fundamental for each since the existence of the other completes his or her self-comprehension.³⁸ The importance of the presence of the other sexual being is clearly described in the Catechesis to elucidate a proper relation that exists between man and woman. Each of them considers himself or herself as a gift to the other. Such a conception is derived from the story of creation. Using the hermeneutic of gift, John Paul II considers creation as a pure gift of God. The creation of man and woman is also seen in the same hermeneutic. Particular to the relation of man and woman, which is manifested through the body, John Paul suggests the term 'spousal meaning' or nuptial significance of the body.

RELEVANCE OF INTEGRAL VISION OF HUMAN PERSON

As the integral vision of Man is constructed in the context of theological discussion of theological anthropology which should offer something particular. The theological feature of his integral vision of Man stems from the use of revelation in setting forth his vision of the theology of the body. The particularity of the Catechesis on the theology of the body, in my judgment, is the way John Paul II interpreted revelation, that is, Christ, the fullest and complete revelation of God. Christ is a master, teacher for humans of all epochs and places on how to be a human person.

The words of Christ are points of departure for the Pope's assertions. In interpreting these words, he uses a phenomenological method with the optic of Thomistic vision. Consequently, the theology of the body is Christocentric in nature.

Although the integral vision of Man presented in the theology of the body is limited to the question of marriage and celibacy, it has a vast range of impacts. What is insightful in the integral vision of Man can be traced from some key points.

First of all is its method. John Paul was deeply influenced by Thomas Aquinas in his basic intellectual formation in Poland and Rome. In his further intellectual formation he was getting in touch with and influenced by the phenomenology movement. These two main philosophical strands were heavily imprinted in his method of academic work as a professor of ethics. He made a synthesis of the metaphysics of Thomas Aquinas and the phenomenology of Scheler. This synthesis is clearly seen in his interpretation of revelation which is the source of his theological anthropology. What is particular in his method is strongly connected with the object of the synthesis, that is, the essential human experience. Human experiences in revelation are manifested through some subjects where the scriptural texts are an object of interpretation or meditation or reflection. It needs a special method to deal with such experiences. The suitable method for such experience is reductive-induction. This approach was at work in his main philosophical work *The Acting Person*. In approaching revelation in the Catechesis, he still uses the same method. Accordingly, his interpretation of scriptural texts is replete with philosophical terminology.

The approach of John Paul took in dealing with sacred texts is likely very similar to that of some of the great patristic writers, such as Augustine, John Chrysostom, Cyprian, etc. They would meditate on a particular text within a holistic frame to draw out the meaning of the text in question. Such an approach makes use of all possible sources, especially philosophy and other scientific disciplines. In the case of John Paul II, his meditation or analysis is characterized by the phenomenology movement which concentrates on human experience. Human experience would be analyzed as it was lived through by a person as subject and another as subject. Using the reduction method, these experiences would be explored in detail to discover the essence of that experience. In John Paul II's view experience is understood as an expression of the person since the subject is really involved in the experience through human acts. In performing an act, the subject (the person) expresses himself. This particular way of meditating on sacred texts (revelation) furnishes an immense insight and a deep knowledge of the subject in question. There is no doubt that this method or approach is rooted on the tradition and at the same time opens widely to future endeavors in theological reflection on revelation. It is more realistic in the sense that it touches on what the human person really lives and experiences.

Secondly, some points for future inquiry. The theology of the body or theological anthropology as proposed by John Paul II inspires further investigation in the theological sphere. There are many topics which need to be dealt with in depth. It also inspires to take a more practical or pastoral involvement in questions of human dignity. One important issue John Paul II promoted in his Catechesis is the concept of image of God, which embraces also the bodily dimension of the person. The term "body" in the Catechesis is a translation of the Italian word "corpo". In theological discussion, this term refers to a human being as a whole. The bodily dimension of the person obtains a lot of reflection in theological discourse (and also other disciplines).³⁹ It does not touch merely on dogmatic theology but also other branches of theology. Emphasis on the bodily dimension of the person paves the way for various different

approaches in dealing with some fundamental matters in theology, such as the theology of sacraments, especially the sacrament of matrimony/marriage. It also touches on the place of the body in sexual ethics and bioethics.

CONCLUSION

The integral vision of the human person proposed by John Paul has a solid biblical foundation and is consistent with the tradition of the Catholic Church. The Pope wants to present the integral vision of the human person for modern people through contemporary mainstream philosophical language. He centers his argument on a solid metaphysics of Thomas Aquinas and speaks to modern people through phenomenological language. Since the style and the content of his integral vision in the Catechesis is dense due to phenomenological terms and metaphysical concepts, then, it can be taken as an implementation of philosophical study into the theology of the human person or theological anthropology. Some have criticized it as being incomplete and not always clear as a systematic handling of such a topic. Yet this does not take away its value as a genuine and particular contribution in the ongoing search for a more complete and fruitful integral vision the human person.

The description of his integral vision proposed by the Pope justifies him to be considered as a Catholic personalist. Moreover, personalism proposed by Catholic thinkers has much to contribute to a sound vision of human person suitable for modern people. That is why Pope John Paul II's vision of human person is widely appreciated by modern thinkers as one of the strongest defenders of integrated human person.

References:

¹ Cfr. Michael Waldstein, "Introduction", in John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them. A Theology of the Body*, trans. Michael Waldstein (Boston (MA): Pauline Books & Media, 2006), 7. Waldstein's study reveals that the original text of the Catechesis was in Polish and was ready to be published. Moreover, Wojtyla himself said – in a conference – that his mature philosophical study (*The Acting Person*) was not known by most of the audience. [Cfr. Karol Wojtyla, "Person and Community", in A.W. Woznicki, ed., *Person & Community: Selected Essays*, trans. Theres Sandok (New York: Peter Lang, 1993), 197]. If so, John Paul II seems aware that his intellectual works in Polish reached only a limited number of people. Accordingly, as Pope he wished that his work – in this case the theology of the body – should reach a wider audience. He chose the General Audience as a medium to gain his goal.

² Cfr. Jaroslaw Kupczak, *Gift and Communion. John Paul II's Theology of the Body* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2014).

³ Cfr. William S. Kurz, "The Scriptural Foundation of The Theology of the Body", in John Gavin S.J., ed., John Michel McDermott S.J., ed., and Avery Robert Dulles, *Pope John Paul II on the Body : Human, Eucharistic, Ecclesial : Festschrift Avery Cardinal Dulles, S.J.* (Philadelphia (PA): Saint Joseph's University Press, 2007), 27–30; Charles E. Curran, *The Moral Theology of Pope John Paul II*, Moral Traditions Series (London: T & T Clark, 2006), 47. Kurz points out that John Paul's Catechesis is similar to the method used in the patristic era in interpreting scriptural texts where Christ is the centre. Curran has also the same impression that John Paul in his Catechesis followed the patristic approach in meditating on scriptural texts.

⁴ Cfr. William S. Kurz, "The Scriptural Foundation of The Theology of the Body", in Gavin, McDermott, and Dulles, *Pope John Paul II on the Body : Human, Eucharistic, Ecclesial : Festschrift Avery Cardinal Dulles, S.J.*, 24–25.

⁵ Cfr. Lino Ciccone, "Per Una Corretta Comprensione Della Catechesis Di Giovanni Paolo II Nelle Udienze Generali Del Mercoledì," *Divus Thomas* 83 (1980): 356–80.

⁶ This affirmation derives from the fact that Karol Wojtyla had elaborated a philosophical study on the human being which appeared in *The Acting Person*. According to some critics, Karol Wojtyla intended to develop a theological vision of the human being. Taylor favors this opinion as can be seen in his article "Beyond Nature: Karol Wojtyla's Development of the Traditional Definition of Personhood," *The Review of Metaphysics* 63, no. 2 (2009): 415–54 (415).

⁷ Cfr. Ibid.

⁸ William S. Kurz, "The Scriptural Foundation of The Theology of the Body", in Gavin, McDermott, and Dulles, *Pope John Paul II on the Body : Human, Eucharistic, Ecclesial : Festschrift Avery Cardinal Dulles, S.J.*, 24–25.

⁹ Cfr. Taylor, "Beyond Nature: Karol Wojtyła's Development of the Traditional Definition of Personhood," 416.

¹⁰ John Paul regards the Vatican II document *Gaudium et Spes* as an important reference in dealing with the human person. Article 22 and 24 of the document are the most cited and reflected texts during his pontificate and pastoral works. These indicate that his vision of human beings is rooted in the official teachings of the Church.

¹¹ Karol Wojtyła has produced not only numerous philosophical articles and books, but theatrical works. His philosophical articles are collected in Woznicki, A.W. ed. *Person & Community: Selected Essays*. Translated by Theresa Sandok. New York: Peter Lang, 1993. There are two books written by Karol Wojtyła: *The Acting Person*. Translated from the Polish by Andrzej Potocki ; Definitive Text Established in Collaboration with the Author by Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka. Analecta Husserliana. Vol. 010. Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing Co., 1979 which deals with philosophy in dealing with philosophy and *Love and Responsibility*. Translated by H.T. Willetts. Fount Paperbacks. London: Collins, 1982 which deals with ethic. Theatrical works written by Karol Wojtyła were *King-Spirit*, *David* (the first play he wrote in 1939 but unfortunately lost), *Job: A Drama from the Old Testament*, *Jeremiah: A National Drama in Three Acts*.

¹² Cfr. Ciccone, "Per Una Corretta Comprensione Della Catechesi Di Giovanni Paolo II Nelle Udienze Generali Del Mercoledì," 375–76. Ciccone concluded his article claiming that the Catechesis is a theological anthropology to serve as a solid base for marriage and celibacy.

¹³ Cfr. Curran, *The Moral Theology of Pope John Paul II*, 49; Luke Timothy Johnson, "A Disembodied "Theology of the Body": John Paul II on Love, Sex & Pleasure," *Commonwealth* 128, no. 2 (2001): 11–17.

¹⁴ Cfr. Curran, *The Moral Theology of Pope John Paul II*, 168. Here Curran points out that John Paul interprets scripture using his personalistic philosophy.

¹⁵ Cfr. s. Iohannes Paulus PP. II, Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka ed., and Andrzej Potocki tr., *The Acting Person*, vol. 010, Analecta Husserliana (Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing Co., 1979), viii, xiv.

¹⁶ Cfr. Ciccone, "Per Una Corretta Comprensione Della Catechesi Di Giovanni Paolo II Nelle Udienze Generali Del Mercoledì," 377. In the footnote, Ciccone indicates phenomenological traces in the Catechesis, pointing out the use of the word "significato". According to Ciccone, the term "significato" is a key concept in the phenomenological method in philosophy.

¹⁷ Cfr. Taylor, "Beyond Nature: Karol Wojtyła's Development of the Traditional Definition of Personhood," 417ff. Taylor presents the development of the concept of person in Karol Wojtyła's writings. He points out that Wojtyła's thoughts are rooted in the Aristotelian, Thomistic and medieval philosophical tradition. Some missing aspects in the traditional concept of person are added through phenomenological philosophy, especially the thought of Scheler.

¹⁸ Cfr. *Ibid.*, 432.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 435.

²⁰ Cfr. Curran, *The Moral Theology of Pope John Paul II*; Cfr. Jaroslaw Merecki S.D.S., *Corpo E Trascendenza : L'antropologia Filosofica Nella Teologia Del Corpo Di Giovanni Paolo II*, vol. 28., Studi Sulla Persona E La Famiglia. (Siena: Cantagalli, 2015), 5. Curran notices that John Paul's Catechesis is dense with philosophical insights especially when John Paul interpreted Genesis 1-2. There are many philosophical terms in use to draw out the content of revelation regarding the condition of the human being.

²¹ Cfr. John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them. A Theology of the Body*, 662.

²² Cfr. Ciccone, "Per Una Corretta Comprensione Della Catechesi Di Giovanni Paolo II Nelle Udienze Generali Del Mercoledì," 375.

²³ Cfr. Kupczak, *Gift and Communion. John Paul II's Theology of the Body*, 5.

²⁴ Cfr. Iohannes Paulus PP. II, Tymieniecka, and Potocki, *The Acting Person*, 3–22. The method used in describing human experience, that is, reduction, in order to find the essential thing or sense, which was at work in *The Acting Person*, is used in the Catechesis. It means that John Paul was consistent in his scientific methodology.

²⁵ According to the Pope, the texts which come from Yahwist traditions are Genesis 2:4b-25. The important texts in discussion are verses 7.18.21-24.

²⁶ Cfr. John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them. A Theology of the Body*, 134–37. The texts from Elohist and Priestly traditions are Genesis 1:1-31. The important texts in discussion are verses 26-27.

²⁷ It is interesting that John Paul takes the word of Christ which connects two separate traditions (Yahwist and Priestly) regarding the question of the indissolubility of marriage. Looking back to the basic plan of Karol Wojtyła to connect metaphysics (being, object) and phenomenology (consciousness, subject) – manifested in his mature

philosophical work *The Acting Person* – it seems that Wojtyła indirectly intends to justify his opinion that an integral understanding of the human person has a solid base in the words of Christ.

²⁸ Cfr. John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them. A Theology of the Body*, 179.

²⁹ Cfr. *Ibid.*, 163.

³⁰ Cfr. *Ibid.*, 169.

³¹ Cfr. *Ibid.*, 230.

³² Cfr. *Ibid.*, 309. The ethos of redemption in John Paul's conception is rediscovering the full meaning of the body, which is not sufficiently appreciated because of concupiscence.

³³ Cfr. Iohannes Paulus PP. II, Tymieniecka, and Potocki, *The Acting Person*, viii,xiii. Basically the philosophical project of Karol Wojtyła is to build a solid foundation for ethics. It should be kept in mind that he disagreed with Kant and Scheler in treating ethics. So, in Wojtyła's view, ethics must be rooted in an integral vision of the human person .

³⁴ Cfr. Karol Wojtyła, "Problem of the Constitution of Culture Through Human Praxis", in A.W. Woznicki, ed., *Person & Community: Selected Essays*, trans. Theresa Sandok (New York: Peter Lang, 1993), 263ff. Cfr. John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them. A Theology of the Body*, 175.

³⁵ Cfr. John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them. A Theology of the Body*, 164.

³⁶ Cfr. *Ibid.*, 157.

³⁷ Cfr. *Ibid.*, 136–37. John Paul expresses it in full accordance with Thomas Aquinas regarding being, good, truth. These three concepts have their absolute and perfect meaning in God. The human being and other creatures according to their proper essence participate in God's attributes. Saying that every being is good derives from revelation where God looks on everything that exists as good.

³⁸ Cfr. Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, "The Notion of Person in Theology," *Communio* 17 (1990): 439–54; Prudence Allen, "Integral Sex Complementarity and the Theology of Communion," *Communio: International Catholic Review* 17 (1990): 523–44. The author traces the term "person" and the idea behind it from its beginning. The best idea in order to grasp the meaning of person is the relationships which exist in the Trinity. Since the term was coined to explain the Christian faith in the Trinity of three persons, the human being, who is created in the image of God as Trinity is called a person. It follows that the human person is constitutively relationship as is the Trinity. Allen, for her part, also develops John Paul's insistence that the communion of persons (man and woman) is an image of God. Allen proposes integral sexual complementary which exists in relation of man and woman.

³⁹ Cfr. Jacob Meiring, "Theology in the Flesh - Embodied Sensing, Consciousness and the Mapping of the Body," *Hervormde Teologiese Studies* 72, no. 4 (2016): 1–11. The author describes current discussions on the body. In his opinion, there were a linguistic turn and a corporeal turn. Regarding the body, the corporeal turn started from 1940 which consists of three waves which appeared chronologically: 1940-1965, 1976-1986 and 1990-2000. Unfortunately, he does not mention anything about the reason or motive of such a chronological classification.