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**SPIRITUALITY OF WORK IN POPE JOHN PAUL II'S
ENCYCLICAL LETTER *LABOREM EXERCENS***

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You have turned my mourning into dancing; you have taken off my sackcloth and clothed me with joy, so that my soul may praise you and not be silent. O Lord my God, I will give thanks to you forever. (Psalm 30:11-12)

Together with the Psalmist, the researcher deeply praises the Holy Trinity and the Blessed Virgin Mary. Not because of the skillfulness of the researcher but because of the providence of God's mercy, this humble dissertation has reached its completion.

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May the Blessed Virgin Mary together with Saint John Paul II continue to intercede for us.

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INTRODUCTION

“You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name” (Jn 15:16; NRSV). Truly, John Paul II was chosen and faithfully accomplished what the Lord appointed him to do until the end. He was a persevering disciple, till the end of his life despite of his lingering illness. Throughout his papacy (1978-2005), he had consoled Catholic faithful everywhere with a motto that he himself lived as a shining example “Be not afraid.”

John Paul II’s impact on the Church and in the community of nations is well recognized. He was a fervent defender of the human person and his inherent dignity and “He has been a strong advocate of justice and human rights, speaking forcefully on behalf of the poor.”¹ He canonized 482 saints and beatified 1,342 blessed. Having travelled extensively around the globe, in a total of 104 foreign trips, he was endowed with the title “Pilgrim Pope.” In all of these foreign trips, John Paul II attracted large crowds who wanted to get a glimpse on him. In December 1994, he was honored as *Time Magazine*’s “Man of the Year”. Throughout his life, he taught people how to live and to die with Jesus. Thus, his death on April 2, 2005 was felt throughout the world. Words of sympathy poured forth from top world leaders to the most ordinary person. The whole world mourned at his passing. At St. Peter’s Square, faithful carrying banners clamor, *Santo Subito*, literally, “Saint Straight

¹ David J. O’Brien and Thomas A. Shannon (eds.), *Catholic Social Thought: The Documentary Heritage* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1995), 347.

Away.” There is no doubting that he lived a saintly life. People started already to call him Pope John Paul II “the Great.”²

On January 16, 2011, Pope Benedict XVI, responding to the popular clamor from around the world, announced his cause of beatification and canonization. His formal beatification ceremony took place on 1 May 2011; while his canonization alongside Blessed John XXIII occurred on 27 April 2014. Those who knew John Paul II, the second longest-serving pope in history, the first non-Italian Pope since Adrian VI, who died in 1523, are not surprised why his beatification and canonization was fast-tracked – only eight years after his death and so far the fastest in centuries. He is one of the most loved leaders of the Catholic Church.

One can write so many things about the rich life of John Paul II. As a philosopher and theologian, he has consistently promoted and upheld the primacy and dignity of the human person. In this humble paper, the researcher wishes to honor Saint John Paul II by reviewing and restating his view on the Human Person especially his position on the spirituality of work in *Laborem Exercens*. In this Encyclical Letter, the Holy Father begins by calling to mind three points regarding work: the dignity of work, its meaning, and its particular concern to the human person.³ Concerning work and the human beings at the very beginning of his Greetings and apostolic Blessing in the encyclical, the Holy Father states as follows:

Work means any activity by man, whether manual or intellectual, whatever its nature or circumstances; it means any human activity that can and must be

² The title “the Great” as an attribute of John Paul II is not officially used widely in the Church yet. However his successor Pope Benedict XVI himself began using it in his homily at the funeral of Pope John Paul II, as well as when he spoke during general audiences or in some of his homilies. Also, some authors of articles or some faithful might use it in their writings to give an important role to Pope John Paul II, willingly to place him as a doctor of the Church like other Popes, such as Leo the Great (c. 390-461) or Gregory the Great (c. 540-604).

³ Pedro V. Salgado, *Social Encyclical: Commentary and Critique* (Quezon City: R. P. Garcia Publishing, 1992), 309.

recognized as work, in the midst of all the many activities of which man is capable and to which he is predisposed by his very nature, by virtue of humanity itself. Man is made to be in the visible universe an image and likeness of God himself, and he is placed in it in order to subdue the earth. From the beginning therefore he is called to work. Work is one of the characteristics that distinguish man from the rest of creatures, whose activity for sustaining their lives cannot be called work. Only man is capable of work, and only man works, at the same time by work occupying his existence on earth.⁴

Thus, this dissertation paper shall be divided in three chapters: Chapter One deals with the life of John Paul II, Chapter Two examines his thought on the human person, and finally Chapter Three shall study the spirituality of work in *Laborem Exercens*. It shall scrutinize his philosophical, anthropological and theological implications for a proper spirituality of work.

⁴ John Paul II, *Laborem Exercens* (Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1981). Available from http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_14091981_laborem-exercens.html (accessed on June 04, 2014).

CHAPTER I

BIOGRAPHICAL CONTEXT

A. A Brief Biography of John Paul II

On May 18, 1920, a child was born in Poland and the name of the child was Karol Józef Wojtyła, born to Karol Wojtyła and Emilia Kaczorowska. He was baptized on June 20, 1920 in Wadowice, his birth place. As described by George Weigel, author of *Witness to Hope: The Biography of Pope John Paul II*, “Wadowice, Karol Wojtyła’s boyhood home, was an ancient town, founded in the mid-thirteenth century and located on the River Skawa in the foothills of the Beskidy Mountains.”¹ One of the Jewish writers made a remark that, Karol Wojtyła was born “in a house owned by a Jewish family. The Jews of this small town constituted about twenty percent of the population, making John Paul II the first pope since Peter to have grown up among Jews and to have spoken Yiddish.”² It is true that he was one of the Popes who had the best communication with the brother Jewish community during his life time.

The beginning of his life, however, was not a pleasant one as it was marked by great loss. His mother died when he was nine years old, and his older brother Edmund died when he was 12. Prior to Karol his mother gave birth to a daughter who died not more than a year after she was born.

Karol Wojtyła spent his elementary and high school time in Wadowice. After he graduated from high school, he moved to Krakow along with his father and began

¹ George Weigel, *Witness to Hope: The Biography of John Paul II, 1920 – 2005* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2005), 23.

² Harold Kasimow, “Explorations and Responses: Pope John Paul II: A Jewish Perspective on a Polish Catholic Saint,” *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 48, no. 3 (June 2013): 410-416, esp. 411. *Humanities International Complete*, EBSCOhost (accessed April 8, 2015).

his studies at the prestigious Jagiellonian University in 1938.³ A year later World War II broke out when Germany invaded Poland, and most of the university professors were arrested. Wojtyla continued his studies clandestinely and took part in underground cultural resistance activities. He began to write some plays for theater and also worked as a quarryman at the Zakrzowek Mine and at the Solvay Chemical Plant as well.⁴

On February 18, 1941 Karol Wojtyla's father died. A year later, "he was accepted by the Archdiocese of Krakow as a clandestine seminarian and began underground studies in philosophy."⁵ In 1946 he was ordained to the priesthood by Cardinal Sapieha in the Cathedral of Krakow. Shortly after his ordination he was sent to Rome to pursue his doctorate studies in theology.

In 1948 Karol Wojtyla returned to his native country and exercised his pastoral ministry there until he was appointed as an auxiliary bishop of Krakow by Pope Pius XII in 1958. "On January 13, 1964, he was appointed archbishop of Krakow by Pope Paul VI, who made him a cardinal on June 26, 1967."⁶ He was present during the sessions of the Second Vatican Council and was "influential in many of the debates, especially on religious freedom."⁷

³ Weigel, *Witness to Hope*, 39.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 44.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Holy See Press Office, "His Holiness John Paul II: Short Biography." Available from http://www.vatican.va/news_services/press/documentazione/documents/santopadre_biografie/giovanni_paolo_ii_biografia_breve_en.html (accessed on February 17, 2014).

⁷ Kevin E. McKenna, *A Concise Guide to Catholic Social Teaching* (Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 2002), 129.

On 16th October 1978, he was elected as the first non-Italian pope, since Dutch Pope Adrian VI in 1522 in more than 400 years in modern time, and took on the name John Paul II. In the same year, on 22nd October, he was solemnly inaugurated as the 264th successor to the Chair of the Apostle Peter. His Pontificate lasted about 27 years until his death on April 2nd 2005, as “the second-longest documented pontificate after Pope Pius IX.”⁸ It is believed that “as one of the most influential leaders of the 20th century, he was instrumental in ending Communism in his native Poland and eventually in all of Europe.”⁹

He was an extraordinary pope. Some people thought that his personality is “a living synthesis of his three immediate predecessors. He is endowed with the personal warmth of John XXIII. He has the brilliant mind of Paul VI. He also possessed the pastoral concern and simplicity of John Paul I.”¹⁰ His most important writings include 14 Encyclicals, 15 Apostolic Exhortations, 11 Apostolic Constitutions and 45 Apostolic Letters. As has been mentioned in the introduction, he has presided at 138 beatification ceremonies that beatified 1,342 Blesseds and 48 canonization ceremonies at which 482 Saints were elevated. He also held eight consistories in which he created 201 cardinals.¹¹ In addition, he started the gathering of the Catholic World Youth Day and promulgated the *New Canon Law* 1983 and approved a new *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 1994. There is no doubt that Pope John Paul II will be forever recognized as “the Pilgrim of Peace and the Apostle of Reconciliation to

⁸ Charles Irudayam, *Social Teaching of John Paul II, Commemorating His Pastoral Visit to India in 1986* (Bangalore, India: Asian Trading Corporation, 2011), 15.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Gaudencio G. Pugat, “Man in the Mind and Heart of John Paul II,” *DIWA: Studies in Philosophy and Theology* 4/2 (1980): 87-96, esp. 87.

¹¹ Holy See Press Office, “His Holiness John Paul II: Short Biography.”

the whole world. Strong and vital, sick and frail, he visited innumerable countries, bringing with him a spirituality cherished by Catholics and much appreciated by those who were neither Catholic nor even Christian.”¹²

B. Motivation and Outline of *Laborem Exercens*

Pope Leo XIII, published the first explicit writing on Catholic Social Teaching, *Rerum Novarum*, in (1891) “which was commemorated in *Quadragesimo Anno* (1931), *Mater et Magistra* (1961), *Octogesimo Adveniens* (1971) and *Laborem Exercens* (1981).”¹³ All these writings are dealing with the social problems from the perspective of human work. “Drawing upon the social thought of progressive Catholic movements in the nineteenth century, often referred to as social Catholicism, Pope Leo XIII initiated a social philosophy that was open to the modern world, criticized secularization and economic injustices, and provided guidelines for the political involvement of Catholics in society.”¹⁴ In his Encyclical Letter *Rerum Novarum* Pope Leo XIII fearlessly declared that, “It is We who are the chief guardian of Religion and the chief dispenser of what pertains to the Church: and by keeping silence We would seem to neglect the duty incumbent on Us.”¹⁵ Thus it is widely accepted by most Catholics that the foundation of the modern Catholic Social Teaching has been laid down by Pope Leo XIII.

¹² Rabbi Leon Klenicki, *Pope John Paul II Visits to Jordan, Israel and the Palestinian Authority: A Pilgrimage of Prayer, Hope and Reconciliation*, PDF (2006). Available from http://archive.adl.org/interfaith/johnpaul_ii_visit.pdf (accessed on May 18, 2015).

¹³ Leon Dominador, *Human Work, Human World, Human Development: Office for Human Development*, (Quezon City: Claretian Publication, 1990), Introduction.

¹⁴ Bob Bender, Discussion of *Laborem Exercens*, PDF (December 2000). Available from <http://www.livingfaiththatwork.org/Documents/Laborem%20Exercens%20discussion.pdf> (accessed on May 18, 2015).

¹⁵ Leo XIII, *Rerum Novarum*, 13.

In his Encyclical Letter *Rerum Novarum* the Pope “introduces collective bargaining as an alternative to state intervention and declared private property a fundamental principle of natural law. It also recognizes that the poor have a special status in consideration of social issues.”¹⁶ From then on the social teaching has been continued by the following Popes in their writings as well. Among them John Paul II was the one who made the most contributions for the development of Catholic Social Teaching and “his concern for the poorest members of society remains the distinctive feature of his social teaching. It has been well reflected in his writings and public speeches.”¹⁷ From this the researcher found out, that *Laborem Exercens*, is an important and interesting encyclical worthy to deepen his research for his final dissertation.

Laborem Exercens was promulgated by Pope John Paul II on September 14, 1981, “to commemorate the ninetieth anniversary of the publication of *Rerum Novarum*. It provided teaching on labor in its social and spiritual dimensions.”¹⁸ The main focus of *Laborem Exercens* is on “...man, and only man, and always man. For the Pope, to speak of work means to speak of human work, which is a radical aspect of man’s existence on earth.”¹⁹ It is divided into five parts, which are the Introduction, Work and Man (Chapter 1), Conflict between Labour and Capital in the Present Phase of History (Chapter 2), Rights of Workers (Chapter 3) and Elements for a Spirituality of Work (Chapter 4).

¹⁶ Irudayam, *Social Teaching of John Paul II*, 60.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 58.

¹⁸ McKenna, *A Concise Guide to Catholic Social Teaching*, 153.

¹⁹ Fausto Gomez, *Social Ethics: Doctrine and Life* (Manila: Santo Tomas University Press, 1991), 180.

Pope Saint John Paul II concludes the last chapter with a section which is relative to the importance of work to the Christian spirituality “which will help people to come closer to God through their work, to participate in his salvific plan, and to deepen their friendship with Christ.”²⁰ He encourages the Church to develop and teach a spirituality of work “as one of her important tasks within the service that she renders to the evangelical message as a whole.”²¹ He also encourages the Church to see the work “as her particular duty to form a spirituality of work which will help all people to come closer, through work, to God, the Creator and Redeemer, to participate in his salvific plan for man and the world and to deepen their friendship with Christ in their lives by accepting, through faith, a living participation in his threefold mission as Priest, Prophet and King.”²²

Work has not taken place just only a century ago but it had been occupied a place in the life of Christians as a major concern in the early life of monasteries. In his Encyclical Letter *Spe Salvi*, Pope Benedict XVI states that, “The nobility of work, which Christianity inherited from Judaism, had already been expressed in the monastic rules of Augustine and Benedict.”²³ Work is not a punishment but is a continuation of creation. It is “part of the original state of man and precedes his fall; it is therefore not a punishment or curse. It becomes toil and pain because of the sin of Adam and Eve, who break their relationship of trust and harmony with God (cf. Gen

²⁰ Michael Walsh and Brian Davies. *Proclaiming Justice & Peace: Papal Documents from Rerum Novarum through Centesimus Annus*, rev. & expanded, North American ed. (Mystic, Conn.: Twenty-Third Publications, 1991), 353.

²¹ John Paul II, *Laborem Exercens*, 24.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ Benedict XVI, *Spe Salvi*, 15.

3:6-8).”²⁴ In another place it is written that “...it should be clear that human labour has been deeply infiltrated by human sin. The primary problem is not so much the content of the primordial divine command, but the particular human response to it.”²⁵

The own work experience of Pope John Paul II and especially his theological reflections on it as expressed in his Encyclical Letter *Laborem Exercens* can deepen the understanding of the meaning of human work in the plan of God.

One important step for this is to get a philosophical understanding of the human person, which is the topic of the next chapter.

²⁴ Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* (Washington, DC: USCCB Publishing, 2006), 256.

²⁵ Ernst M. Conradie, *An Ecological Christian Anthropology: At Home on Earth?* (England: Ashgate Publishing Limited Gower House, 2005), 239.

CHAPTER II

THE THOUGHT OF JOHN PAUL II ON THE HUMAN PERSON

Karol Wojtyła's interests in literature and linguistics, history and drama at the Jagiellonian University in Krakow had led him to philosophical and theological studies.¹ Specifically his doctoral dissertation in philosophy introduced Wojtyła to the phenomenology of Max Scheler. George Weigel writes, "The Scheler study was Karol Wojtyła's first sustained attempt to link the realist objectivity embedded in the philosophy he had learned in the seminary and at the Angelicum to modern philosophy's emphasis on human experience and human subjectivity."² However, Rocco Buttiglione stated that, "his first initiation to phenomenology came about indirectly and outside of orthodox philosophy, through the theory of theater and, above all, the existential experience of being an actor under Kotlarczyk's direction."³

There is no doubt that Wojtyła, together with all seminarians of his day, was formed firmly within the Aristotelian-Thomistic tradition. He "enthusiastically affirmed the teachings of St. Thomas Aquinas on most points"⁴, but at the same time took note of its weakness, for example, the angelic doctor "paid too little attention to the human person as experience from within."⁵ Wojtyła notes that "when it comes to analyzing consciousness and self-consciousness there seems to be no place for it in

¹ John Paul II, *Gift and Mystery*, 12.

² Weigel, *Witness to Hope*, 129.

³ Rocco Buttiglione, *Karol Wojtyła: The Thought of the Man Who Became Pope John Paul II* (Cambridge: Eerdmans Publishing, 1997), 21.

⁴ Avery Dulles, "John Paul II and the Mystery of the Human Person," *The National Catholic Reviews*, February 2, 2004 Issue. Available from <http://americamagazine.org/issue/469/article/john-paul-ii-and-mystery-human-person> (Accessed on May 11, 2014).

⁵ Dulles, "John Paul II and The Mystery of The Human Person."

St. Thomas objectivistic view of reality... St. Thomas gives us an excellent view of the objective existence and activity of the person, but it would be difficult to speak in his view of the lived experiences of the person.”⁶ As Weigel affirms:

Wojtyla didn’t lock himself into intellectual combat with the philosophical method he had been taught, expending his energies in a war of attrition against an entrenched Catholic way of thinking. Certain forms of neo-scholasticism might have been an obstacle to a genuine Catholic encounter with modern philosophy. Wojtyla simply went around the barrier, having absorbed what was enduring about neo-scholasticism – its conviction that philosophy could get to the truth of things-as-they-are.⁷

A. On Love and Responsibility

The fruit of expending his energies was the work of his first book called *Love and Responsibility*. This book was inspired by his young students, which came out when he was a Professor at the Catholic University of Lublin. “The Pope was popular with young people during his years of service as a university chaplain, and the book *Love and Responsibility* was born of his work with these young people who wanted to learn from him ‘*how to live.*’”⁸ By means of “*Love and Responsibility*, he stepped into one of the minefields of contemporary Catholic life.”⁹ This book sought to articulate an essentially positive view of human sexuality against the background of the Polish Communist regime’s active promotion of abortion, contraception and sexual experimentation among the young as well. “It discussed marital chastity and sexual ethics within the framework of Wojtyla’s philosophical personalism and his

⁶ Dulles, “John Paul II and The Mystery of The Human Person.”

⁷ Weigel, *Witness to Hope*, 128.

⁸ Peter McFadden, “John Paul II on Love and Responsibility,” (New York: Love and Responsibility Foundation, Summer Edition, 2002), PDF. Available from http://www.catholicculture.com/jp2_on_l&r.pdf (accessed on May 18, 2015).

⁹ Weigel, *Witness to Hope*, 140.

defense of Christian humanism as a response to the false humanisms of the time.”¹⁰ His book *Love and Responsibility* beautifully displays his view of the dignity of the human person and the sacredness of the sexual act.

B. On Personalism

One of the major themes for John Paul II is on personalism. Since becoming pope, John Paul II has used personalism as a lens through which to interpret much of the Catholic tradition. “Personalism, as a philosophical movement, has taken a number of divergent directions. Its essential, unifying perspective is that persons and personal relations are more basic for understanding reality than abstract ideas like being or nature. It insists that all thought be related to personhood.”¹¹ He is considered as a personalist and “It is true that in a number of his writings Pope John Paul II describes his characteristic form of thinking as personalist.”¹² He tries to explain the dogmas of the church with a personalist slant.¹³ During the World Youth Day in 2000, the Pope told his audience:

It is important to realize that among the many questions surfacing in your minds, the decisive ones are not about ‘what.’ The basic question is ‘who’: to whom am I to go? whom am I to follow? to whom should I entrust my life? In another message to youth he declared: Christianity is not an opinion and does not consist of empty words. Christianity is Christ! It is a Person.¹⁴

¹⁰ Weigel, *Witness to Hope*, 143.

¹¹ Ronald E. Modras, “Birth control, personalism, and the Pope.” *Currents in Theology and Mission* 8, no. 5 (October 1, 1981): 283-290, esp. 285. *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost (accessed April 10, 2015).

¹² Michael Waldstein, *Is Pope John Paul II a Good Teacher? Papal Personalism and St. Thomas Lecture at Thomas Aquinas College*, (January 12th, 2001), PDF.

¹³ Dulles, “John Paul II and the Mystery of the Human Person.”

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

A profound personalism supports John Paul's ecclesiology, theology of ecumenism, interreligious relations, and teachings on social matters. He teaches that "[t]he Church wishes to serve this single end: that each person may be able to find Christ, in order that Christ may walk with each person the path of life."¹⁵ It is said that "[f]rom 1951-1953 Karol Wojtyla used his two years leave of absence from parish work to study phenomenology, personalism and existentialism under the direction of the Catholic phenomenologist [Roman Ingarden]."¹⁶

In his Encyclical Letter *Laborem Exercens*, he expounds the theology of work based on the relationship between the person and activity and affirms that, "[m]an is the image of God partly through the mandate received from his Creator to subdue, to dominate, the earth. In carrying out this mandate, man, every human being, reflects the very action of the Creator of the universe."¹⁷ Workers are persons; hence they are of more value than their products or capital. Wojtyla's in depth philosophical analysis of human love and sexuality stems from his philosophy of 'personalism'.

¹⁵ John Paul II, *Redemptor Hominis*, 13.

¹⁶ John Hellman, "John Paul II and the Personalist Movement." *Cross Currents* 30, no. 4 (1980): 409-419, esp. 411. *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost (accessed April 10, 2015). [Roman Witold Ingarden was born in Kraków, Poland, in February of 1893, during Austria's last occupation of Southern Poland. His father, also named Roman, was an engineer, and his mother, Witosława, was a teacher. He was baptized and raised Catholic. Ingarden attended secondary school from 1903 to 1911 in Lwów. In 1911, he began studying philosophy at Jan Kazimierz University in Lwów, but he only stayed there one semester. In 1912, he went to Gottingen to study psychology. Here he attended a lecture course taught by Edmund Husserl, and his influence, combined with Ingarden's dissatisfaction with the school's psychology department, convinced Ingarden to turn the focus of his studies back towards philosophy.] Available from Kouzmanoff, Adam. "Roman Ingarden." *Salem Press Biographical Encyclopedia* (January 2014): *Research Starters*, EBSCOhost (accessed April 17, 2015).

¹⁷ John Paul II, *Laborem Exercens*, 4.

C. On the Acting Person

John Paul II participated in the sessions of the Second Vatican Council and was particularly involved in drafting the “Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (*Gaudium et Spes*), which speaks of ‘the exalted dignity proper to the human person’ and of universal, inviolable human rights.”¹⁸ At the same Vatican II, Wojtyla entered vigorously into the debates on religious freedom. He fully agrees with the opening statement of *Dignitatis Humanae* (as though these words would come from the pen of Wojtyla). A sense of the dignity of the human person has impressed itself more and more deeply on the consciousness of contemporary man. In addition to that the demand is increasingly made that men should act based on their own judgment, enjoying and making use of a responsible freedom, not driven by coercion but motivated by a sense of duty.¹⁹

He became convinced that the Council’s understanding of the human person could be enriched if given a deeper philosophical foundation. “Out of that concern would come Wojtyla’s major philosophical work, *Person and Act*”²⁰ first published in 1969. Later the book *Person and Act* was translated as *The Acting Person*, before Cardinal Wojtyla became a Pope. In this book, Wojtyla emphasizes that man must ceaselessly unravel his mysteries and strive for a new and mature expression of his nature. “It is based on human nature, that is, on the humanness pervading all the human dynamism and shaping it so that it becomes really human.”²¹ The book

¹⁸ Dulles, “John Paul II and the Mystery of the Human Person.”

¹⁹ Vatican II, *Dignitatis Humanae*, 1.

²⁰ Weigel, *Witness to Hope*, 158.

²¹ Cardinal Karol Wojtyla, *The Acting Person*, trans. Andrzej Potocki (Dordrecht, Holland: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1979), 83.

expounds a theory of the human person as a self-determining agent who realizes himself through free and responsible action. Activity is not strictly other than the person; it is the person coming to expression and constituting it. Wojtyła's thought in *The Acting Person* is a dynamic refutation of the materialistic and positivistic tendencies in various schools of modern philosophy. *The Acting Person* is a reversal of the post-Cartesian attitude towards Man in that it characterizes him as a person in action.

As a phenomenological thinker, John Paul II sees man as he or she is based on experience which means that “man encounters reality and reality comes to dwell with him. This reality is made out of things but is made also and above all of other people.”²² John Paul II considers man always as a person – man in his true image, man as he really is and should be. He perceives personality in man's individuality, sociability and ambiguity.²³ In his first and well-known Encyclical, *Redemptor Hominis* (Redeemer of Man), the Pope writes: “Each man in all the unrepeatability of what he is and what he does, of his intellect and will, of his conscience and heart. Man who in his reality has, because he is a ‘person’, a history of his life that is his own and, most important, a history of his soul that is his own.”²⁴ Indeed, throughout his Pontificate, he never stopped to be a firm defender of human freedom, including religious freedom.²⁵ He is opposed to physical and moral coercion as they

²² Buttiglione, *Karol Wojtyła*, 124.

²³ Pugat, “Man in the Mind and Heart of John Paul II,” 89.

²⁴ John Paul II, *Redemptor Hominis*, 14.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 12.

are infringements of the human dignity. Authentic freedom, for Wojtyla, “is never freedom ‘from’ the truth but always and only freedom ‘in’ the truth.”²⁶

Persons are essentially social beings and oriented to a life in community. They achieve themselves as persons by interaction, giving to others and receiving from them in turn. Thus, to reconcile the good of the community with that of its individual members, Wojtyla proposed a theory of participation. Everyone must contribute to the good, which then redounds to the common good containing an implicit critique not only of Marxist collectivism but also of libertarian individualism and anarchist alienation. Only a human being can be a true social being. Thus within man as social being the mission of the Church can be fulfilled. As John Paul II states in his first encyclical, *Redemptor Hominis*:

Man in the full truth of his existence, of his personal being and also of his community and social being – in the sphere of his own family, in the sphere of society and very diverse contexts, in the sphere of his own nation or people, and in the sphere of the whole of mankind – this man is the primary route that the Church must travel in fulfilling her mission.²⁷

During his lifetime’s mission as a Pope he continuously addressed all mankind and called all Christians to witness the value and dignity of human person. Concerning the value of the human person, “in order to have an authentic experience of value, it is necessary that the sensitivity be turned towards true values, that is, that it be integrated into the truthfulness of the value.”²⁸ However, “only that value which

²⁶ John Paul II, *Veritatis Splendor*, 64.

²⁷ John Paul II, *Redemptor Hominis*, 14.

²⁸ Buttiglione, *Karol Wojtyla*, 163.

is objectively true is a solid basis for personal realization, and the person sometimes should realize it even at the cost of sacrificing his own subjective feeling.”²⁹

D. On the Dignity of the Human Person

Concerning human dignity, John Paul II “affirms the dignity of man because man has been created ‘in the image and likeness of God’ and he is ‘to subdue the world and have dominion over the world’.”³⁰ In his Encyclical Letter, *Laborem Exercens* (On Human Work), John Paul II “endorses the right to private property, traditionally defended by the social teaching of the church, and he associates that right with the traditional concern for the common good.”³¹ At the same time he also speaks about the right of the worker which means the right of the human person in a wider sense. He declares:

While work, in all its many senses, is an obligation, that is to say a duty, it is also a source of rights on the part of the worker. These rights must be examined in the broad context of human rights as a whole, which are connatural with man, and many of which are proclaimed by various international organizations and increasingly guaranteed by the individual States for their citizens. Respect for this broad range of human rights constitutes the fundamental condition for peace in the modern world.³²

Also in *Centesimus Annus* (Hundredth Year, 1991), “he reaffirms the equally traditional right to a just wage.”³³ He writes, “a workman’s wages should be sufficient to enable him to support himself, his wife and his children. ‘If through

²⁹ Buttiglione, *Karol Wojtyla*, 163.

³⁰ Pugat, “Man in the Mind and Heart of John Paul II,” 91.

³¹ Kenneth L. Schmitz, *At the Center of the Human Drama: The Philosophical Anthropology of Karol Wojtyla/Pope John Paul II* (Washington, D.C: The Catholic University of America Press, 1993), 123.

³² John Paul II, *Laborem Exercens*, 16.

³³ Schmitz, *At the Center of the Human Drama*, 123.

necessity or fear of a worse evil the workman accepts harder conditions because an employer or contractor will afford no better, he is made the victim of force and injustice’.”³⁴

In *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (1987) John Paul upholds “the right of economic initiative as well within the whole ambit of human rights”³⁵, saying, “although development has a necessary economic dimension, since it must supply the greatest possible number of the world’s inhabitants with an availability of goods essential for them ‘to be’, it is not limited to that dimension. If it is limited to this, then it turns against those whom it is meant to benefit.”³⁶ In his struggle against “Marxism in Poland after the Second Vatican Council, Cardinal Wojtyla identified the doctrine of the person as the Achilles’ heel of the Communist regime.”³⁷ He decided to base his opposition on that very thing – the metaphysical significance and the mystery of the person. He identified the extraordinary struggles of the 20th century as due to an unwillingness to recognize the inherent value of the human person, who is made in the image and likeness of God.

Again in *Centesimus Annus*, John Paul II proclaims: “Man receives from God his essential dignity and with it the capacity to transcend every social order so as to move towards truth and goodness. But he is also conditioned by the social structure in which he lives, by the education he has received and by his environment. These elements can either help or hinder his living in accordance with the truth.”³⁸ These are

³⁴ John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus*, 8.

³⁵ Schmitz, *At the Center of the Human Drama*, 123.

³⁶ John Paul II, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, 28.

³⁷ Dulles, “John Paul II and the Mystery of the Human Person.”

³⁸ John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus*, 38.

some of his works in which he spoke of human rights and dignity. John Paul II was not only asking for the protection of human rights and man's dignity but he also demands to live responsibly too. "Man often seems to see no other meaning in his natural environment than what serves for immediate use and consumption. Yet it was the Creator's will that man should communicate with nature as an intelligent and noble 'master' and 'guardian', and not as a heedless 'exploiter' and 'destroyer'."³⁹

E. On the Right to Life

Above all, one of the most important major themes in John Paul II's life was the Right to Life. Among the popes he was the one who strongly opposed any Threat to Life. In his Encyclical Letter *Evangelium Vitae* one can see his position against any threat to life by promoting a new culture of human life:

To all the members of the Church, the people of life and for life, I make this most urgent appeal, that together we may offer this world of ours new signs of hope, and work to ensure that justice and solidarity will increase and that a new culture of human life will be affirmed, for the building of an authentic civilization of truth and love.⁴⁰

John Paul II encourages all human beings to be responsible in all matters of human life. He writes, "We are facing an enormous and dramatic clash between good and evil, death and life, the 'culture of death' and the 'culture of life.' ... we are all

³⁹ John Paul II, *Redemptor Hominis*, 15.

⁴⁰ John Paul II, *Evangelium Vitae*, 6.

involved and we all share in it, with the inescapable responsibility of choosing to be unconditionally pro-life.⁴¹ Especially for Christians he continues to emphasize,

We have been sent as a people. Everyone has an obligation to be at the service of life. This is a properly 'ecclesial' responsibility, which requires concerted and generous action by all the members and by all sectors of the Christian community... Together we all sense our duty to preach the Gospel of life, to celebrate it in the Liturgy and in our whole existence, and to serve it with the various programs and structures which support and promote life.⁴²

Concerning abortion and euthanasia not only abortion and euthanasia but also every kind of ending a person's life, John Paul II strongly uphold his position as follows:

Human life, as a gift of God, is sacred and inviolable. For this reason procured abortion and euthanasia are absolutely unacceptable. Not only must human life not be taken, but it must be protected with loving concern. The meaning of life is found in giving and receiving love, and in this light human sexuality and procreation reaches their true and full significance. Love also gives meaning to suffering and death; despite the mystery which surrounds them, they can become saving events. Respect for life requires that science and technology should always be at the service of man and his integral development. Society as a whole must respect, defend and promote the dignity of every human person, at every moment and in every condition of that person's life.⁴³

John Paul II was a fearless man on earth. In his life time he has been always remembered his motto "Be not afraid", and he practiced it indeed himself, especially when defending human life from the womb to the tomb. He wants every single person to face his or her natural end of life. On October 7, 1979, on the occasion of his Apostolic Journey to the United States of America, while celebrating the Holy Mass at the Capital Mall, he proclaimed in his homily:

⁴¹ John Paul II, *Evangelium Vitae*, 28.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 79.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 81.

I do not hesitate to proclaim before you and before the world that all human life—from the moment of conception and through all subsequent stages—is sacred, because human life is created in the image and likeness of God. Nothing surpasses the greatness or dignity of a human person. Human life is not just an idea or an abstraction; human life is the concrete reality of a being that lives, that acts, that grows and develops; human life is the concrete reality of a being that is capable of love, and of service to humanity.⁴⁴

Nevertheless, in some serious cases which cause great danger to others, capital punishment might be taken into consideration in order to secure other's life. One of the writers commented on the position of the Holy Father, "'Only God is the master of life!' he writes. However, the 'right to protect one's own life' can come up against 'the duty not to harm someone else's life.' For instance, it may be that we cannot protect the life of an innocent child except by harming the person who is trying to hurt that child."⁴⁵ Besides, that Pope John Paul II modifies his stance on the death penalty "In *Evangelium Vitae*, St. John Paul goes on to explain that there is a 'growing tendency' within developed countries to limit and even to abolish the punishment. He explains that the purpose of a punishment is primarily 'to redress the disorder caused by the offense.' The death penalty should only be used 'in cases of absolute necessity.'"⁴⁶ The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* goes even further than that, when it writes: "Today, in fact, as a consequence of the possibilities which the state has for effectively preventing crime, by rendering one who has committed an offense incapable of doing harm – without definitively taking away from him the possibility

⁴⁴ John Paul II, "Apostolic Journey to the United States of American: Homily at Holy Mass (Sunday, 7 October 1979) Capital Mall, Washington" (Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1979). Available from http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/homilies/1979/documents/hf_jp-ii_hom_19791007_usa-washington.html (accessed on May 18, 2015).

⁴⁵ Omar Gutiérrez, "Only God Is the Master of Life!" *Catholic Answer* 29, no. 1 (March 2015): 14-17, esp. 15. *Academic Search Complete*, EBSCOhost (accessed April 21, 2015).

⁴⁶ Ibid.

of redeeming himself – the cases in which the execution of the offender is an absolute necessity are very rare, if not practically non-existent.”⁴⁷

Nonetheless, nowadays, regarding death penalty, the teaching of the Catholic Church became more and more clear and unambiguous. On his Apostolic Journey to America 1999, Pope John Paul II made a clear statement in his homily:

A sign of hope is the increasing recognition that the dignity of human life must never be taken away, even in the case of someone who has done great evil. Modern society has the means of protecting itself, without definitively denying criminals the chance to reform. I renew the appeal I made most recently at Christmas for a consensus to end the death penalty, which is both cruel and unnecessary.⁴⁸

Not only John Paul II, but also his successors, Pope Benedict XVI as well as Pope Francis, the present Pontiff, continuously spoke out against the death penalty. Pope Francis is strongly against the death penalty since his time as the Archbishop of Buenos Aires. His latest statement against the death penalty is entitled: *Letter of his Holiness Pope Francis to the President of the International Commission against the Death Penalty*. In this letter, Pope Francis writes:

Today capital punishment is unacceptable, however serious the condemned’s crime may have been. It is an offence to the inviolability of life and to the dignity of the human person which contradicts God’s plan for man and for society and his merciful justice, and it fails to conform to any just purpose of punishment. It does not render justice to the victims, but rather foments revenge... Justice is never reached by killing a human being... All Christians and men of good will are thus called today to fight not only for the abolition of the death penalty, whether legal or illegal, and in all its forms, but also in order to improve prison conditions, with respect for the human dignity of the people deprived of their freedom.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, (Latin version issued by Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1994), United States Catholic Conference, 1994. English translation of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church: Modifications from the Editio Typica*, 1997, United States Catholic Conference (New York: Doubleday, 1995), 2267.

⁴⁸ John Paul II, “Apostolic Journey to the United States of America, Homily at Liturgy of Vespers (27 January 1999), Saint Louis Cathedral Basilica” (Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1999). Available from https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/homilies/1999/documents/hf_jp-ii_hom_19990127_stlouis-vespers.html (accessed on May 18, 2015).

⁴⁹ Pope Francis, *Letter to the President of the International Commission against the Death Penalty* (Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2015). Available from <http://w2.vatican.va/>

Pope Francis wants human dignity and human freedom to be respected in every situation. He concludes his statement to the President of the International Commission against the Death Penalty as follows:

I take my leave while entrusting you to the Lord Jesus who, in the days of his earthly life, did not want his persecutors to be harmed in his defence: “Put your sword back into its place” (Mt 26:52), was captured and unjustly condemned to death, and who identified with all prisoners, whether guilty or not: “I was in prison and you came to me” (Mt 25:36). May He, who before the adulterous woman did not question her guilt, but invited the accusers to examine their own consciences before throwing a stone at her (cf. Jn 8:1-11), grant you the gift of wisdom, in order that the action you undertake in favour of the abolition of this cruel punishment, may be appropriate and fruitful.⁵⁰

F. On Human Development

Like his predecessor Pope Paul VI, also Pope John Paul II reflected a lot about the question of human development, individually and socially. Human development is for him at its core and center a moral question and it is wrong to neglect or even deny the moral dimension of human life. “Human development is never a merely technical or economic question; it is fundamentally a *human and moral* question.”⁵¹ Another crucial aspect in this regard is, that authentic human development affects the whole person and all persons. John Paul II follows in this also closely Pope Paul VI and his Encyclical Letter *Popularum Progressio* (on the Development of Peoples) 1967. “Collaboration in the development of the whole person and of every human being is in fact a duty of *all towards all*, and must be shared by the four parts of the world: East and West, North and South.”⁵² This issue of authentic development of the *whole*

content/francesco/en/letters/2015/ documents/papa-francesco_20150320_lettera-pena-morte.html (accessed on May 18, 2015).

⁵⁰ Pope Francis, *Letter to the President of the International Commission against the Death Penalty*.

⁵¹ John Paul II, *Ecclesia in Asia*, 32.

⁵² John Paul II, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, 32.

person and of *all* human beings is of course highly relevant for the issue of human work, the proper understanding of the relevance and dignity of human work and its spiritual dimension.

CHAPTER III

SPIRITUALITY OF WORK IN *LABOREM EXERCENS*

Saint John Paul II concludes the last chapter of *Laborem Exercens* presenting elements for a spirituality of work. In the said chapter the Holy Father emphasizes the important fundamentals such as that human work and human rest are a sharing in God's creation, and human work is a following in the footsteps of Jesus Christ, a carpenter's son, who himself was a carpenter, as well as of Apostle Paul, a tentmaker. Due to the toil of work in union with Jesus Christ, who was crucified for all people, human beings in a way participate with the Son of God in the redemption of humanity. To investigate the spirituality of work in *Laborem Exercens*, it is good to have some fore taste of Christian spirituality at the beginning of this chapter.

A. A Glimpse on Christian Spirituality

There are various forms of religions existing in our world. Each religion has its own worldview and way of understanding life and human practice, its purpose and goal. Among these practices spirituality is one of the common features in almost all religions. Without any form of spiritual practice a religion cannot exist or develop stable. Spirituality is an important core value in every form of religion. A clear definition of what spirituality and religion is was given by the development scientist Kurt Alan Ver Beek when he writes:

I will define spirituality as a relationship with the supernatural or spiritual realm that provides meaning and a basis for personal and communal reflection, decisions, and action. While religion is generally considered an institutionalized set of beliefs and practices regarding

the spiritual realm, spirituality describes the personal and relational side of those beliefs, which shape daily life. So while one could be spiritual without being religious or vice versa, in practice the two are commonly intertwined as people experience and describe their spirituality through a religious perspective.¹

Spirituality therefore accounts for the deepest framework of meaning for our decisions and actions, both as individuals and as communities. In the following the researcher will discuss Christian Spirituality in general.

Christian Spirituality is not a creative way of Christian life but is rooted in the life of Jesus Christ, who was the spiritual master himself. Christian Spirituality refer to a life that follows in the footstep of its master, Jesus Christ, who is the way, the truth and the life. Christian Spirituality has to do with one's "interior life' one's self-awareness of presence-to-God"² who gives us meaning in our life, but it has also effects outside in our behavior and actions. To put it into another word, "Surely any spirituality that claims to be true must direct every deliberate act of the agent who lives by it to God as the supreme good and ultimate end. Every act, if it is to be morally upright, must be directed, at least virtually or habitually, if not explicitly, to the honor and glory of God, to the love of God above all things."³ Alfred Wilder explains Christian Spirituality in the following way:

Christian spirituality is not exhaustively a conviction about how things are. Christian spirituality culminates in a love of things and their Creator. However, Christian life essentially does involve a conviction about how things are; it involves a creed. As a matter of fact, it involves a tenaciously held conviction about how certain fundamentally important things are in reality. In relation to God, man, and the world, it involves that state of dignity

¹ Kurt Alan Ver Beek, "Spirituality: a development taboo," *Development in Practice* 10/1 (February 2000), 31-42, esp. 32.

² Richard J. Woods, *Christian Spirituality, God's Presence through the Ages* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2006), 2.

³ Alfred Wilder, "Christian and Non-Christian Spiritualities," *Compendium of Spirituality, vol.2*, compiled by Emeterio De Cea, translated and adapted by Jordan Aumann (Staten Island, NY: Alba House, 1996), 1-19, esp. 3.

which is the possession of the truth. Christian spirituality is clearly a matter of orthodoxy, not merely a matter of orthopraxis.⁴

Thus, Christian spirituality is to be understood as to be related to the whole life of a person, a life that integrates personal and social life, faith and good deeds, prayer and work, past, presence, and future, and above all, the love of God, and the love of the neighbor and of the people, and the love of the self. Michael Downey elaborates on this:

Christian spirituality is rooted in a sense of belonging to a people who together express their sense of the sacred through word, gesture, action, event, tradition, community. The presence of the sacred is mediated through persons, preeminently the person of Jesus Christ. As a consequence the spiritual quest has everything to do with being in right relationship with others in the believing community and the wider human community.⁵

Traditionally, the essential elements of Christian Spirituality are grace with the Sacraments; prayer, the virtues principally, the theological virtues, and the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Grace is the fundamental gift of God through Jesus Christ that brings Christians closely to God and towards each other. Grace is a real share in the very life of God, by satisfying grace the life of humankind is transformed into the life of the children of God. Jordan Aumann defines Christian Spirituality as follows:

Christian spirituality is therefore a participation in the mystery of Christ through the interior life of grace, actuated by faith, charity, and the other Christian virtues. The life that the individual receives through participation in Christ is the same life that animated the God-man, the life that the Incarnate Word shares with the Father and the Holy Spirit; it is, therefore, the life of God in the august mystery of the Trinity. Through Christ, the spiritual life of the Christian is eminently Trinitarian.⁶

⁴ Wilder, "Christian and Non-Christian Spiritualities," *Compendium of Spirituality*, 1-19, esp. 8.

⁵ Michael Downey, *Understanding Christian Spirituality* (Mahwah, N.J.: Paulist Press, 1997), 30.

⁶ Jordan Aumann, *Spiritual Theology* (Manila: UST Publishing House, 1998), 18.

Consequently Christian Spirituality is not only a life merely following in the footsteps of Jesus Christ but it is also a Trinitarian spirituality because of the relationship with God the Father and of Jesus Christ, and his sending of the Holy Spirit. Consequently, a Christian enters somehow into the life of the Trinitarian God. Through the Son, Christians became sons and daughters of God the Father. It can also be said that Christian Spirituality has a social dimension. From the very beginning Christians had practiced a sharing of life, a social life and they live for each other and shared what they have (cf. Acts 2:44ff). Furthermore Christians do not live for their own sake; they do live their life in the world and for the world at large. In the whole, Christian spirituality means “closeness to God”⁷ and in order to be closer to God the most and powerful way is to continue his work so that by work all can come closer to God, the creator. But this closeness to God happens in a concrete community, the Church, the new family of brothers and sisters following the Lord. This is why Christian Spirituality is very concrete for example in the Sacraments and so on and so forth.

B. Human Work as a Particular Mission for the Church

First of all, for Saint John Paul II, the duty of the Church is to develop and to teach a spirituality of work “as one of her important tasks within the service that she renders to the evangelical message as a whole.”⁸ Secondly, the Church has to see

⁷ Salgado, *Social Encyclical*, 341.

⁸ John Paul II, *Laborem Exercens*, 24.

work “as her particular duty to form a spirituality of work which will help all people to come closer, through work, to God, the Creator and Redeemer.”⁹

According to the Biblical account, human beings have this mission since the beginning of creation. God the creator made human beings in the likeness of his own image and said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth” (Gen 1: 28; NRSV). This shows that God wills humans to take care of every creature and to continue the work of creation as responsible stewards.

It does not mean that human beings take the place of the creator absolutely but relatively, “Man is the image of God partly through the mandate received from his Creator to subdue, to dominate, the earth. In carrying out this mandate, man, every human being, reflects the very action of the Creator of the universe.”¹⁰ That is why, whether it is manual or intellectual work,¹¹ every single person should realize that he or she is participating, producing and continuing the work of the creator in this world. “Since work in its subjective aspect is always a personal action, an *actus personae*, it follows that the whole person, body and spirit, participates in it, whether it is manual or intellectual work.”¹²

Among the work of the Church, the proclamation of the good news is one of her major activities. The Church cannot bring to an end the work of Jesus Christ

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid., 4.

¹¹ Ibid., 24.

¹² Ibid.

through whom salvation is given to human beings. The Social Teaching of the Church is proclaimed as follows:

At the dawn of this Third Millennium, the Church does not tire of proclaiming the Gospel that brings salvation and genuine freedom also to temporal realities. She is mindful of the solemn exhortation given by Saint Paul to his disciple Timothy: ‘Preach the word, be urgent in season and out of season, convince, rebuke, and exhort, be unfailing in patience and in teaching. For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own likings, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander into myths. As for you, always be steady, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry’ (2 Tim 4:2-5).¹³

More than two thousand years have passed and the Church never gave up preaching the good news of Jesus Christ to all nations. The Church always follows her Lord and makes every effort to spread the good news whether in person or by the media. The Church cannot deny the important role of the media nowadays. Pope Benedict XVI, at the 43rd World Communications Day, “encouraged Catholics to boldly enter the ‘digital continent.’ Despite being over 80 years old, Benedict keenly recognizes this digital world for what it is: a ripe mission field for the Church.”¹⁴ Also the present Pope Francis makes use of his Tweeter by posting a single message almost every day to communicate to the young generation.

C. Work as a Sharing in the Activity of the Creator

In his Encyclical Letter *Laborem Exercens*, Pope John Paul II states that, “The word of God’s revelation is profoundly marked by the fundamental truth that man,

¹³ Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* (Washington D.C.: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2005), 2.

¹⁴ Brandon Vogt, *The Church and New Media, Blogging Converts, Online Activists, and Bishop who Tweet* (Huntington, Indiana: Our Sunday Visitor, 2011), 19.

created in the image of God, shares by his work in the activity of the Creator and that, within the limits of his own human capabilities, man in a sense continues to develop that activity, and perfects it as he advances further and further in the discovery of the resources and values contained in the whole of creation.”¹⁵ Among all creatures only human beings can do and maintain the work of the Creator. By their work they discover more and more their limitations and they come to realize that the whole of creation is full of the wisdom and the activity of God which has to be reflected in the activities of human beings.

The meaning of creation, for human beings can be seen in the first chapter of the book of Genesis which Saint John Paul II called “the first ‘gospel of work’. For it shows what the dignity of work is about: it teaches that man ought to imitate God, his Creator, in working, because man alone has the unique characteristic of being in the likeness to God. Man ought to imitate God both in working and also in resting, since God himself wished to present his own creative activity under the form of work and rest.”¹⁶ Human work and rest assume a deep and significant meaning in the book of Genesis by being likened to the work and rest of God himself.

At this point “work” can be understood in a way as caring for creation in one’s daily life. Nonetheless, if the researcher is not mistaken, “rest” can be understood in two different ways. One way can be understood as a resting time for human beings to give time to their Creator. Another way of understanding rest is as a final rest which means the end of earthly life, or to put it into another way, to find the last fulfillment in God and to be with him. That is why God the Creator wants his

¹⁵ John Paul II, *Laborem Exercens*, 25.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

creatures, especially human beings, to take rest and to contemplate about their final destination on the day of rest. “Therefore man’s work too not only requires a rest every ‘seventh day’, but also cannot consist in the mere exercise of human strength in external action; it must leave room for man to prepare himself, by becoming more and more what in the will of God he ought to be, for the ‘rest’ that the Lord reserves for his servants and friends.”¹⁷

Following the word of the Second Vatican Council, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes*, Saint John Paul II affirms that every human being should realize that in his or her daily life even the most ordinary of everyday activities are performed as form of participation in God’s activity. “For, while providing the substance of life for themselves and their families, men and women are performing their activities in a way which appropriately benefits society. They can justly consider that by their labor they are unfolding the Creator’s work.”¹⁸ Every single work done by a person is to be considered as participation in the process of the creation activity. This can be seen in a simple and humble and basic work such as cleaning the house, doing the laundry and so on and so forth.

The Holy Father continues to emphasize that the “Christian spirituality of work should be a heritage shared by all. Especially in the modern age, the spirituality of work should show the maturity called for by the tensions and restlessness of mind and heart.”¹⁹ Indeed it is true that in the modern age, the more people advance in technology the more they forget about their basic relationship with their Creator and sometimes they even see themselves as there would not be a greater one in the

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

universe then they themselves, becoming in fact a kind of rival to the Creator.

Likewise the Second Vatican Council, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes* writes:

Far from considering the conquests of man's genius and courage as opposed to God's power as if he set himself up as a rival to the creator, Christians ought to be convinced that the achievements of the human race are a sign of God's greatness and the fulfillment of his mysterious design. With an increase in human power comes a broadening of responsibility on the part of individuals and communities: there is no question, then, of the Christian message inhibiting men from building up the world or making them disinterested in the good of their fellows: on the contrary it is an incentive to do these very things.²⁰

Saint John Paul II teaches, that "[t]he knowledge that by means of work man shares in the work of creation constitutes the most profound motive for undertaking it in various sectors."²¹ Furthermore, referring to the Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, he affirms that,

The faithful therefore must learn the deepest meaning and the value of all creation, and its orientation to the praise of God. Even by their secular activity they must assist one another to live holier lives. In this way the world will be permeated by the spirit of Christ and more affectively achieve its purpose in justice, charity and peace... Therefore, by their competence in secular fields and by their personal activity, elevated from within by the grace of Christ, let them work vigorously so that by human labour, technical skill, and civil culture created goods may be perfected according to the design of the Creator and the light of his Word.²²

D. Work as an Imitation of Christ

There is no doubt that Jesus Christ himself was a worker and he did not work reluctantly under his foster-father Saint Joseph, the carpenter. Though he was the son

²⁰ Second Vatican Council, *Gaudium et Spes*, 34.

²¹ John Paul II, *Laborem Exercens*, 25.

²² Ibid. See also Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church Lumen Gentium*, 36.

of God he obediently and willingly worked for his family daily bread. In fact, whether one sees Jesus as a human person or as divine person, his work is related to the Father, the almighty, who began all work. As a consequence, by imitating the Father, the Son continues the work of the Father working among humankind. Because of Jesus, the work of the Father became newly alive in the history of humanity. Hence, human beings, who are made in the image and likeness of God, their Creator, must do their work according to the Creator's work. Everything they do must resemble God the Father and Jesus Christ.

The reality of God's plan to continue his work was made known through the incarnation and activity of Jesus Christ by taking on human life. Under the instruction of his foster-father Saint Joseph Jesus works tirelessly during his life time on earth, not only in view of earthly work only but Jesus also fulfills his Father wills and plan by preaching the Good News:

Going from town to town, preaching to the poorest – and frequently the most receptive – the joyful news of the fulfillment of the promises and of the Covenant offered by God is the mission for which Jesus declares that he is sent by the Father. And all the aspects of his mystery – the Incarnation itself, his miracles, his teaching, the gathering together of the disciples, the sending out of the Twelve the Cross and the Resurrection, the permanence of his presence in the midst of his own – were components of his evangelizing activity.²³

Following and imitating Jesus Christ, as he makes know the Father through his preaching, Christians too must witness and make known the Good News of Jesus Christ through their daily work. All baptized are called to profess and proclaim the word of life to the nations. To make Jesus, known which is “In Jesus, the ‘Word of life,’ God’s eternal life is thus proclaimed and given... the Gospel of life includes

²³ Pope Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 6.

everything that human experience and reason tells us about the value of human life, accepting it, purifying it, exalting it and bringing it to fulfillment.”²⁴

Christians, in turn, are placed in a responsible position in their work. Their work must take on a deep meaning and their tasks must be similar to Jesus; done in love and joy. Here is where the redemptive plan of salvation continues in this world, the plan of redemption as it relates to human work. This does not only concern God’s work, but the work of Jesus, the work of Joseph as well as of Mary, and even all work done by all those who follow Jesus Christ and have experienced firsthand the redemption of the world by following in his footsteps.

(1) Christ: A Man of Work

When Jesus began his mission, many of his listeners were astonished because in their eyes he was not a professional preacher but he was a professional carpenter. When he began his teaching many spoke about him as described by Mark, the evangelist: “Where did this man get all this? What is this wisdom that has been given to him? What deeds of power are being done by his hands! Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary...?” (Mk 6:2-3; NRSV). Certainly, Jesus was a perfect worker and he loved to work and “Through work Jesus journeyed to the Father. Through work Jesus merited his place at the right hand of the Father.”²⁵ Saint John Paul II says of him that, “he belongs to the ‘working world’, he has appreciation and respect for human work.”²⁶ The Holy Father continues to emphasize that Jesus Christ “looks with love

²⁴ Pope Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 30.

²⁵ Salgado, *Social Encyclical*, 342.

²⁶ John Paul II, *Laborem Exercens*, 26.

upon human work and the different forms that it takes, seeing in each one of these forms a particular facet of man's likeness with God, the Creator and Father."²⁷

Christ himself understood very well the different dimensions of human work. Whenever he spoke to his listeners he usually referred to practical daily examples such as "the shepherd, the farmer, the doctor, the sower, the householder, the servant, the steward, the fisherman, the merchant, the labourer. He also speaks of the various forms of women's work. He compares the apostolate to the manual work of harvesters or fishermen."²⁸ In the same manner Karl H. Peschke elaborates:

Work is considered by Christ a natural, integral part of human life. In his discourses and parables he often illustrates his teachings by examples taken from the world of labour: the farmer in the fields, the woman about her housework, the faithful and unfaithful servants, the fisherman, the hired hand in the vineyard. The parables demand industry, reliability and fidelity in work (Lk 16:10-12). The servant who buried his talent in the ground is punished as lazy and wicked. The industrious servants who worked with their capital are praised and rewarded as faithful and good stewards (Mt 24:45-51; 25:14-30; Lk 19:12-27).²⁹

Not only in the New Testament are such examples mentioned but already the Old Testament refers to human work and individual professions, which are mentioned in high regard. For example, "the doctor, the pharmacist, the craftsman or artist, the blacksmith, the farmer, the scholar, the sailor, the builder, the musician, the shepherd, the fisherman."³⁰ One wonderful example is the description of the multi-talented and God fearing business woman in Proverbs 31.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Karl H. Peschke, *Christian Ethics: Moral Theology in the Light of Vatican II* (Bangalore: Theological Publications, 2013), 679-680.

³⁰ John Paul II, *Laborem Exercens*, 26.

The Holy Father John Paul II refers also to the Apostle Paul and his work, who was a tent-maker and was earning his bread by working in his own profession while doing missionary work. The Apostle Paul did not want to burden any of the Christian communities wherever he went and stayed. Besides doing preaching and mission work he earned his own living, working by his own hands. Paul declares about him and his missionary helpers that, "...we were not idle when we were with you, and we did not eat anyone's bread without paying for it; but with toil and labour we worked night and day, so that we might not burden any of you" (2 Thess 3:7-8; NRSV). This remarks of Paul were not meant to boast of himself but to give clear guidelines for those who do not want to work and stay day by day in idleness. In like manner, Pope John Paul II highlights in his Encyclical:

Hence his instructions, in the form of exhortation and command, on the subject of work: 'Now such persons we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work in quietness and to earn their own living', he writes to the Thessalonians. In fact, noting that some 'are living in idleness... not doing any work', the Apostle does not hesitate to say in the same context: 'If anyone will not work, let him not eat'. In another passage he encourages his readers: 'whatever your task, work heartily, as serving the Lord and not men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward'.³¹

The teaching of Apostle Paul, contains a good "morality and spirituality of human work"³² considering his own missionary example and lifestyle. According to Karl H. Peschke, this was also important to give credibility to the proclaimed Good News: "In a pagan surrounding, which often had little appreciation for manual labour,

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

Christians were expected all the more to earn an honest living by the work of their hands.”³³

Relating to the teaching of the Apostle, and by quoting the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes*, the Holy Father asserts that,

Just as human activity proceeds from man, so it is ordered towards man. For when a man works he not only alters things and society, he develops himself as well. He learns much, he cultivates his resources, he goes outside of himself and beyond himself. Rightly understood, this kind of growth is of greater value than any external riches which can be garnered ... Hence, the norm of human activity is this: that in accord with the divine plan and will, it should harmonize with the genuine good of the human race, and allow people as individuals and as members of society to pursue their total vocation and fulfill it.³⁴

Work does not just show who a person or a Christian is towards others, but by work a person or a Christian can make progress of himself and develop personally, because “a person is more precious for what he is than for what he has.”³⁵ That is why the teaching about the question of “progress and development – a subject that dominates present-day thought – can be understood only as the fruit of a tested spirituality of human work; and it is only on the basis of such a spirituality that it can be realized and put into practice.”³⁶

³³ Peschke, *Christian Ethics*, 680.

³⁴ John Paul II, *Laborem Exercens*, 26.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Ibid.*

(2) Work and the Sharing in the Passion of Christ and his Death

Regarding the work of God's plan, the dramatic reality of human work in the history is human sin. The researcher is now referring to work which is often not free or involuntary. This non-free or forced work is often imposed on people by the difficult circumstances and situations that one can neither calculate nor control and it is a work that goes against one's will and attitudes, and therefore causes uneasiness. Not only for human beings but even for Jesus himself, on the night before his passion in the garden of Gethsemane he prayed: "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me; yet, not my will but yours be done" (Luke 22:42; NRSV). Facing the reality of suffering by taking up his Cross and entering into his Paschal Mystery, the Holy Father emphasized regarding the saving work of Jesus Christ:

In a sense, the final word of the Gospel on this matter as on others is found in the Paschal Mystery of Jesus Christ. It is here that we must seek an answer to these problems so important for the spirituality of human work. The Paschal Mystery contains the Cross of Christ and his obedience unto death, which the Apostle contrasts with the disobedience which from the beginning has burdened man's history on earth. It also contains the elevation of Christ, who by means of death on a Cross returns to his disciples in the Resurrection with the power of the Holy Spirit.³⁷

Dying on a cross had a precise language and meaning for the Jews and pagans in the time of Jesus as well as for the first Christian community. For the Jews, to die on a cross clearly demonstrated that God had abandoned an individual. Thus the evangelist, presenting the crucifixion, emphasizes this solitude and abandonment which is expressed in Psalm 22: "*Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?*" which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Matt 27:46; NRSV). This Psalm presents the cry and prayer of the virtuous man. In its opening line, which Matthew quotes, Jesus is praying a word of lament without rebellion.

³⁷ John Paul II, *Laborem Exercens*, 27.

Out of love and without any violence, Jesus peacefully undergoes the crucifixion on the cross for all the sinners. The death of Jesus on the cross seems to be all the less divine who seems to be incapable of participating in the affairs of this world and unable to suffer or have compassion with those inferior to him. But this view about God proved to be wrong by the very fact of the Son of God suffering and dying on a cross. Referring to the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes*, the Holy Father states;

Christ, 'undergoing death itself for all of us sinners, taught us by example that we too must shoulder that cross which the world and the flesh inflict upon those who pursue peace and justice'; but also, at the same time, 'appointed Lord by his Resurrection and given all authority in heaven and on earth, Christ is now at work in people's hearts through the power of his Spirit... He animates, purifies, and strengthens those noble longings too, by which the human family strives to make its life more human and to render the whole earth submissive to this goal'.³⁸

Every Christian has the opportunity to share in the passion and death of Jesus Christ. Christians, because of their daily toil, thus become co-workers of Christ for the redemption of human beings. For example, in case of migrant workers, for most of them it is a hardship to leave their families, friends, and homes. Due to the circumstances, they have to leave everything behind and enter somehow into the passion and death like Jesus for a while in order for the prospect to enter into the eternal joy with their families for the rest of their life. The passion of Christ happened once for all historically two thousand years ago. Nonetheless, it is experienced today in the suffering of many people such as the unemployed, those who have to live in fear all the time, the anxious and afflicted living in prisons, the victims of absurd and

³⁸ Ibid., see also Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes*, 38.

ruthless violence, and also the elderly, who often have been cast aside from life and left all alone, and the abandoned children, the homeless, and so on and so forth.

The passion of Jesus Christ teaches Christians not only to recognize those who suffer in order that they might find help and solidarity, but also to break out of the existing conditions of violence which seem to perpetuate themselves in the heart of humanity and in the history of human beings. His passion and death shows, that Jesus Christ loves humankind in everyone. He loves human beings despite their sinfulness. Jesus Christ does not withdraw or turn his back on human beings. Instead, he seeks to reawaken in human beings the beautiful attributes of penitence, conversion as well as rediscovered faith.

The Holy Father continues to express that, “By enduring the toil of work in union with Christ crucified for us, man in a way collaborates with the Son of God for the redemption of humanity. He shows himself as a true disciple of Christ by carrying the cross in his turn every day in the activity that he is called upon to perform.”³⁹ In his book *Jesus of Nazareth*, Joseph Ratzinger proclaims that, “The mystery of the Cross does not simply confront us; rather, it draws us in and gives a new value to our life.”⁴⁰

The cross of Jesus Christ is a message about man and God. The humanism of the cross condemns the false humanism of excessive power, abuse and envy, which is exemplified practically in those persons who put Jesus Christ to death. At the same time, the crucifixion suggests a new humanism of obedient discipleship and overcoming violence, injustice and sin. Being a disciple means changing one’s life

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Benedict XVI, *Jesus of Nazareth, Holy Week: From the Entrance into Jerusalem to the Resurrection* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2011), 236.

totally into a new life and turning fully to Jesus Christ, who is the “way, the truth and the life.” It means carrying his own cross every day, and, if necessary, facing persecution and being ready to die for Jesus Christ and the sake of the kingdom of God.

In the contemplation and adoration of the cross, one can see the perfect way towards deliverance through obedience, sacrifice and above all love. The obedience of Jesus, up to the point of death, reveals his constant and deep filial relationship with God, the Father. Jesus, the Word, who was in the beginning, cannot live if not in acceptance of the way of the obedient Word. He opened a way to end violence on earth. Recently, in his Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, Pope Francis declared that, “Without prolonged moments of adoration, of prayerful encounter with the word, of sincere conversation with the Lord, our work easily becomes meaningless; we lose energy as a result of weariness and difficulties, and our fervor dies out.”⁴¹ So we have to link all our efforts and work with the redemptive work of our Savior in order to bring the proper fruits.

(3) Work and the Sharing of the Resurrection of Christ

From the perspective of human beings human work and the resurrection seem not to be related. However, “the Church sees work not only through the natural light of reason, namely the sciences, but also through the light of faith, through the truth

⁴¹ Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 262.

namely that God revealed to the human being.”⁴² Concerning the light of faith, the Holy Father elaborates:

The Christian finds in human work a small part of the Cross of Christ and accepts it in the same spirit of redemption in which Christ accepted his Cross for us. In work, thanks to the light that penetrates us from the Resurrection of Christ, we always find a glimmer of new life, of the new good, as if it were an announcement of ‘the new heavens and the new earth’ in which man and the world participate precisely through the toil that goes with work... On the one hand this confirms the indispensability of the Cross in the spirituality of human work; on the other hand the Cross which this toil constitutes reveals a new good springing from work itself, from work understood in depth and in all its aspects and never apart from work.⁴³

After the resurrection of Jesus Christ, every work of Christians must be viewed in a new way. Only in the light of the resurrection makes everything sense, and everything takes on a new meaning and divine tone. Everything is susceptible to being redeemed in hope because the power of the resurrection reaches every place, every time, and every situation of life. Christians are called to prepare themselves with a new mind and heart to be able to grasp that power of resurrection and to give witness to it in their daily work and life.

Christians must understand that the Paschal victory of Jesus Christ, which certainly concerns all the evil in the world such as sin, violence, arms, war and death must first be accepted and realized in themselves before witnessing it to others. That means also that this must happen through them in the community of the Church, in the community and society wherever they live. Christians are the first fruits of the resurrection; they are the gift of Jesus’ victory for all the nations. *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* declares that, “To be a witness to Christ is to be a ‘witness to his Resurrection,’ to ‘have eaten and drunk with him after he rose from the dead.’

⁴² Salgado, *Social Encyclical*, 315.

⁴³ John Paul II, *Laborem Exercens*, 27.

Encounters with the risen Christ characterize the Christian hope of resurrection. We shall rise like Christ, with him, and through him.”⁴⁴ As a result, Christians must, of course, witness the joy of the resurrection which they have received and they must proclaim in faith.

It is impossible to have hope without faith. In his very first Encyclical Letter *Lumen Fidei*, Pope Francis affirms, “Faith is born of an encounter with the living God who calls us and reveals his love, a love which precedes us and upon which we can lean for security and for building our lives. Transformed by this love, we gain fresh vision, new eyes to see; we realize that it contains a great promise of fulfillment, and that a vision of the future opens up before us.”⁴⁵

E. Work as Participation in the Transformation of the World

In the beginning of Creation, every work, that the Creator accomplished “was good” (Gen 1:25; NRSV). After the fall it seemed to be that everything turned away from the Creator. Nevertheless, because of his grace and mercy to his creatures, he gives them a chance to come back to him by their daily toils and the Creator himself heals the brokenness of the world, and he opens the way to fully restore his original intent for the world, including the role of humanity as co-creators with him. God the Creator himself redeems human beings in his Son to participate in his redemptive activity.

Christians are in a sense participating in the transformation of the world in their daily activities. They are called to be the people of God, to be the true witnesses

⁴⁴ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 995.

⁴⁵ Pope Francis, *Lumen Fidei*, 4.

of God in this world. “Let the Christians who listen to the word of the living God, uniting work with prayer, know the place that his work has not only in earthly progress but also in the development of the Kingdom of God, to which we are all called through the power of the Holy Spirit and through the word of the Gospel.”⁴⁶ By baptism and confirmation every Christian participates in the threefold mission of Christ. The Holy Father John Paul II continues to elaborate:

He who was born of the Virgin Mary, the carpenter’s Son – as he was thought to be – Son of the living God (confessed by Peter), has come to make us ‘a kingdom of priests’. The Second Vatican Council has reminded us of the mystery of this power and of the fact that the mission of Christ – Priest, Prophet-Teacher, King – continues in the Church. Everyone, the whole People of God, shares in this threefold mission.⁴⁷

Jesus Christ himself creates a way for his followers to follow him in order that they may become evangelizers. Christians take on this mission in obedience to Christ and must know that they have been sent by Jesus Christ. “It is clear that from the very origins of Christianity, the laity – as individuals, families, and entire communities – share in spreading the faith.”⁴⁸ All Christians have the clear duty to witness the faith and to transform the world by their work especially by living their faith for others.

The Church truly manifests the Risen Lord when it shows that in him every person is understood, loved, pardoned and saved. In that same manner, the Church must approach every individual as he or she is and must show them what they can become as well as must embrace all humanity with all its talents, hopes, challenges, and problems so as to point out the path for them that leads to Jesus Christ. The Church has the responsibility to present Jesus Christ in a proper way: “Even though

⁴⁶ John Paul II, *Laborem Exercens*, 27.

⁴⁷ John Paul II, *Christifideles Laici*, 14. Cf. also John Paul II, Homily at the Beginning of his Pastoral Ministry as Supreme Shepherd of the Church (22 October 1978).

⁴⁸ John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio*, 71.

‘Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever’ (Heb 13:8), it is necessary to present Him to the men and women of each period of history in a more adequate fashion befitting the new human circumstances.’⁴⁹

The word of God must be proclaimed to everyone. Jesus himself did the will of the Father to the point of death and so opened for everyone the way towards receiving the fullness of life. The evangelist presents the Risen Lord in a very meaningful way in the act of breathing the Spirit on his disciples.⁵⁰ This is obviously an allusion to Genesis, Chapter Two, which presents God, the Creator in the act of forming human beings and pouring into the human being a living spirit.⁵¹ Jesus, the son of God coming down to earth, becoming a human being, shared the full existence of humanity except sin. Thus all living beings, above all humans should know this fact so as to unite his or her personal life with the life of Jesus Christ and to find in Him truth and salvation.

Some Christians may assume that only those who are doing a specific ministry in the Church are the ones who can transform the world by their work. This is not true at all. In reality, all good work is helping and participating in the transformation of the world. A biblical understanding asserts that all work matters to God and provides an opportunity for people to participate in God’s ongoing creative work, as the call of human beings to take up responsibility in Genesis shows, in which the Creator says:

⁴⁹ Jesus Alvarez Gomez, *A New Evangelization for the Third Millennium* (Quezon City: Claretian Publications, 1997), Introduction.

⁵⁰ See John 20:21-23; NRSV, the text states: “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.’ When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.’”

⁵¹ See Genesis 2:4-7; NRSV, the text states: “In the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens, when no plant of the field was yet in the earth and no herb of the field had yet sprung up – for the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was no one to till the ground; but a stream would rise from the earth, and water the whole face of the ground – then the Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living being.”

Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.’ So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them, and God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.’⁵²

An integrated understanding of work from a biblical perspective needs to include a clear sense of Christian vocation, or calling. As Christians we are called first of all to find our identity in our relationship with God. This is our primary calling, that is to say; we are called to be missionaries. God’s mission is not primarily about getting people more involved in what most of Christians are doing, but getting Christians more involved in what God is doing in the world. All Christians are called and needed to witness the values of the kingdom of God.

In his Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, Pope Francis reminds us that, “Every Christian is a missionary to the extent that he or she has encountered the love of God in Christ Jesus: we no longer say that we are ‘disciples’ and ‘missionaries’, but rather that we are always ‘missionary disciples’.”⁵³ Equally important is that a “Christian community cannot be faithful to its Master and Lord unless it is committed to the mission entrusted to it by him, the mission to spread his Good News.”⁵⁴ There is no doubt that in the Holy Spirit, all human history is seen in a new light and is related to the Church. Her call to conversion and her witness to Hope in Jesus Christ brings about the transformation of the individuals and of societies. With this same gift of the Holy Spirit, all Christians must show their eagerness to offer their modest contribution, with all the sacrifices that will be

⁵² Gen 1:26-28; NRSV.

⁵³ Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 120.

⁵⁴ Dr. George Kaitholil, *Paul: Guide to Christian Living* (Bandra, Mumbai: St. Paul Press Training School, 2008), 173.

demanded of them, and with the great hope that is in their hearts by working with joy on the Transformation of the World. This Transformation comes about through His presence and love, who is our Lord, the “Pioneer and Perfecter of Faith” (Heb 12:2).

CONCLUSION

The course on 'Contemporary Issues in Global Christianity' which is given by Prof. Fr. Dr. Franz Gassner, SVD was the main insight subject that led the researcher to write this Practicum Paper on the Social Teaching of the Catholic Church. The researcher found out that among the many Popes who taught the Social Teaching of the Catholic Church, Pope John Paul II was the pope who influenced that teaching most.

The teachings of Pope John Paul II not accidently came to the fore after his election to the papacy 1978, but started to emerge already with his concern for humanity at the very beginning of his life time. He was the man of humanity who always thought about the human person, the common good and the relationships in a society. Whether in his philosophical writings or in his anthropological writings or in his theological treatises, he always has something to say for the sake of human being and not for his own sake.

This dissertation paper presents in the first chapter briefly the life of John Paul II. In the second chapter, one may get some taste of important thoughts of John Paul II on the human person and how he applies them in his ministry. Last but not the least, in the third chapter, one may encounter his teaching on the topic of spirituality of work based on his Encyclical Letter *Laborem Exercens* of 1981.

To sum up, this dissertation, reflects perspectives of Pope John Paul II's philosophical, anthropological and theological writings on the human person and how they pertain to human work. Especially his position on the spirituality of work in *Laborem Exercens* proves that he gives witness not only by his writings but also by his practical way of life. He himself really lived and showed exemplarily the world

how to live and work fully as a human being and how to care for every person and the whole creation and the common good. Truly, John Paul II was a man of and for humanity, a man for the marginalized, and a man of the forgotten who brought the face of God and the loving heart of the Creator to his creatures in this world.

We all are called to become holy by following in the footsteps of our Lord Jesus Christ. Often we fail to follow Jesus convincingly and to reach holiness in our daily life. John Paul II was the one who closely followed Jesus in every situation, whether by his writings, by his preaching and above all by his practical life example of faith, kindness and, mercy towards all people he encountered.

Indeed, John Paul II had experienced himself strongly the mercy of God and that mercy has to be reflected in human beings. He understood the role of God's mercy very well so that he actively promoted the Divine Mercy Sunday. One may recall that even when he died it happened on the vigil of the Divine Mercy Sunday on April 2, 2005. His beautification was also proclaimed by his successor Pope Benedict XVI on the Divine Mercy Sunday, May 1, 2011 and lastly his canonization was done by Pope Francis on April 27, 2014, the Divine Mercy Sunday. All these events truly show the relationship of Saint Pope John Paul II and the relevance of Divine Mercy in human history.

There are many issues of reflection in the life of Saint Pope John Paul II. This short paper could at least reflect on some elements of his teaching on the spirituality of work in honor of his work and sainthood. John Paul II's sainthood was the fastest one in the history of the Roman Catholic Church. There is no wonder for that because he was already "a living saint" during his life time. That is why immediately after his death many faithful were gathering at Saint Peter's square calling for his "Sainthood

Straight Away.” Before we have Pope John Paul II “the great” and now we have Saint Pope John Paul II, how blessed we are to have been his contemporary sons and daughters in this world.

Definitely, he had fed the sheep of his Master very well and now his Master rewards him with glory among his angels and saints. Saint Pope John Paul II, pray for us. Amen.

PRAYER TO ST. JOHN PAUL II¹

O, St. John Paul, from the window of heaven, grant us your blessing! Bless the church that you loved and served and guided, courageously leading it along the paths of the world in order to bring Jesus to everyone and everyone to Jesus. Bless the young, who were your great passion. Help them dream again, help them look up high again to find the light that illuminates the paths of life here on earth.

May you bless families, bless each family! You warned of Satan's assault against this precious and indispensable divine spark that God lit on earth. St. John Paul, with your prayer, may you protect the family and every life that blossoms from the family. Pray for the whole world, which is still marked by tensions, wars and injustice. You tackled war by invoking dialogue and planting the seeds of love: pray for us so that we may be tireless sowers of peace.

O St. John Paul, from heaven's window, where we see you next to Mary, send God's blessing down upon us all. Amen.

¹ Even though, the cardinal's office said there were no plans to provide official translations of the prayer. However, the above prayer was translated by the *Catholic News Service*, which is available from <https://cnsblog.wordpress.com/2014/04/25/vatican-issues-official-prayers-to-saints-john-xxiii-john-paul-ii/> (accessed on April 30, 2015)

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