

THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA

Pope John Paul II's Understanding of Education in Moral Values and Its Application to  
Catholic Secondary Education in Present-Day Nicaragua

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to the Faculty of the  
School of Theology and Religious Studies  
Of The Catholic University of America  
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree

Doctor of Sacred Theology

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Washington, D.C.

2011

Pope John Paul II's Understanding of Education in Moral Values and Its Application to  
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Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II reinvigorated Catholic education anthropologically and theologically. He encouraged Catholic schools, as a privileged place for Catholic education, to provide a solid Catholic moral foundation for their students. This dissertation explores his key ideas on Catholic education both before and after Wojtyla's elevation to the papacy. His teachings in this area are relevant to Nicaraguan Catholic schools to reinforce their current educational programs. Methodologically, this study focuses on the moral values of responsibility, justice and solidarity, highlighted by Pope John Paul II to the Church of Nicaragua. It then uses these values to analyze samples of the moral curricula of three religious communities used in Nicaraguan Catholic secondary schools in terms of their similarities to John Paul II's teaching on Catholic education. The study begins by analyzing the current moral reality of Nicaragua in which young people are immersed. The second chapter provides key concepts articulated by John Paul II through which he enriched the concept of the human person and on which he fundamentally based his moral theology. The third chapter develops the specific teachings of the late pope on Catholic education which could be applied as resources for a religious curriculum in Catholic schools. Finally, the conclusion summarizes some concerns that Catholic schools in Nicaragua must face as they deal with a crisis of values. The interest in a renewal of Catholic education emerges from an apparent crisis of identity in numerous Catholic schools around the world. Many schools have focused more on pedagogical process and

humanistic subject matter than on providing a Christian moral formation for their students.

Thus, John Paul II worked to remind Catholic schools of the riches of Vatican Council II and he motivated them in terms of his vision of the human person to offer a clear and vigorous Catholic education that would be able to respond to the challenges of contemporary society.

This dissertation by Silvio J. Fonseca-Martinez fulfills the dissertation requirement for the doctoral degree in Sacred Theology approved by John Grabowski, Ph.D., as Director, and by William Barbieri, Ph.D., and Frederick Ahearn, D.S.W. as Readers.

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Frederick Ahearn, D.S.W., Reader

## DEDICATION

This research is respectfully dedicated to the honor of all my professors who taught me at The Catholic University of America, and to many North American and Nicaraguan friends who supported and believed in me while I was experiencing difficult times working on my doctorate. Not having disappointed them is a great satisfaction to me.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my sincere gratitude to those persons who supported me and shared with me the happiness and sadness of these years of my doctorate. I would especially like to thank the brothers and sisters in the faith who live in the United States and during my stay there showed me such solidarity. In particular I would like to mention the *Cursillos de Cristiandad* of the Diocese de Arlington.

My special thanks go to Dr. John Grabowski, who guided me with courage and steadfastness during this process despite differences in language and culture. He became for me one of the greatest thinkers and professors that God has put in my academic life. Another special gratitude is for Father Francis Moloney, former Dean of the School of Theology and Religious Studies. He accepted and supported me in many ways during times when God sent me some difficult tests.

Another special gratitude is for Dr. Frederick Ahearn, a close friend and reader of this dissertation, who stood by my side while I was a student at this university and who gave me the confidence and hope to move forward in this great adventure. Equal gratitude goes to Dr. William Barbieri, my other reader, who helped me with his keen observations.

A special mention is for Bill Richey, my proofreader, whom God put in my path as an angel and whose solidarity will never be forgotten.

Finally, I would like to thank to the Catholic University of America, which contributed greatly to my progress and demonstrated a true solidarity with Nicaragua so that this doctorate might serve to prepare future priests and thereby strengthen evangelization in Nicaragua.

## INTRODUCTION

John Paul II, the 264<sup>th</sup> successor of Peter, named Karol Josef Wojtyla, elected pope on October 16, 1978, was born in Wadowice, Poland on May 18, 1920 and passed away on April 2, 2005. His life was filled with sorrow due to the early deaths of his parents and brother, the Nazi occupation of Poland, and the subsequent Communist invasion of his country. This painful life, however, made him remarkable and worthy of admiration. As John Cornwell describes him, John Paul II was an example of patience and fortitude.<sup>1</sup>

He was ordained to the priesthood in Krakow on November 1, 1946. His bishop discovered his intellectual skills and sent him to Rome, where he received a doctorate in theology in 1948 under the direction of R.M. Garrigou-Lagrange, an expert in Thomistic philosophy. He selected as the subject of his doctoral research St. John of the Cross. The focus of his dissertation, *Faith According to St. John of the Cross*, revealed his inclination to mystical experience and his concern to integrate faith and dogma. As Rocco Buttiglione asserts, Wojtyla achieved in his doctoral dissertation a unity of faith as an intellectual reality and as an experience of the Holy Spirit.<sup>2</sup>

In 1951 he went back to study at the Jagiellonian University, where he previously had studied in 1938, to prepare for a second doctorate that focused on the ethical system

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<sup>1</sup> John Cornwell, *The Pontiff in Winter. Triumph and Conflict in the Reign of John Paul II* (New York: Doubleday, 2004) xi.

<sup>2</sup> Rocco Buttiglione, *Karol Wojtyla. The Thought of the Man Who Became Pope John Paul II*, translated by Paolo Guietti & Francesca Murphy (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1997), 45.

of the phenomenologist Max Scheler. This German philosopher's phenomenological system and analysis of values attracted Wojtyla, who later applied this method to the morality of human acts. After acquiring his second doctorate, he spent part of his life as a professor at the Catholic University of Lublin. On July 4, 1958, Karol Wojtyla was appointed auxiliary bishop of Krakow, and then Archbishop of the same see. He participated actively in Vatican Council II, where he played an important role in the drafting of the documents of *Gaudium et spes* and *Dignitatis humanae*. He was made a Cardinal by Pope Paul VI on June 26, 1967.<sup>3</sup>

As pope, he promulgated fourteen encyclicals, fifteen apostolic exhortations, eleven apostolic constitutions, forty-five apostolic letters, and he gave innumerable messages and speeches. Among his innovations as pope was his founding of World Youth Day, which augured a true rejuvenation for the Catholic Church and prepared her for the Third Millennium.

His pontificate was one of the longest in the history of the Catholic Church. He is considered one of the most influential thinkers in current times for his contributions to philosophy and theology. Confronting a false humanism in the Eastern and Western world embodied in the Marxist and capitalist systems, he promoted a Christian humanism to defend human dignity. As Cardinal Stanislaw Dziwisz says: "He [the pope] did not

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<sup>3</sup> Among the many biographies of John Paul II are: Meg Green, *Pope John Paul II. A Biography* (Greenwood Press: London, 2003); Alain Vircondelet, *Jean-Paul II Biographie* (Paris: Éditions Julliard, 1994); and George Weigel, *Witness To Hope: The Biography of Pope John Paul II* (New York: Cliff Street Books, 1999).

believe that there could be such a thing as communism ‘with a human face,’ because Marxism takes away man’s freedom, and so limits his ability to act and to develop.”<sup>4</sup>

In his pastoral task as universal leader of the Catholic Church, he assumed the mission of applying the teachings of Vatican Council II, which attempted to create a dialogue with contemporaries in order to explain the truth of the human person, God, and the Church; to promote a renewal of the Church’s pastoral activity; to foster dialogue among different religions; to engage in ecumenism; and to reinforce the communion and discipline of the Catholic Church.

He wrote a new chapter of contemporary history with his convictions, teachings, and tenacity in struggling for a better world, which had been kidnapped by destructive and materialist doctrines proclaimed in Marxist ideology and in the capitalist system. Many countries, inspired by John Paul II’s legacy, took seriously his doctrine of human dignity and the right of individuals and nations to be free from ideological systems that deny the person’s freedom. This encouraged thinkers, political leaders, and peoples to seek their own freedom, which led to the collapse of a number of socialist regimes. He insisted in his pontificate that the only center of human history is Jesus Christ, not political or economic systems.<sup>5</sup>

Pope John Paul II’s more than one hundred pastoral trips marked him as a universal missionary promoting a widespread evangelization of the Catholic faith. His ability to communicate with the entire world has not been matched in the recent history of the

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<sup>4</sup> Stanislaw Cardinal Dziwisz, *A Life with Karol. My Forty-Year Friendship with the Man Who Became Pope*, translated by Adrian Walker (New York: Doubleday, 2003), 103.

<sup>5</sup> John Paul II, *Redemptor hominis*, 10, Redeemer of Humankind, *John Paul II, the Encyclicals in Everyday Language*, edited by Joseph G. Donders (New York: Orbis Books, 2001), p. 1, AAS 71 (1979): 257-324.

papacy. Similar to other experts in communication, he intelligently handled the mass media so that the good news of Jesus Christ reached out to all humanity.

In his pastoral travels pope John Paul II visited Nicaragua twice during very different political contexts. His first visit took place in 1983 while a Marxist government ruled the country, which for him was a deeply personal experience since he himself had lived under a similar communist regime in Poland. Historians recorded the offenses against the pontiff by the Sandinista government in his first visit that attempted a political manipulation of his pastoral journey. Observers also noted his public rebuke of Ernesto Cardenal, a Catholic priest who at that time worked for the Sandinista government.<sup>6</sup>

During his first visit, John Paul II spoke to Catholic educators, calling on them to form their students in human and Christian values and to build a new society founded on human dignity and the gospel's values. In fact, this dissertation is inspired by his pastoral concern for Catholic schools, whose mission consists in promoting human dignity, incarnating Christ in the mind of the students, and humanizing culture.

After being charged for twelve years as Episcopal Vicar for Catholic education for the Archdiocese of Managua, from 1992 through 2004, I realized that a great number of Nicaraguan Catholic schools suffer an identity crisis and find themselves to be ineffectual in dealing with new challenges raised by the modern world, such as moral relativism, which rejects traditional customs concerning family, respect for marriage and sexuality; the fair administration of justice, religious indifference, and a consumerist mentality.

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<sup>6</sup> Stanislaw Cardinal Dsiwysz states: "He [the Pope] suffered because of the profanation of the Eucharist, but also because the Sandinistas had prevented the faithful from reaching the place of celebration. Those who did manage to get through were confined to an area far away from the altar and the Pope, where they couldn't hear his homily." Dsiwysz, *A Life with Karol*, 103.

His second visit occurred in 1996 in a very different political context, this time during a democratic regime. At that time, people wanted to demonstrate to him their respect and fidelity to his teachings and to make clear that the offenses he suffered in his first visit came not from Catholic believers but from a few people who were orchestrated by the Sandinista regime and its top leaders. In this visit the pope improvised in his homily the expression “*Aquella era una noche oscura.*” (That was a dark night). This phrase was metaphorically interpreted by Nicaraguan society to mean that the country under the Sandinista totalitarian rule had passed through a dark night in its history.<sup>7</sup>

John Paul II’s thought continues to be an inspiration at the present time. For many Nicaraguan people his personal experience and his teachings have become patterns of action to be implemented in crucial moments of society. During his two visits he encouraged people to remain faithful to the Christian tradition and the teaching of the Catholic Church, to protect local culture, and to defend their liberty from any kind of slavery.

Even though an “official” communist system no longer exists, the current government persists in a totalitarian mode since the current Nicaraguan government and local political authorities frequently mis-rule the country by disrespecting the national constitution and enacting decrees to benefit the governing political party to the detriment of the common good and social peace. In this social context, the teaching of John Paul II acquires great relevance for Nicaragua, because of his social teaching about human dignity and the responsibility of authorities to respect the laws and institutions in a democratic system, which thus encourages people to live in freedom and hope.

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<sup>7</sup> Sergio Ramirez, “La Revolución que no fue,” *Diario La Prensa*, (Nicaragua) (19 July 2004), 10A.

## Methodology

The methodology of this dissertation will consist of reading and analyzing the writings of the late pontiff before becoming pope and then as successor of Peter. His works as professor and bishop are essential to understand his teaching as universal pastor. Four encyclicals were chosen as primary source: *Dives in misericordia*, *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, *Centesimus annus*, and *Veritatis splendor*, although this does not exclude his other encyclicals which are linked to the themes treated herein. Other sources are *Ex corde ecclesiae* and his specific statements on Catholic secondary education that concern his moral theology. This dissertation also cites, in the form of secondary literature, many writers who have studied Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II's teaching.

To treat some aspects of the moral reality of Nicaragua, this dissertation reviews various sources available in the country that discuss this topic. One important source is the *Conferencia Episcopal de Nicaragua*, (Nicaraguan Episcopal Conference), which in the last four decades has tackled important issues in social and sexual matters experienced in the country, in the light of the Vatican Council II, the five Latin American Episcopal Conferences, and very recently in the light of the former pope John Paul II. These documents basically consist of Pastoral Letters and Messages written in the last three decades and which provide a moral and theological analysis of the national reality. The difficulty is that most of these documents have not been formally published, but fortunately some of them have appeared in *L'Osservatore Romano*. It was only in the 1990s that the Nicaraguan Episcopal Conference edited the most important pastoral letters that were published during the 1980s, and very recently all these documents were

made available on the internet. However, such documents are written in Spanish and must be translated into English when cited.

Other official sources to be considered for this dissertation will be those from the Nicaraguan government, which like the official Nicaraguan Catholic documents are written in Spanish and must also be translated into English when cited. Relevant literature from different organizations located in and outside of Nicaragua will be analyzed with respect to the specific values treated herein. Unfortunately, in Nicaragua much important information necessary for this research is missing, such as lack of publication dates and publishers necessary to cite in the footnotes of this doctoral dissertation. In addition to this, information relevant to subjects such as “youth” or “young people” is relatively recent, dating from the 1990s, and much of it is not objectively reliable because of obvious political or other biased interests. Despite these obstacles, I will make reference to as many sources as are available.

The chapters follow in this manner: The first chapter deals with the spiritual and social moral reality lived by today’s generations and how this reality has rapidly transformed some customs and traditions within Nicaraguan society, such as family, marriage, and a correct orientation to sexuality. Such changes in moral matters are due in part to the inescapable influence of mass media. Furthermore, Nicaraguan youth were exposed to a long and tumultuous period of internal political changes as a consequence of domestic political conflicts that were exacerbated by the interventions of other countries, such as the Soviet Union and the United States. Internally, since the 1970’s the country has gone through two civil wars, which have had dire consequences on its moral values and to this



day still have a negative impact on Nicaraguan society, especially among the younger people. And with respect to external influences, no country nowadays can escape the phenomenon of world globalization that has radically changed the moral values of contemporary mankind.

In this first chapter I will examine the moral reality of Nicaragua in terms of three values: responsibility, emphasizing family, matrimony, and sexuality, and then justice and solidarity, all of which seek the common good for society. Although they are interlinked, an individual study of each value illustrates its specific character and how it can be the object of a specific educational curriculum. The chapter is fundamentally descriptive and illustrates that in Nicaragua some current human behaviors practiced by the new generations regarding the virtues of responsibility, justice, and solidarity are experiencing a real crisis.

The second chapter will study the philosophical and theological foundation and moral teachings of Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II. This chapter discusses keys of the former pope's thought concerning the moral virtues of responsibility, justice, and solidarity, which are essential for seeking the common good and social rectitude. These values will be presented in the light of what they can offer to the broader understanding of a moral formation in Catholic secondary education, which the pope conceptualized as a "Catholic school."

The third chapter develops Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II's understanding of Catholic education and his proposals for Catholic schools. Since the aim of this dissertation is to demonstrate the importance and relevance of the teachings of the late pope for Catholic

schools, this chapter analyses the religious formation undertaken in three Nicaraguan Catholic secondary school programs. The analysis focuses on the extent to which the moral formation in these schools converges with the magisterium of John Paul II. The study of these secondary school projects find that the convergence lies in the anthropological emphasis for moral education. After analyzing the three schools, the last section of this chapter proposes some contents for the moral formation of students in Catholic secondary schools in Nicaragua in the light of the teachings of the former pope.

The fourth chapter is the conclusion of this dissertation. It is dedicated to evaluating the legacy of the late pope for Catholic education. The pope encouraged Catholic schools to play a crucial role in society, by shaping personalities of students, promoting social justice, working for the common good, defending human dignity, and reinforcing human and Christian values.

### Contribution

Taking into account that John Paul II's guidelines concerning Catholic education in Nicaragua have not been fully implemented in most Nicaraguan Catholic schools, that there is no national program dealing with moral education for students, and that there is a necessity for implementing an educational program in moral values on a country-wide scale, the contribution of this dissertation is threefold.

First, it provides an understanding of John Paul II's teaching on moral education within Catholic secondary education, and it offers a doctrinal context for Catholic education.

Second, it analyzes the extent to which the contents of the curricula of certain Catholic secondary schools in Nicaragua converge with the universal teaching of John Paul II and the magisterium of the Nicaraguan Episcopal Conference, and whether students are being sufficiently formed in the virtues needed in society and demanded specifically by Catholic believers who expect the Catholic schools to accomplish this educational mission.

Third, it provides suggestions and source material for teachers and students to create future educational programs and curricula for moral formation in Nicaraguan Catholic schools that converge more closely with the teachings of John Paul II.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **THE MORAL REALITY OF NICARAGUA**

This first chapter is divided into three sections. The first section provides a background that briefly describes the geography and history of Nicaragua. The aim of this brief summary of Nicaraguan history is to portray how current Nicaraguan culture is a mixture of Indian, European, and local customs that have influenced Christian morality and the religious practices of Catholics in the country. The second section relates political, cultural, and religious characteristics of young people. The purpose of describing the characteristics of Nicaraguan young people is to illustrate specific political and religious traits that distinguish them from other nations as a result of political changes that have occurred in the country in the last three decades, as well as to indicate what would be desirable for these young people. The third section illustrates the transformation and decline of moral values in recent generations. The chapter ends with a brief conclusion.

#### **1.1 Background of Nicaragua**

Nicaragua is located in Central America. This country shares its northern border with Honduras and its southern border with Costa Rica. To its east lies the Pacific Ocean, and to its west is the Caribbean Coast.

Nicaragua was first visited in 1502 by Christopher Columbus and colonized by Spain in 1524. Its independence from the Spanish Crown was obtained in 1821. The country

has a territorial extension of 129,494 square kilometers, the largest land mass of any country in Central America, and it has more than 5.5 million inhabitants.<sup>1</sup>

Historically, Nicaragua has existed since pre-Columbian times; the first inhabitants date from approximately from 6000 years ago. According to anthropological findings, human remains have been discovered in the country dating from the Paleolithic era. The most well known are the so-called “*Huellas de Acahualinca*” (Acahualinca’s Footsteps). The early indigenous peoples of Nicaragua include the Chorotegas, who arrived from Mexico in the 7<sup>th</sup> century, and the Nicaraos in the 12<sup>th</sup> century A.D. These early cultures were influenced throughout their history by the Aztec culture.<sup>2</sup> In the 15<sup>th</sup> century a new culture emerged called *el mestizaje*, which refers to the mixing of Spanish culture with the culture of the indigenous peoples of Nicaragua.<sup>3</sup> This *mestizaje* culture is dominant across the Central and the Pacific regions of the country that were colonized by Spain. British and African indentured servants from Jamaica influenced the Atlantic region of this country during the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Indigenous communities such as the Sumos, Miskitos, and Ramakies live in this area, each having its own cultural characteristics.<sup>4</sup>

In the 18<sup>th</sup> century the country was influenced by the ideology of liberalism (understood as anti-clericalism, and belief in science and progress), which formed part of

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<sup>1</sup> Jorge Eduardo Arellano, *Historia Básica de Nicaragua*. Tomo I (Managua: Fondo Editorial CIRA, 1993), 7.

<sup>2</sup> Arellano, *Historia Básica de Nicaragua*, 7.

<sup>3</sup> Jeffrey Gould disagrees with other historians who affirm that Nicaraguan *mestizaje* represented a new national identity, since many communities were not united and subsequently disintegrated. Jeffrey L. Gould, *To Die in This Way. Nicaraguan Indians and the Myth of Mestizaje, 1880-1995* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998), 10.

<sup>4</sup> Carlos Vilas M, *State, Class, and Ethnicity in Nicaragua. Capitalism, Modernization and Revolutionary Change on the Atlantic Coast*, translated by Susan Norwood (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1989), 33.

the modern movement for Central America's independence. The influence of the American and French revolutions a few years earlier also had a great influence. The influence of liberalism was evident in the first Constitution of the Nicaraguan Republic enacted in 1826, which proclaimed liberty and political equality for all Nicaraguan citizens and established the separation of Church and state. It proclaimed the freedom of religion, eliminated convents belonging to the Catholic Church and expelled some religious congregations from the country.<sup>5</sup>

Nicaragua was occupied by the U.S. military between the years 1926-1933. In 1934 when the U.S. military occupation of Nicaragua ended, the U.S. marines transferred the command of four thousand enlisted soldiers in the National Guard to Anastasio Somoza Garcia. Somoza was the director of the National Guard and in charge of fighting the guerrilla insurgency led by Augusto Sandino. Somoza, supported by the U.S. government, was proclaimed president in 1937. The Somoza family remained in power until it was overthrown by the Sandinista revolution in 1979.<sup>6</sup>

Much more recently, Nicaragua became a prominent stage in the Cold War when the Sandinistas, a Marxist political group allied with and supported by the Soviet Union, seized power in 1979 and imposed a socialist political philosophy and sweeping reforms. With the fall of most of the global communist systems, however, came the demise of the

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<sup>5</sup> Arellano, *Breve Historia de la Iglesia de Nicaragua. 1523-1979* (Managua: Editorial Manolo Morales, 1986), 57. Sofia Montenegro states that the supporters of the Central American independence movement advanced the values of patriotism, social integration, equality, and identity, but that there were contradictions between theory and practice. For example, in applying tax policies, the poorest were deprived of their possessions. Sofia Montenegro, *Jóvenes y Cultura Política. La Generación de los Noventa* (Managua: Hispamer, 2001), 59.

<sup>6</sup> Frances Kinloch Tiberino, *Historia de Nicaragua* (Managua: Universidad Centroamericana de Historia de Nicaragua y Centroamérica, 2005), 275-293.

Sandinista regime. This collapse brought democratic reforms to Nicaragua and all the challenges that such a transformation presented.<sup>7</sup>

## 1.2 Characteristics of Nicaraguan Youth

Before describing the character of Nicaraguan society, it is necessary to describe the legal, political and religious characteristics of Nicaraguan youth. This is necessary in order to understand the family crisis, as is evident in increasing divorce, premarital sex and decreasing numbers of people receiving the sacrament of marriage; social realities such as more violence and political corruption; and religious indifference and decreasing practice of the sacraments, particularly the sacraments of reconciliation and the Eucharist. These trends are increasingly dominant in the country, especially among young people in the last thirty years.

As stated, this dissertation addresses Nicaraguan society in general but focuses particularly on its youth, who compose half of the country's population and represent the future of the nation and of the Catholic Church. In terms of social and economic development, Nicaraguan young people are a potential labor force and generators of new ideas, as well guardians of the religious tradition. The Nicaraguan Catholic Church still has within her ranks a considerable portion of Catholic young people who respect the teachings of Catholic faith, and many of them are involved in the evangelization of their culture. From this perspective, Nicaraguan youth are effective agents of change for political, social, and religious issues.

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<sup>7</sup> Thomas W. Walker, *Nicaragua Without Illusions. Regime Transition and Structural Adjustment in the 1990s* (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources Inc., 1997), 11.

Nicaraguan youth share characteristics with youth around the world, such as tastes, fashion, hopes to achieve a university education or a good job, etc. Furthermore, the influence of U.S. culture in terms of television, music and fast food has been enormous. There are, however, some indicators that distinguish Nicaraguan youth. Those will be described in the following sections. There is limited literature on the subject of Nicaraguan youth. Although recently some international organizations have demonstrated a concern for youth issues due to the increase of crime, alcohol and drug addition, these organizations have mostly focused on violence, birth control and abortion.<sup>8</sup>

### 1.2.1 Legal Age and Maturity

The term “being young,” is broad and ambiguous. The dictionary defines it as a time of good health, happiness and dreams for life, or a period of life between childhood and maturity.<sup>9</sup> For John Paul II the period of youth must not be understood only as a number of years, but also as a period that God gives to man to clarify questions and to establish goals for life.<sup>10</sup> Other specialists on the physical and psychological evolution of the young link adolescence and youth and define it as a process. As Dorothy Rogers says, “adolescence is a time of achievement rather than a mere time period.”<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Gobierno de Nicaragua. Secretaría de la Juventud, *Experiencias Participativas con Jóvenes en Proyectos de Promoción y del Desarrollo y Prevención de la Violencia. El caso Nicaragua* (Managua: Litografía Génesis, 2006), 25.

<sup>9</sup> *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, Third Edition (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1996).

<sup>10</sup> John Paul II, *Crossing the Threshold of Hope*, edited by Vittorio Messori (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1994), 120.

<sup>11</sup> Dorothy Rogers, *Adolescents & Youth*, Fourth edition (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1962), 6.



These sociological references provide a sense of the chronology concerning when adolescence ends and young adulthood begins in a numerical and an affective sense. Furthermore, the definition of young adulthood is linked to the concept of human maturity, which in many cases serves as a criterion to distinguish youth and responsibility. Gail Inlow thinks adolescents reach maturity at various ages when they use reason by themselves.<sup>12</sup> In Nicaragua, many adults consider young adults as irresponsible in approaching the challenges of life, unable to face the difficulties of one's life, and weak in addressing dangers such as drugs, loitering, alcohol, and similar problems.<sup>13</sup>

The rights and duties of young adults according to Nicaraguan law is an important topic. The legal age of "young people" does not necessarily correspond to their normal growth. Linked to legal age, that is, when a youth becomes "a young adult" according to the law, is also thus the question of maturity.

The legal age of a young adult in Nicaragua is 21; almost half of Nicaraguan's population is made up youth younger than 21.<sup>14</sup> Despite the age of 21 being defined as the age of adulthood in Nicaragua, there are different legal frameworks by which people are considered youths. For instance, the *Código Civil de Nicaragua* (Nicaraguan Civil

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<sup>12</sup> Gail M. Inlow, *Maturity in High School Teaching* (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1963), 14.

<sup>13</sup> Humberto Abaunza comments that in Nicaraguan young people are considered a social problem due to the fact that the Nicaraguan society stigmatizes them as delinquents and gangsters, drunken and irresponsible. Humberto Abaunza, "La Juventud Nicaragüense en la Primera Década del Milenio," edited by Humberto Abaunza and Ricardo Andino, *Juventud y Nuevos Desafíos en Nicaragua* (Managua: Fundación Desafíos, 2003), 29.

<sup>14</sup> According to *Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas y Censo* Nicaragua has the youngest population in Latin America. Forty percent are younger than 12 years old, and approximately thirty-five percent are between 13 and 29 years old. Gobierno de Nicaragua. Secretaría de la Juventud, *Experiencias Participativas con Jóvenes*, 15.

Code) establishes the legal age at 21 for men and women. At this age youth can exercise their civil rights, such as to acquire goods and sign contracts. Regarding matrimony, men can marry then without their parents' permission when they are 21.<sup>15</sup> On the other hand, the *Nicaraguan Political Constitution* grants political rights to young people at 16 to vote for president and participate in political activity in the country.<sup>16</sup>

This judicial inconsistency actually constitutes a controversy for Nicaraguan laws because of the contradiction between the legal age according to Civil Code and that of the Nicaraguan Constitution, since the constitution gives the right to vote at 16. Despite these contradictions, some international organizations such as the Pan American Health Organization and German Technical Cooperation (GTZ), praise Nicaragua for having, at least in theory, some of the best legal protections in place for children and adolescents.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> The Nicaraguan Civil Code states: "La época de la mayoría de edad se fija sin distinciones de sexo en los veintium años cumplidos. El mayor de edad puede disponer libremente de su persona y bienes." Artículo no. 278, pg. 57."The age of reaching majority without distinction of gender is 21. The adult is then free to decide concerning his person or goods" (personal translation). Regarding matrimony for minors, this same Civil Code says: "El varón menos de veintiún años o no declarado mayor y la mujer menos de diez y ocho o no declarada mayor, no puede contraer matrimonio sin el asenso o licencia de sus padres, de sus abuelos, o de sus representantes legales," artículo 140 (Managua: Editorial Carlos Heuberger y Co. 1931), pg. 32.

"The male less than 21 or not declared adult, and the female less than 18 or not declared adult, cannot marry without the assent or permission of parents, grandparents or legal guardians" (personal translation).

<sup>16</sup> "Son ciudadanos los nicaragüenses que hubieran cumplido dieciséis años de edad. Sólo los ciudadanos gozan de los derechos políticos consignados en la Constitución y las leyes, sin más limitaciones que las que se establezcan por razones de edad. Art. 47, de la Constitución Política de la República de Nicaragua," (Managua: Bitecsa, 2004), pg. 16. "Nicaraguans are citizens when they have reached the age of 16. Only citizens possess the political rights granted by the Constitution and the laws, without any limitation other than those established for reasons of age" (personal translation).

<sup>17</sup> "La población joven de Nicaragua goza de ventajas jurídicas, institucionales y formales que se reflejan en las leyes y los planes nacionales. Esto implica que el Estado debe asumir un mayor compromiso con el fin de que se dispongan los recursos necesarios para llevar a la práctica estas leyes y planes. Además, debe definirse qué instancias asumirán la tarea de promover, apoyar y facilitar las acciones derivadas de la ley, las políticas y los programas, y qué roles específicos tendrá cada una de ellas." Gobierno de Nicaragua. Secretaría de la Juventud, *Experiencias Participativas con Jóvenes*, 56. "The youth of Nicaragua possess legal rights, institutionally and formally, as reflected in the nation's laws and programs. This implies that the state should undertake a greater commitment so that the resources are available to put into practice these laws and programs. Furthermore, what should be clearly defined is which agencies will take over the

## Nicaragua Ruled by Adults

Even though the majority of Nicaragua's population is made up of young people, Nicaragua is ruled by adults: ministers, congressmen, politicians, and other key government agents, with typical ages ranging from 50 to 80. This reality represents a challenge for the country in terms of integrated social development and intergenerational conflicts, since young people do not have a voice in influencing the country's present and future course. Additionally, in Nicaragua many people believe that only adults possess wisdom and have the ability to face life's problems/challenges. Thus, in many cases, the older generations disdain young people's skills and the majority of youth do not have a chance to put their academic training to good use because of the lack of work opportunities. In Nicaragua obtaining employment depends on social and political connections rather than professional criteria.<sup>18</sup>

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task of promoting, supporting and facilitating the outcomes of the law, polices and programs, and what specific role each one of them will have" (personal translation).

<sup>18</sup> "La discriminación social generada por un modelo centrado en el adulto y patriarcal afecta a toda la población joven, con excepción de aquellas personas que se ubican en determinados espacios que les permiten analizar su situación y luchan en contra de las exclusiones." "The social discrimination generated by the model centered in adult and patriarchal culture affects the youth population, except those placed in specific social contexts that allow them to analyze their situation and struggle against exclusions."

Gobierno de Nicaragua. Secretaría de la Juventud, *Experiencias Participativas con Jóvenes*, 17.

Another Nicaraguan writer says: "Estamos frente a un fenómeno llamado *"adultismo,"* la juventud es subvalorada, menospreciada, es símbolo de inmadurez y de incapacidad, reducida al ámbito de asumir decisiones. En cambio, el mundo adulto se sobrevalora. Si se es adulto, se tiene autoridad, se es maduro, existe experiencia y capacidad para planear y tomar decisiones." "We are [in Nicaragua] facing a phenomenon called *"adultismo,"* (adultism) which means youth is symbol of immaturity and inability, condemned only to obey decisions, as opposed to adult people who feel themselves the only experts to plan and make decisions." Carlos Emilio Lòpez, *Juventopía. Retos y Sueños de Juventud. Ensayos y Conferencias sobre la Juventud Nicaragüense* (Managua: Impresiones y Troqueles, 2001), 57.

### 1.2.2 Political Maturity

It is difficult to pinpoint the place of young people as the subject of a political culture and to locate their appropriate place in this paper, but the vital importance it has for this dissertation lies, without question, in the particular experience lived by Nicaraguan young people in the decades of the 1980s and 1990s. Young people were the most important agents of the transformation in national political processes. As Sofía Montenegro asserts, young people in Nicaragua have been considered “the most active social subjects within the political life of the nation” because they faced the former Somoza national guard and overthrew the Somoza dynasty, which was no longer viewed as legitimate by most citizens. They were also involved in the war of 1980 confronting the Sandinista regime, and finally they elected the democratic system with their votes in the decade of the 1990s.”<sup>19</sup>

Before the Sandinista revolution Nicaraguan young people did not have opportunities to decide about the nation’s political destiny because the country was ruled by the repressive Somoza dynasty, which was the cause of social protests and the revolutionary movement, composed by youth, which would later become the political party known as the *Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional*. This lack of participation would undergo a significant transformation during the 1970s and 1980s.

The political maturity of the juvenile population in the period mentioned above is due for the most part to the two previous Nicaraguan civil wars. The first took place in the decade of the 1970s and overthrew the Somoza dynasty that had ruled the country for

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<sup>19</sup> Montenegro, *Jòvenes y Cultura Política en Nicaragua*, 83.

four decades. The last decade of this regime had ended in repression and the massive violation of human rights. In this insurrection, which was headed by the *Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional*, thousands of young people who supported this revolutionary movement died.<sup>20</sup>

The second war occurred in the decade of the 1980s and was fought by Sandinista soldiers and opponents of the Sandinista government. These latter, supported by the U.S. government, were known as *contra revolucionarios* (counterrevolutionaries) and were composed of former members of the National Guard that had served the previous Somoza government, and peasants who lived in the mountains of the country and who were victims of human rights violations by the Sandinista authorities. The majority of these adversaries of the Sandinista regime were young people who died in the Nicaraguan mountains defending liberty and human rights during this civil war.<sup>21</sup>

To fight the so-called “counterrevolution” the Sandinista government required military service for teenagers, who were sent to fight the opponents of the Sandinista regime. In the first and second wars fifty thousand young people died on both sides: supporters of the Sandinista revolution because of their personal convictions concerning the revolution, those who were simply forced to participate in the war, and adversaries of

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<sup>20</sup> The *Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional* was a revolutionary movement born in 1960. Their founders took the name of Augusto César Sandino, a military general who fought against the United States’s occupation in Nicaragua in the decade of 1930’s. Gary Prevost, “The FSLN,” *Nicaragua Without Illusions*, 149. Marco Aurelio Navarro-Genie wrote a book about the history of Augusto César Sandino, who lived 50 years before the foundation of the *Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional*. Marco Aurelio Navarro-Genie, *Augusto ‘César’ Sandino. Messiah of Light and Truth* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2002).

<sup>21</sup> Shirley Christian states that the Nicaraguan counterrevolution began in Miami in 1980, organized by the former Guardsmen of Somoza regime, and later the movement was supported by other leaders who were opposed to the Sandinista revolution. This counterrevolutionary organization was financed by the Reagan administration in the decade of 1980s. Shirley Christian, *Nicaragua Revolution in the Family* (New York: Random House, 1985), 193-195.

the Sandinista system because of their disagreement with the Marxist nature of the revolutionary process.<sup>22</sup>

The death of numerous Nicaraguan young people occurred in the wars to overthrow Somoza and the Sandinistas. Even though the systems came from opposed ideologies, both were repressive and killed thousands of people while imposing regimes of terror.<sup>23</sup> Regarding the first war, the Catholic Church and Nicaraguan society recognized the heroism of youth for being involved in armed combat. For instance, the last Nicaraguan Political Constitution calls them *gloriosa juventud* (glorious youth) for their participation in the war of 1979.<sup>24</sup> Similarly, the *Nicaraguan Episcopal Conference* explicitly honored the great ideals and sacrifice of the Nicaraguan youth who fought against the Somoza regime.<sup>25</sup>

Mandatory military service was a point of conflict between the Church and the Sandinista revolution. On the one hand, the Catholic Church considered the Nicaraguan civil war to be a consequence of the conflict between the USSR and the United States in the Cold War, and thus it was a defense of the Sandinista revolution rather than national defense. On the other hand, the Sandinista government justified military service as “patriotic service” in defending the country from “United States aggression” against

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<sup>22</sup> Lòpez, *Juventopía*, 86.

<sup>23</sup> Marisabel Brás estimates 50,000 Nicaraguans people died during both wars. Brás, *Nicaragua A Country Study*, edited by Tim L. Merrill, (Washington D.C.: Federal Research Division, 1994), 39.

<sup>24</sup> República de Nicaragua, *Constitución Política de la República de Nicaragua*, pg. 3

<sup>25</sup> “Reconocemos la sangre derramada por los jóvenes en este prolongado combate. Son la esperanza de la revolución nicaragüense. Ellos han sido generosos y han asombrado al mundo.”

“We recognize the blood spilled by young people in this prolonged combat. They are the hope of the Nicaraguan Revolution. They have been generous and have amazed the world.” Conferencia Episcopal de Nicaragua, “Carta Pastoral: Compromiso Cristiano para una Nicaragua Nueva. November 17, 1979,” *Boletín Informativo de la Arquidiócesis de Managua* 83 (1979): 22.

Nicaragua.<sup>26</sup> In protecting Catholics, the Nicaraguan pastors demanded that the State respect the conscientious objectors who opposed the war.<sup>27</sup>

In the last three decades young people have thus experienced very different political systems: the Somoza dynasty, the Marxist Sandinista revolution, and a more democratic system. These rapid changes have brought different realities to Nicaraguan youth, giving them much political experience.

In the 1990s, with the victory of democracy the young experienced a different mentality. The revolution's failure, however, meant a disappointment for the defenders of the revolution, since the revolutionary movement had not provided them with economic progress, employment and education. As Sergio Ramirez says, young people experienced frustration after the two wars because their dreams of achievement and justice were not fulfilled.<sup>28</sup> Thus, the decade of the 1980s is called *la década perdida* (the lost decade) because of the war and the promises made by the Sandinista revolution to implement justice and to provide youth with a better future that never were fulfilled.

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<sup>26</sup> The Nicaraguan Church maintained that the civil war was provoked by foreign powers, which only left death and hatred in the country. Conferencia Episcopal de Nicaragua, "Carta Pastoral sobre la Reconciliación. April 22, 1984," *Documentos Seleccionados de la Conferencia Episcopal de Nicaragua. 1982-1991* (León: Editorial Hospicio, 1992), 107. Roger Miranda and William Ratfill document that the link between the Soviet Union and the Sandinista movement began before they seized the power in July 1979. After the Sandinistas took power, there was an agreement in November 1981 between Moscow and the Sandinista government concerning Soviet support for the Nicaraguan army. Roger Miranda & William Ratliff, *The Civil War in Nicaragua. Inside the Sandinistas* (New Brunswick, Transaction Publishers, 1993), 115-125.

<sup>27</sup> Margaret E. Crahan claims that the Nicaraguan Episcopal Conference said that military service imposed by Sandinista revolution was illegitimate. The truth was that the Catholic bishops recognized the right of the state to implement military duty, but in the local context such a requirement had a different meaning, since it was a fratricidal war between Nicaraguan citizens and not a foreign invasion, as the Sandinista government argued. Graham, "Religion and Politics in Revolutionary Nicaragua," *The Progressive Church in Latin America*, edited by Scott Mainwaring and Alexander Wilde (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1989), 55.

<sup>28</sup> Sergio Ramirez Mercado, "La Generación destronada," edited by Melvin A. Sotelo, *Los Jóvenes, otra cultura* (Managua: Editorial Nueva Nicaragua, 1995), 15.

### 1.2.3. Cultural Values

#### Concepts of Culture

Culture comes from the Latin word *cultus* meaning worship, but now it is often associated with the promotion of art, knowledge and virtues important for the common good. It is undeniable that the human person shapes and is shaped by culture. As Morris E. Opler asserts, it would be absurd to deny that culture pertains to human beings; the cultural context that surrounds mankind cannot be separated from human existence.<sup>29</sup> On the other hand, according to the *New Catholic Encyclopedia* there are more than 160 definitions of culture, but in trying to summarize such interpretations, it concludes that culture consists in patterns of life, symbols, and values.

The Catholic Church also has utilized the term “culture” in discussing the religious practices and the social and political realities of the contemporary time that surrounds human beings as it seeks to establish a Christian culture. Paul VI, for instance, speaking about culture, affirmed that there is no contradiction between the gospel and culture, and a rupture between them has become catastrophic for human beings.<sup>30</sup> For Hervé Carrier, John Paul II was the first pope who deeply studied the term “culture,” which then became universally accepted as a concept applied in ecclesiastical documents regarding the evangelization of culture.<sup>31</sup> For instance, in the exhortation *Familiaris consortio* the pope confirmed the harmony between the gospel and “certain cultures,” many of which share the same moral teachings as the Catholic Church in their attitudes toward

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<sup>29</sup> Morris E. Opler, “The Human Being and Culture,” *The Meaning of Culture. A Reader in Cultural Anthropology*, edited by Morris Freilich (Toronto: Xerox College Publishing, 1972), 94.

<sup>30</sup> Pablo VI. *Evangelii nuntiandi. On Evangelization in the Modern World*, no. 20 (Washington D.C: United States Catholic Conference, 1976); AAS 68 (1976): 6-76.

<sup>31</sup> Hervé Carrier, *Evangelizing the Culture of Modernity* (New York: Orbis Books, 1993), 64.



matrimony and family.<sup>32</sup> Consequently, John Paul II described abortion, euthanasia, suicide, and other practices dominant in the modern world as a part of the “culture of death.”<sup>33</sup>

The Latin American Catholic bishops have pointed out that the economic and political conditions in the continent reveal a culture that demands evangelization. For instance, the second Conference of Latin American Catholic bishops held in Medellin in 1968 applied to the Continent the recent teachings of Vatican Council II and denounced the social injustices present in many Latin American countries. In the fourth conference held in Santo Domingo in 1992, the bishops again focused on culture, interpreting the biblical account of Pentecost as the birth of a new culture that transcended all nations and which created a new humanism.<sup>34</sup>

Every Latin American Episcopal Conference indicated above has confronted current conditions existing on the continent, in order to re-orient Christian consciences and to influence public opinion. Historically, some social changes in Latin America, at least in political systems, have been due to the social teaching of the Catholic Church. For instance, the second Latin American conference in Medellin in 1968 with its “preferential option for the poor” had a strong effecting in increasing the involvement of the Catholics

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<sup>32</sup> John Paul II, *Familiaris consortio* no. 10. *On the Family*, translated by Catholic New Services (Washington D.C.: United States Catholic Conference, 1981), AAS 74 (1982): 81-191.

<sup>33</sup> John Paul II, *Evangelium vitae*, no. 12. The Gospel of Life. *John Paul II, The Encyclicals in Everyday Language*, 242; AAS 87 (1995): 486-487.

<sup>34</sup> “The coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost (cf. Acts 2: 1-11) makes manifest the universality of the commission to evangelize: the aim is to reach every culture. It also makes manifest the cultural diversity of the faithful when we hear the apostles speaking, each in his own language. Culture arises with God’s initial command to human beings: to grow and multiply, to fill the earth and subdue it (cf. Gn. 1:28-30). Thus, culture means cultivating and expressing the full range of the human in a loving relationships with nature and in the community dimension of peoples.” Consejo Episcopal Latinoamericano, *Fourth General Conference of Latin American Bishops, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, October 12-28, 1992*, translated by Phillip Berryman (Washington D.C.: United States Catholic Conference, 1993), no. 228.

in changing the system of the national government, which was accused of repression and corruption in the 1970s.<sup>35</sup>

During these conferences the Latin American bishops have denounced social injustices, political and economic corruption, violation of human rights, poverty, family disintegration, religious indifference, drug abuse, aggression toward ancient cultures, and consumerism -- all of which had become common practices throughout the Latin American continent. For example, the Fourth Conference pointed out that corruption, the lack of justice, and unprosecuted crimes have become common in Latin America.<sup>36</sup>

The Nicaraguan Episcopal Conference outlines the personal and social aspects of the local culture. The bishops portray the Nicaraguan people as humorous, defiant in the face of death, fond of food, vulgar but not blasphemous, sociable, more imaginative than reflective, lovers of music and poetry, friendly with foreigners, and fond of fashion.<sup>37</sup> Humberto Abaunza describes Nicaraguan boys as tending to be strong, enthusiastic, and bold, while girls tend to take pride in serving others and feel a deep vocation to motherhood.<sup>38</sup>

But there is another side of the coin to be considered here: although Nicaraguan people usually are frank, they do not always tell the truth. This deception is expressed in

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<sup>35</sup> Crahan affirms that Vatican Council II and the Second Latin American Catholic Conference of Medellin reinvigorated and restructured the Nicaraguan Catholic church. See *The Progressive Church in Latin America*, 41.

<sup>36</sup> "Human rights are violated not only by terrorism, repression, and murder, but also by the existence of conditions of extreme poverty and unjust economic structures that give rise to vast inequalities. Political intolerance and indifference toward the situation of widespread impoverishment indicate a contempt for the way people are actually living that we cannot pass over in silence." Consejo Episcopal Latinoamericano, *Fourth General Conference*, no. 167.

<sup>37</sup> Conferencia Episcopal de Nicaragua, *II Concilio Provincial* (Managua: Conferencia Episcopal de Nicaragua Press, 1994), no. 58.

<sup>38</sup> Humberto Abaunza et al, *Una causa para rebeldes. Identidad y Condición Juvenil en Nicaragua* (Managua: Fundación Puntos de Encuentro, 1995), 19.

the theatrical performance called *El Guegüence*, a masked dance symbolizing the rejection of Spanish colonizers by Nicaraguan Indians, which has become significant for national culture in terms of the conflict between domination and freedom. As Pablo Antonio Cuadra asserts, in each Nicaraguan person there is the capacity for deception portrayed in *Guegüence*.<sup>39</sup>

Nicaragua has experienced different cultural influences that have transformed traditional moral conduct. The new generations have suffered traumatic changes in the last two decades caused by political systems and new cultural influences, such as consumerism, individualism and secularism, which have of course also impacted other countries. Culture is now imposed by such different sources as television programs and educational curricula in school. As the Nicaraguan bishops clearly write, this new generation has been formed by the mass media of the cinema, television, and radio.<sup>40</sup>

#### 1.2.4 Religious Culture

The seed of the gospel was sown in Nicaragua on August 14, 1502, when Christopher Columbus first came to Central America. Evangelization, undertaken by religious orders such as the Dominicans, Mercedarians, Augustinians, Franciscans, and Jesuits, among others, began in 1523 in the central and Pacific sectors of the country. These missionaries

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<sup>39</sup> Pablo Antonio Cuadra, *El Nicaragüense* (Managua: Hispamer, 1993), 67. See also Jeffrey L. Gould, *To Die in This Way. Nicaraguan Indians and the Myth of Mestizaje 1880-1995* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998), 8.

<sup>40</sup> “Nuestra cultura comenzó a perder su originalidad debido a modelos extranjeros impuestos desde fuera a las tradiciones nicaragüenses.” “Our culture began to lose its originality because foreign models were imposed on the Nicaraguan traditions from outside.” Conferencia Episcopal de Nicaragua, II *Concilio Provincial*, no. 85. See also Conferencia Episcopal de Nicaragua, “Mensaje Pastoral con ocasión de la Solemnidad de la Asunción de María. August 15, 1999,” *L’Osservatore Romano* (Spanish edition) 34 (1999): 8.

spread the gospel of Jesus Christ among of the indigenous Nicaraguan peoples.<sup>41</sup> On the Caribbean coast, the task of evangelization was undertaken by the Moravians, followers of John Huss, who established their mission among the Miskito Indians in 1849.<sup>42</sup>

Religion is very important for the Nicaraguan people. The bishops state that belief has been essential for believers since religion has signified hope, inspiration, and strength in difficult political and social circumstances.<sup>43</sup> Although there is no official religion in the country, the Catholic faith continues to be the faith of the majority.<sup>44</sup> Despite a decrease in membership, the Catholic Church enjoys respect and credibility because of the role she has played throughout the history of the nation. According to the last survey conducted in Nicaragua in 2005 concerning the opinion of young people about the Catholic religion, 47% of youth expressed their trust in the Catholic Church. The report said, “the grade of trust for the Catholic Church is high.”<sup>45</sup>

In general, Nicaraguan young people practice a Christian faith that has played an important role in social causes, such as during the revolutionary struggle of the decade of 1970s. As Henry Petrie accounts, many young people joined in Christian groups and

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<sup>41</sup> Edgar Zúñiga, *Historia Eclesiástica de Nicaragua* (Managua: Editorial Hispamer, 1996), 25-30.

<sup>42</sup> John Huss was a preacher born in Bohemia in 1369 and died in 1415 in Constance. He promoted moral reforms against orthodox Catholicism. Among his teachings he affirmed that a bishop was a real bishop only if he lived an authentic moral life. He was excommunicated and condemned to death in 1412. The Moravian denomination established its Church in Nicaragua on the Atlantic Coast in 1849 and at the present is one of the largest religions practiced by the Caribbean Coast natives. Florencio Galindo, *El Fenómeno de las Sectas Fundamentalistas. La Conquista Evangélica de América Latina* (Navarra: Verbo Divino, 1994), 43.

<sup>43</sup> Conferencia Episcopal de Nicaragua, “Carta Pastoral sobre algunos Aspectos de la Catequesis Familiar. May 30, 1989,” *Documentos seleccionados*, 57.

<sup>44</sup> The Nicaraguan Constitution establishes that the State does not have an official religion and that there is freedom of religion and respect for different religious denominations. See Articles nos. 14 and 29. República de Nicaragua, *Constitución Política de la República de Nicaragua*.

<sup>45</sup> Gobierno de Nicaragua. Secretaría de la Juventud, *Primera Encuesta Nacional de Juventud. 2006* (Managua: Inpasa, 2006), 40.

took on the cause of the revolution as a commitment to the gospel and as a form of service to the poorest members of society.<sup>46</sup>

Sofía Montenegro, having surveyed 1,202 young people, concludes that religion is an important element in local society. Regarding young people, Montenegro's survey reflects that a high percentage of Nicaraguan youth (73.0%) do not hold magical or superstitious beliefs and 94.3% responded that God exists and He is merciful. In addition, 32% of those surveyed confirmed their weekly participation in their different religious services.<sup>47</sup> Carlos Emilio Lopez maintains that the Nicaraguan youth of today are more interested in the practice of the gospel than dogmatic formulas since their main intention is to have a social impact on people in need.<sup>48</sup>

Nicaraguan religiosity is a blend of Indian and European cultural customs due largely to evangelizers who brought to Central America their own methods and forms of evangelization. To assure success, missionaries understandably needed translators to comprehend Nicaraguan culture. Pablo Antonio Cuadra, a Nicaraguan writer, relates that the first missionaries utilized children and teenagers as translators and evangelizers.<sup>49</sup> This explains why in Nicaragua there has been an inculturation between the native culture and the gospel which continues to this very day.

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<sup>46</sup> Henry A. Petrie, *Jóvenes de Nicaragua. Una historia que contar* (Managua: Editorial San Rafael, 1993), 23.

<sup>47</sup> Montenegro, *Jóvenes y Cultura Política en Nicaragua*, 140-143.

<sup>48</sup> López, *Juventopía*, 89.

<sup>49</sup> Cuadra, *Ensayos I* (Bogotá: Imprelibros S.A., 2003), 64.

## Religious Phenomena of Atheism, Popular Church, and Sects

From the 1980s until the present time the Nicaraguan Catholic church has experienced three religious phenomena that have challenged the Catholic religion and have been decisive in the transformation of culture and religious traditions.

### Atheism

In the decade of the 1980s, Catholics struggled against the atheism which the Sandinista revolution wanted to impose on children and youth. In Nicaragua the preservation of basic Christian traditions and beliefs has always been a pastoral priority for the bishops in their efforts to maintain Christian culture. The Nicaraguan bishops denounced such atheistic education as a violation of human rights and as an attempt to intentionally inculcate the rejection of Christian values practiced by young people. The consequences of this will be treated in the second part of this chapter.<sup>50</sup> There are dissidents, however, who defend Sandinista ideology and argue that it was only a project of a few leaders and not specifically an official imposition by the government.<sup>51</sup>

### Iglesia Popular (People's Church)

Another phenomenon was the so-called *Iglesia Popular* (People's Church), which was supported and promoted by the Sandinista Revolution, since such religious groups served as instrument for the revolutionary leaders of the *Frente Sandinista de Revolución*

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<sup>50</sup> Conferencia Episcopal de Nicaragua, "Carta Pastoral sobre la Educación Católica. December 8, 1982," *Documentos Seleccionados*, 39.

<sup>51</sup> Philip J. William, "The Catholics in the Nicaraguan Revolution. Differing Responses and New Challenges," *The Progressive Church in Latin America*, 79-88.

*Nacional*. The People's Church movement was composed of priests, nuns, and laity.<sup>52</sup> It was considered a parallel church and opposed to legitimate ecclesiastical authorities. The Nicaraguan bishops criticized this People's Church since such groups became promoters of division inside the Church and supporters of Marxist ideology.<sup>53</sup>

The significance of the People's Church cannot be minimized. The issue arose in the context of the Second Vatican Council and radical liberation theology, which has been criticized by many thinkers as an instrument of communism. For instance, George Weigel opines that many leaders of liberation theology were theologians educated in Europe who attempted to implement a "Marxist analysis" in Latin America.<sup>54</sup> Debra Sabia researched this topic in Nicaragua in depth. After grounding the rise of the *Iglesia Popular* in the renewal of Vatican II and the political context of Latin America, she suggests that in fact

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<sup>52</sup> A Nicaraguan writer states: "Resultaba evidente que los estrategas del FSLN habían comprendido finalmente que sólo usando la religión católica como símbolo de confiabilidad para propósitos puramente políticos, podrían vencer la barrera de la resistencia hacia ellos, que amplios grupos de católicos aún mantenían. Con esta estrategia consiguieron al menos la tolerancia e incluso la colaboración de la mayoría de la opinión pública que quería participar de alguna manera en el derrocamiento de la dictadura. Otra vertiente importante de captación de cooperantes en la lucha armada, surgió en los cuarteles de la propia Iglesia (Universidad Católica, Centro Valdivieso entre otros), que propugnaba en los clérigos la adhesión a los postulados de la Teología de Liberación, apoyándose en los textos de Gustavo Gutierrez, Leonardo Boff, Mendez Arceo, Jon Sobrino y Curran, etc. Para ello contaban con la Iglesia Popular, como herramienta eficaz empeñada en enfrentarse con la Iglesia Jerárquica y ortodoxa a la cual denunciaban como adláteres de la dictadura." Emilio Alvarez Montalván, *Cultura Política Nicaragüense* (Managua: Hispamer, 2000), 185. "It became evident that the FSLN strategists had finally understood that only by using the Catholic religion as a symbol of trustworthiness for what were purely political ends could they break through the barrier of resistance that large groups of Catholics still maintained. With this strategy they achieved the tolerance and even the participation of the majority of the public who wanted to participate in some way in the overthrow of the dictatorship. Another important aspect of recruiting those who would cooperate in the armed struggle arose in within the walls of the church itself (the Catholic University, the Valdivieso Center, among others), which advocated that the clergy adhere to the principles of the Liberation Theology, based on the writings of Gustavo Gutierrez, Leonardo Boff, Mendez Arceo, Jon Sobrino y Curran, et al. For this they counted on the People's Church as an effective tool to utilize in confronting the hierarchy and orthodoxy of the Church, which they denounced as a crony of the dictatorship," (personal translation).

<sup>53</sup> Conferencia Episcopal de Nicaragua, "Carta Pastoral sobre la Eucaristía, Fuente de Reconciliación. April 6, 1986," *Documentos seleccionados*, 93.

<sup>54</sup> George Weigel, *Witness to Hope*, 283.

its appearance signified a new experience of faith for many Catholics. In the case of Nicaragua, the Sandinista revolution was a manifestation of love toward the poor, which is in accordance with the gospel. From this point of view, the revolutionary movement was an experience and a reformulation of faith for many,<sup>55</sup> Pope John Paul II, however, condemned this movement because it was separate from the legitimate ecclesiastical authorities and had a political agenda.<sup>56</sup>

### Protestant Sects

Finally, the accelerated growth of Protestant sects has contributed to the doctrinal confusion of the Catholic population and the desertion of Catholicism.<sup>57</sup> In Nicaragua, most of these sects base their sermons on attacking the pope's authority and the bishop's reputation in order to sow distrust in society about their pastoral task and personal integrity.<sup>58</sup> The Nicaraguan bishops have confessed their "sorrow" in the face of this

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<sup>55</sup> Debra Sabia, *Contradiction and Conflict. The Popular Church in Nicaragua* (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 1997), 92.

<sup>56</sup> John Paul II, "Carta a los Obispos de Nicaragua sobre la Unidad de la Iglesia. June 29, 1982," *Documentos Seleccionados*, 92. Margaret E. Crahan opines that the Vatican took a hard line against the people's church because of its political agenda and Marxist ideology. See *The Progressive Church in Latin America*, 41.

<sup>57</sup> Some authors that treat the phenomenological case of Protestantism in Nicaragua affirm that this issue is plural and complex. For instance, Manuel Ortega and Marcelina Castillo note that Nicaraguan Protestantism is composed of different groups known as "evangelical denominations." These authors identify three groups: the first is called "Denominaciones Protestantes Históricas," (historical Protestant denominations), which come from the Protestant Europeans of the XVI century. The second is known as "Protestantes Pentecostales," (Pentecostal Protestants), which emerged in Nicaragua in 1930 and has grown significantly since 1960 in all of Central America. The last group is classified as "Misiones de fe," (Faith Missions), which came from the United States and the end of XIX century. (Manuel Ortega Hegg y Marcelina Castillo, *Religión y Política. La experiencia de Nicaragua* (Managua: Print Digital, 2006,) 131.

<sup>58</sup> Regarding Protestant sects, researchers have demonstrated that in 1950 the Catholic percentage of the population was 90 percent and Protestants represented only 4 percent. See John Morris Ryan et al, *Area Handbook for Nicaragua* (Washington D.C.: US Government Print, 1970), 137. Another source is provided by Dennis Gilbert, who affirms that the Protestant population has accelerated in numbers, going from 3 percent of the national population in 1965 to more than 20 percent in 1990. Gilbert, *Nicaragua A County*



unjust campaign against the Catholic community.<sup>59</sup> On the other hand, the Nicaraguan bishops have commented on what they see as the causes of increasing Protestantism in the country.<sup>60</sup>

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*Study*, 84. Finally, Manuel Ortega and Marcelina Castillo report that in 1970 the Catholic population represented 91 percent of the population and 4 percent were Protestants; in 1975 Roman Catholics were 89 percent, and 5 percent Protestant; in 2004, Catholics were 76 percent while Protestants had increased to 19 percent. Ortega y Castillo, *Religión y Política*, 89. See the chart 1 on page 60 of this chapter.

<sup>59</sup> “A los obispos de Nicaragua nos duele profundamente el ataque en aumento a los valores católicos de parte de sectas, que aprovechando la ignorancia religiosa de algunos católicos y a veces aprovechándose de sus necesidades materiales, ejercitan con ellos un desleal y anticristiano proselitismo.” Conferencia Episcopal de Nicaragua, “Carta Pastoral con motivo de la solemnidad de los santos apóstoles Pedro y Pablo,” *Documentos seleccionados*, 144. “We Nicaraguan bishops are deeply pained by the increasing attacks on Catholic values on the part of sects which, taking advantage of the religious ignorance of some Catholics and at times taking advantage of their material needs, undertake among them a disloyal and anti-Christian proselytism” (personal translation).

<sup>60</sup> The Nicaraguan Episcopal Conference has pointed out two important causes of the increase of Protestant sects in the country: The first regards the political of the United States, since the Nixon administration considered the Catholic Church a danger for North American interests because the Church had allied itself with the poor. The second pertains to the support by the Sandinista government for evangelical churches in order to decrease the influence of the Nicaraguan Catholic church in the country. The Nicaraguan bishops state: “A comienzos del verano de 1969, Nelson Rockefeller, presentaba al Presidente Nixon, el balance de su viaje especial a América Latina. Rockefeller había llegado a la conclusión que era conveniente para la política de los Estados Unidos, el potenciar sectas conservadoras, ya que, según él, la Iglesia Católica, por su compromiso con el pueblo pobre y su reclamo por un cambio en las estructuras, ha dejado de ser aliado de confianza para los Estados Unidos y la garantía de estabilidad social en el Continente.” (Conferencia Episcopal de Nicaragua, II Concilio Provincial) no. 211. “In the beginning of the summer of 1969 Nelson Rockefeller gave President Nixon an evaluation from his special trip to Latin America. Rockefeller had come to the conclusion that U.S. policy should strengthen the conservative sects because he thought that the Catholic Church, because of its commitment to the poor and call for structural change, was no longer a reliable U.S. ally or a guarantor of social stability on the continent,” (personal translation). “El Gobierno Sandinista, no muy contento con la postura de la Iglesia Católica, y bajo la bandera de la libertad religiosa, también promovió la expansión de estos grupos [Protestant sects] dándoles todo el apoyo, para conseguir que la influencia de la Iglesia Católica sobre la gente, se fuera debilitando gradualmente. Aún más, se promovió la idea de que no era necesario ser católico para ser un buen cristiano, como tampoco era necesario ser católico para mantener la grandeza de la identidad nacional.” (Conferencia Episcopal de Nicaragua, II Concilio Provincial), no 214. “The Sandinista government, unhappy with the position of the Catholic Church, also promoted the expansion of these groups under the banner of religious freedom, giving them full support in order to gradually weaken the influence of the Catholic Church among the people. Furthermore, it promoted the idea that it was not necessary to be a Catholic to be a good Christian, nor that it was necessary to be a Catholic to maintain the greatness of the national identity,” (personal translation).

### 1.3. Values in Nicaragua

#### 1.3.1. Religious Values

The Catholic religion is still the majority religion in Nicaragua according to the few surveys that exist.<sup>61</sup> Despite the preaching of the gospel in Nicaragua, however, a large number of Catholics live a “moral double standard.” Culturally there are numerous expressions of popular religiosity, such as processions and devotions in every part of the country, but there is a divorce between faith and practice. For instance, most Catholic couples are not married by the Sacrament of Matrimony and the practice of polygamy and adultery are very common in Nicaraguan culture. Some research describes Catholic practices there as merely emotional without deep repercussions for moral behavior, regarding for example monogamy.<sup>62</sup>

Religious values have experienced a decline over the last decade in Nicaragua. In the decade of the 1980s, Bishops congratulated Catholics for being tested in faith, by standing steady in their fidelity to their Christian roots and the Catholic Church, their love of the Blessed Virgin Mary, devotion to Eucharist, and a sincere respect for their pastors and the Holy Father. On the other hand, in the decade of the 1990s the Nicaraguan Episcopal Conference regretted the loss of enthusiasm for religious values and urged Nicaraguan Catholics to recover their former values.<sup>63</sup> The Nicaraguan

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<sup>61</sup> See note above no. 59.

<sup>62</sup> John Morris Ryan et al, *Area Handbook for Nicaragua*, 92. See also Gilbert, *Nicaragua A County Study*, 91.

<sup>63</sup> The Nicaraguan Episcopal Conference stated concerning over the crisis of religious values: “Ciertos valores familiares y patrióticos están desapareciendo, tal como la fraternidad, el sentido de la familia, el respeto mutuo, el respeto por la vida y por los ancianos. Se está perdiendo el respeto a los templos, santuarios y cementerios, y ha decaído la práctica de asistir a los necesitados, de la fe y el ejercicio de la caridad.” “Certain family and patriotic values are vanishing, such as fraternity, the sense of the family,

Catholic Church has warned that the decline of religious values has accelerated moral decay in all levels of life, which as a result has created evils in Nicaraguan society as a consequence of personal sin. This has caused transgressions that Nicaraguan people did not commit before, such as abortion, sexual wantonness, robberies, and other abominable crimes that have then weakened even more the moral conscience of citizens.<sup>64</sup> Catholics know the ethical norms but they have not observed them rigorously, which has led to the immoral behaviors noted above, which then has led to a further weakening of ethical norms in general. Despite the fact that the Nicaraguan bishops have deplored such practices, there is an evident need to confront courageously this moral double standard in the country, since the Catholic teachings have tended to be a reaction to such behaviors rather than a prophetic role to change this situation.

#### Sacraments of Baptism and of Matrimony

The sacraments of Baptism and Matrimony are quantitative indicators of adherence to the Catholic faith because baptism and matrimonial records exist in each parish.

Confirmation and first communion are other forms of calculating the progress of the faith, of course, but in the case of Nicaragua only the sacrament of baptism is commonly

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mutual respect, respect for life and the elderly. In certain areas respect for sacred places such as sacred buildings, sanctuaries, and even cemeteries, the practice of assisting people in need, and the practice of the faith and works of charity have decreased.” Conferencia Episcopal de Nicaragua, “Mensaje sobre la Justicia y la Paz. September 3, 1998,” *L’Osservatore Romano* (Spanish edition) 40 (1998): 11.

<sup>64</sup> Conferencia Episcopal de Nicaragua, “Carta Pastoral para Avivar la Esperanza Cristiana. May 10, 1994,” *L’Osservatore Romano* (Spanish edition) 23 (1994): 9.

celebrated by believers. Nicaraguan dioceses have only very recently begun to record the reception of first communion.<sup>65</sup>

Baptism is the sacrament through which Christian people become children of God and citizens of heaven. The Catholic Church teaches that this sacrament is necessary for salvation and to be considered a member of the Church. In Nicaragua this sacrament is the most observed and has a religious and social significance. According to the statistics of the *Anuario Pontificio*, baptisms in the Archdiocese of Managua have increased each year. This increase each year represents approximately 1.5% of the population of 1,800,000 theoretically Catholic inhabitants of the Archdiocese of Managua, but such an increase does not imply a Christian commitment by the majority of baptized. It does not mean that they will commit themselves to lay apostolates or the practices of the sacraments of matrimony and Eucharist.<sup>66</sup> Thus the increase in numbers of baptisms cannot serve as proof that religious values have strengthened.

It is interesting to review the accounts from some Nicaraguan historians that explain the widespread practice of baptisms since the period of colonization. For instance, Pablo Antonio Cuadra recounts that at that time baptism was the only way of becoming Christian and sharing the privileges of the Spanish Crown, but candidates for baptism did not have a consistent catechesis.<sup>67</sup> This explains the background for the current fact that

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<sup>65</sup> The common practice to celebrate only Baptism is confirmed by John Morris Ryan et al, *Area Handbook for Nicaragua*, 137.

<sup>66</sup> See the chart 2 on page 60 of this chapter.

<sup>67</sup> “Durante el periodo colonial, el sacramento de bautismo fue un signo visible para ser ciudadano y ser incorporado a la Iglesia Católica, pero no había una sólida evangelización sobre el sentido de ser cristiano, ya que la preparación prebautismal era reducida a una prédica de las verdades de la fe. Todavía hoy el ‘bautismo’ es el único sacramento de la mayoría de los nicaragüenses.” “During the colonial period, baptism was the visible sign of becoming a citizen and being incorporated into the Catholic Church; but

Nicaraguan Catholics feel a great urgency to receive the sacrament of the Baptism “*quam primum*,” (as soon as possible) not for any deeply felt spiritual need, but rather for fulfilling a religious commitment based on tradition and in many cases as a result of superstitions concerning demonic evils that can possess a person. As John Morris Ryan concludes, “for Nicaraguan people baptism is essential.”<sup>68</sup>

Matrimony is the natural union between a man and a woman and a sacrament for the baptized. Matrimony had an important place in Nicaragua during the pre-Columbian epoch and had religious importance. Consequently, marriage has been influenced by ancient Nicaraguan customs as well as by Catholicism.

According to Pablo Antonio Cuadra, monogamous matrimony was the practice of the Nicaraguan Indians before colonization, even though polygamy was also practiced by important leaders in the community. For example, adultery was harshly punished and virginity was valued by women and men.<sup>69</sup> Thus, when the country was evangelized by Spain there was a harmony between the culture and Christian marriage. Since colonization the Nicaraguan Catholic church has promoted and defended the dignity of matrimony despite attacks on the sacrament of marriage and the Catholic Church. For instance, Sofía Montenegro, a Nicaraguan critic of Catholic traditions, especially those

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there was no solid evangelization about being a Christian since such preparation was reduced to a schematic preaching of the truths of faith. Still today baptism is the only sacrament for the majority of the Nicaraguan people.” Cuadra, *El Nicaragüense*, 219.

<sup>68</sup> John Morris Ryan et al, *Area Handbook for Nicaragua*, 143.

<sup>69</sup> Cuadra, *Ensayos* I, 34.

concerning sexual matters, associates ecclesiastical matrimony with slavery because the Catholic Church controlled the institution of marriage.<sup>70</sup>

Throughout the decade of the 1990s Nicaraguan Catholicism focused on matrimony as a priority in its pastoral tasks since this institution was experiencing a tremendous crisis in regards its doctrine and practice. The bishops taught that a false doctrine about matrimony had been accepted by many couples, who thought that matrimony and union for life were not worthwhile and that children are an obstacle to personal freedom.<sup>71</sup> Furthermore, in rejecting the sacrament of marriage many Nicaraguans felt free to practice polygamy, which had become a widespread custom in the country.<sup>72</sup> Another factor is the cost of marriage, which some people feel they cannot afford, as well as the fact that women are less inclined to marry men who are not employed.

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<sup>70</sup> “Durante la colonia la Iglesia Católica era la institución que mezclaba la cultura hispánica con tradiciones eclesiásticas, especialmente en referente al matrimonio. La Iglesia Católica decidía la edad mínima de la pareja para contraer matrimonio, y autorizaba la edad mínima para el sacramento del matrimonio, registraba y legitimaba el matrimonio. En ciertos casos las regulaciones eran alteradas debido a las necesidades recientes de los convertidos a la Iglesia Católica. La Iglesia Católica era soberana e independiente de la corona española en la enseñanza del matrimonio. La Iglesia básicamente enfatizaba en la necesidad sacramental y la libertad personal de la pareja para el matrimonio.” “During the colonial period, the Catholic Church was the institution that mixed Spanish culture with ecclesiastical traditions, especially in regards to matrimony. The Catholic Church decided the minimum age of the couples to get married, authorized the minimum age for the sacrament of matrimony, and registered and legitimated marriages. In certain cases, matrimonial regulations were altered because of special needs of the recently converted population to be considered Catholics. From the perspective of Catholic teaching about marriage, the Catholic Church was sovereign from the Spanish Crown. The Church basically emphasized the sacramental necessity and the importance of personal freedom of the couple to get married.” Montenegro, *La Cultura Sexual en Nicaragua* (Managua: Centro de Investigaciones de la Comunicación, 2002), 33.

<sup>71</sup> Conferencia Episcopal de Nicaragua, “Mensaje acerca de algunos temas importantes para la Pastoral Familiar. August 15, 1996,” *L’Osservatore Romano* 38 (Spanish edition) (1996): 10.

<sup>72</sup> In 2006, the Office of the Secretary of Youth of the Nicaraguan Government surveyed 1,946 boys and 1,035 girls to research their views about matrimony as a lifelong commitment. Responses were: 34 percent of the male population responded that marriage is for all of one’s life, while 7 percent opined oppositely. Eighty percent of the women surveyed had the opinion that marriage is lifelong. In total, seventy-seven percent said that matrimony is lifelong. Gobierno de Nicaragua. Secretaría de la Juventud, *Primera Encuesta Nacional de Juventud* (Managua: Inpasa, 2006), 34. See the charts 3 and 4 on pages 61 and 62 of this chapter.

Catholic doctrine teaches that inseparable and lasting matrimony means a serious sacred commitment for Catholics in living out their responsibility of fidelity in the sacrament of marriage. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* defines matrimony as a responsibility for a lifetime for the good of the couple and the procreation and education of children.<sup>73</sup>

The foregoing description of these two sacraments provides ideas about religious values in Nicaragua. There are also in the country other practices of piety and frequency of the other sacraments similar to other countries where the population is mostly Catholic. These practices, such as Mass attendance and participation in the sacrament of communion, have enriched the Catholic faith. Furthermore, in Nicaragua there is another way to live Christian faith and religious traditions known as *religiosidad popular* (traditional or folk religiosity). These traditions appear stable at the present time although there is no official record of these like those for the sacraments of Baptism and Matrimony. Unfortunately, the Catholic Church cannot afford surveys or similar studies to update its knowledge of Catholic practices because of its economic limitations.

### 1.3.2 Values of Social Responsibility

This section focuses on certain social values in crisis in contemporary Nicaragua, especially among youth, concerning family, sexuality issues, abortion, prostitution, drug abuse and alcoholism, justice, and solidarity. All the issues relate to the central issue of responsibility because they involve moral imperatives concerning respect for others, as

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<sup>73</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (English edition) no.1601, second edition, translated by United States Catholic Conference (New York: Doubleday, 1997).

William Schweiker notes, the discourse of responsibility provides criteria for judging or evaluating specific acts as worthy of praise or blame.<sup>74</sup>

Nowadays, it is common to hear the term “values of responsibility” in civic and ecclesiastical speeches about personal and social duties. In his analysis of the values of responsibility, Albert Jonsen affirms that moral action is linked to basic values that still require philosophical, psychological, sociological and biological research. Jonsen concludes, however, that the basic values of “physical comfort, emotional stability and satisfaction, social order and justice, peace and so on” require responsibility as a moral action.<sup>75</sup> All these issues are of great concern to the Nicaraguan Episcopal Conference, society, and international organizations. The Nicaraguan Catholic church has been pastorally engaged with these issues by clarifying them in her writings, in which she focuses on the root causes of such problems, by forming Episcopal commissions to deal with these situations, and by educating lay experts on these matters. The NGO’s have contributed to the country by publishing reports, compiling statistics and in certain cases rehabilitating victims of violence and sexual abuse.<sup>76</sup>

#### 1.3.2.1 Family, Marriage and Sexuality

The institution of the family has been honored in Nicaragua by the Catholic Church because of its vital role in social stability and as an educator in civic and religious values.

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<sup>74</sup> William Schweiker, *Responsibility and Christian Ethics* (Cambridge: University Press, 1995), 144.

<sup>75</sup> Albert R. Jonsen, *Responsibility in Modern Religious Ethics* (Washington D.C.: Corpus Publications, 1968), 200.

<sup>76</sup> Gobierno de Nicaragua. Secretaría de La Juventud, *Experiencias participativas con Jóvenes*, 25.



The Nicaraguan Constitution describes the family as the “fundamental nucleus of society.”<sup>77</sup>

The concept of the family in Nicaragua is the sum of all members: grandparents, parents, children, and relatives; such a reality has converted the family into a place of solidarity becoming, in a certain manner, subsidiary to the state in terms of housing, health, and education.<sup>78</sup> Studies demonstrate that this traditional concept of family existed before colonization, but it was further influenced by the Spanish family values. At present family size is reduced because many couples have decided to have fewer children.<sup>79</sup> Denis Gilbert confirms that the Nicaraguan family is the only stable institution that has remained of the former indigenous institutions.<sup>80</sup>

The Nicaraguan bishops describe the family as welcoming to those outside the family and the most important instrument of socialization. It is a privileged place for forming cultural, moral, civic, and religious values.<sup>81</sup> The bishops have written in a variety of ways of their concern about the situation of the family in the last two decades; this has become a priority in their pastoral task. The Nicaraguan pastors have addressed several documents on the subject of the family, which demonstrates the importance that the issue

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<sup>77</sup> República de Nicaragua, *Constitución Política de la República de Nicaragua*, no. 70.

<sup>78</sup> Humberto Abaunza, et al, *Una Causa para Rebeldes. Identidad y Condición Juvenil en Nicaragua* (Managua: Puntos de Encuentro, 1995), 80.

<sup>79</sup> Cuadra, *Ensayos I*, 137

<sup>80</sup> Gilbert, *Nicaragua A Country Study*, 78.

<sup>81</sup> Conferencia Episcopal de Nicaragua, “Mensaje Pastoral en la Solemnidad de la Asunción. August 15, 1999,” *L'Osservatore Romano* (Spanish edition) 34 (1999): 8.

has for the country.<sup>82</sup> This dissertation will refer to the documents on the family published in the decade of the 1990s.

Summarizing the drama of the Nicaraguan family in the period described above, the bishops point out that the “culture of death” impacts family stability due to increased abortion, the use of contraceptives, illicit unions, wrong sexual education, and unilateral divorce. Additionally, political, economic, and religious factors have collaborated in the family’s disintegration.<sup>83</sup> Finally, it must be pointed out that central to the challenges facing the contemporary Nicaraguan family are a set of external factors that have contributed to a weakening of the family as an institution in the country. These factors, related to the emergence of new technology, globalization, the Internet and cable television, have permeated the mentality and conduct of parents and children and created a new concept of family and different ways of behaving.

### Sexuality, Birth Control, and Abortion

The topic of sexuality includes birth control policies, abortion, the value of virginity and matrimony. The latter two have historically been esteemed in Nicaragua to maintain the moral order of society and Christian behavior.<sup>84</sup> The Nicaraguan woman feels pride in

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<sup>82</sup> Conferencia Episcopal de Nicaragua, “Carta Pastoral Jesucristo y la Unidad de su Iglesia. October 22, 1980,” <http://www.tmx.com.ni/cen/documentos/1980/Carta-Pastoral-22-10-1980>, Accessed January 28, 2008; Conferencia Episcopal de Nicaragua, “Carta Pastoral con Motivo del Año Mariano. September 8, 1987,” *Documentos seleccionados*, 79; Conferencia Episcopal de Nicaragua, “Carta Pastoral en la Solemnidad Litúrgica de los Santos Pedro y Pablo. June 29, 1988,” *Documentos seleccionados*, 137; and Conferencia Episcopal de Nicaragua, “Mensaje sobre algunos aspectos de la Pastoral Familiar, August 15, 1996,” *L’Osservatore Romano* (Spanish edition) 38 (1996): 10. .

<sup>83</sup> Conferencia Episcopal de Nicaragua, “Carta Pastoral con Motivo de la Navidad de 1995,” <http://www.tmx.com.ni/-cen/documentos/1995/Carta-Pastoral-16-12-1995>. Accessed January 10, 2008.

<sup>84</sup> Cuadra, *Ensayos*, 34.

her body, fertility, and motherhood.<sup>85</sup> Denis Gilbert says that the Nicaraguan woman plays an important role as woman and mother which is inherited from Hispanic customs.<sup>86</sup> The Nicaraguan bishops provide a similar description by affirming that femininity and maternity are “essential” characteristics of Nicaraguan women.<sup>87</sup>

Since 1980, the related subjects of female dignity, family, birth control, and abortion have been discussed by the Nicaraguan Catholic church. By the mid-1990s, the Nicaraguan Church had begun to struggle against new concepts of sexuality and for the defense of human life. The bishops have clearly expounded an anthropological and theological approach to the purpose of sexuality and the right notion of masculinity and femininity in response to global and local feminist movements. These subjects have been discussed by papal documents, among them, *Evangelium vitae* and the Apostolic letter *Mulieris dignitatem* in the context of extremist global feminist movements. The Holy Father called for a “new feminism,” which he grounded in a Christian anthropological perspective, through which he defined the role of the woman in society. For John Paul II, “a new feminism cannot be interpreted as similar to ‘male domination.’ ”<sup>88</sup>

Regarding the controversial “feminist movement,” such phenomena have recently become very strong in Nicaragua, but women’s organizations which pursued social goals in the country have in fact existed for a long time. María Teresa Blandón states that the Nicaraguan women’s movement is one of oldest in Latin America. It began in the late 1970s; its aim was social and economic benefits for women. After the Sandinista

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<sup>85</sup> Abaunza et al, *Una causa para rebeldes*, 51.

<sup>86</sup> Gilbert, *Nicaragua A County Study*, 83.

<sup>87</sup> Conferencia Episcopal de Nicaragua, “Carta Pastoral con Motivo del Año Mariano. 8 de Septiembre de 1987,” *Documentos Seleccionados*, 79.

<sup>88</sup> John Paul II, *Evangelium vitae*, no. 99.

triumph, the organization was manipulated by the *Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional* (Sandinista Front for National Liberation) for partisan interests favorable to the revolutionary movement.<sup>89</sup>

But the term “new feminism” must be used carefully since there is a traditional feminist theology according to Catholic teaching about the dignity and role of women. For instance, in the exhortations and encyclicals *Familiaris consortio*, *Christifideles laici*, *Evangelium vitae*, and in the apostolic letter *Mulieris dignitatem*, the pope discussed specifically the dignity and purpose of woman, which affirmed that within the Catholic Church there has always been a genuine concept of feminism.

In John Paul II’s thought “new feminism” meant that woman is not inferior to the personal potential of man, but is merely different, and masculinity and femininity are an expression of the image and likeness of God.<sup>90</sup> Anthropologically, the role of woman is defined, among other things, as a vocation to motherhood and to transmit life, and her participation in this process is irreplaceable. As Mary Bader Papa asserts, women have become their own worst enemies, because they are using men as glasses through which to see themselves.<sup>91</sup>

Conflict between Catholic teaching and local feminist movements appeared in Nicaragua in 1996, when such movements demanded that Nicaraguan Congressmen enact the *Ley de Igualdad de Oportunidades* (Law of Equality of Opportunity), which

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<sup>89</sup> María Teresa Blandón, “The Impact of the Sandinista Defeat on Nicaraguan Feminism,” *Compañeras. Voices from the Latin American Women’s Movement*, edited by Gaby Koppers (Nottingham, Russel Press, 1992), 97.

<sup>90</sup> John Paul II, *Evangelium vitae*, no. 99.

<sup>91</sup> Mary Bader Papa, *Christian Feminism. Completing the Subtotal Woman* (Chicago: Fides/Claretian, 1981), 104.

argued that the civil constitution should eliminate the distinction between masculinity and femininity, and use only the term “gender,” to be indiscriminately assigned to men and women based on the argument that all citizens have the same rights before the law.<sup>92</sup>

### Birth Control

In connection with family, matrimony and sexuality, the issue of birth control must be added to the discussion. This practice has been aggressively imposed on the poorest countries around the world by international organizations. Among these organizations is the United Nations Family Planning Agency (UNFPA), which is specifically mentioned by the Nicaraguan Episcopal Conference.<sup>93</sup> John Paul II seriously condemned these anti-birth policies.<sup>94</sup> Nicaragua is not the exception in this area. In communion with the Pope, the bishops call birth-control policies a “new colonialism” in which there is a “hidden racism” because it ignores Nicaraguan culture and religion.<sup>95</sup> Studies demonstrate, nevertheless, that Nicaragua continues to have one of the highest birth rates in Latin America and reports attribute the high birth rates to the Catholic Church’s influence.<sup>96</sup> According to statistics, until 1965 the birthrate was 7.3 children per woman. Afterwards

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<sup>92</sup> Asociación de Mujeres Nicaragüenses Luisa Amanda Espinoza, *Proyecto de Ley de Igualdad de Oportunidades* (Managua: Artes Gráficas, 2001), 9. Conferencia Episcopal de Nicaragua, “Mensaje sobre la Familia en Ocasión de la Solemnidad de San José. March 19, 2003,” *L’Osservatore Romano* (Spanish edition) 29 (2003): 10.

<sup>93</sup> Conferencia Episcopal de Nicaragua, “La Familia debe volver a su verdad auténtica para el fundamento de la sociedad Nicaragüense. March 19, 2003,” *L’Osservatore Romano* (Spanish edition) 29 (2003): 10.

<sup>94</sup> John Paul II, *Evangelium vitae*, no. 16.

<sup>95</sup> Conferencia Episcopal de Nicaragua, “Mensaje pastoral sobre algunos temas de la Pastoral Familiar. August 15, 1996,” *L’Osservatore Romano* (Spanish edition) 38 (1996): 10.

<sup>96</sup> Dennis Gilbert states: “The ideal expectations of the culture do not prevent most Nicaraguan women from becoming sexually active early in life: 38 percent by age sixteen and 73 percent by age nineteen, according to one study.” Gilbert, *Nicaragua A County Study*, 82.

this gradually declined, and in the period 1995-2000 it was determined to be 4.4 children per woman.<sup>97</sup>

## Abortion

Family and life have always been defended by Catholic tradition. The practice of abortion has begun in Nicaragua and has deeply shaken the morality that characterized Christian consciences in respecting human life. The bishops have condemned the practice of abortion as a “terrifying crime,” never before seen in Nicaragua. Although abortion is penalized by law, it is clandestinely practiced in the country and for this reason there are no statistical reports on abortion, even though national and international organizations report limited information.<sup>98</sup>

In October 26, 2006, the Nicaraguan Legislative Assembly abolished the right to therapeutic abortion, which had been legal for 130 years. This change was spearheaded by the Catholic Church and pro-life movements, which argued that the Nicaraguan

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<sup>97</sup> Enciclopedia de Nicaragua. Volumen 2 (Barcelona: Editorial Oceano, 2002), p. 243

<sup>98</sup> Casa de Vida, a national Catholic organization concerned with the issue of abortion, reports that between 2005 and 2008, 1,330 women between the ages of 13 and 37 had abortions. The largest age group were those between 19 and 24, which represented 48% over the number surveyed. 835 (63%) were single mothers. 923 (69%) were Catholics. In terms of reasons for desiring an abortion, the largest group, 497 (31%) reported economic reasons. Casa de Vida, *Estadísticas de Abortos 2005-2008* (Managua: Casa de Vida Press, 2009): 2.

“El sistema de salud nicaragüense registró en el período 1999-2005, un promedio de 397 embarazos ectópicos, 232 embarazos con molas hidatiformes, 824 embarazos con embriones y fetos con malformaciones congénitas y más de 5500 abortos espontáneos por otras causas no especificadas que ameritaron intervenciones obstétricas de emergencia, en su mayoría quirúrgicas.” “The Nicaraguan health system recorded during the period 1999 to 2005 an average of 397 ectopic pregnancies, 232 pregnancies with hidatiform moles, 824 pregnancies with embryos or fetuses with congenital malformations, and more than 5500 spontaneous abortions for other causes not specified that required emergency obstetrical interventions, the majority surgical.” World Health Organization, *Derrogación del Aborto Terapéutico en Nicaragua. Impacto en Salud* (Managua: Gráficos y Algo más, 2006), 16.

government should respect the Constitution, which guarantees the protection and defense of human life from conception.<sup>99</sup>

In the above referenced matter, there is an obvious connection with respect for human life from a Christian point view. The fifth commandment “Do not kill,” has been deeply rooted in Nicaraguan society to protect innocent lives. Humberto Abaunza states that many Nicaraguan young people reject abortion because of religious convictions.<sup>100</sup>

The Nicaraguan Catholic Church has confronted a society divided about abortion, since a sector of population and international organizations have argued for juridical, ethical and health reasons that women have a right to decide about their own body. Some argue that abortion is either the third or the fourth cause of maternal mortality in the country.<sup>101</sup> Currently there is a lawsuit attempting to overturn the decision to abolish the right to abortion. This legal dispute is likely to continue for years.

## Prostitution

Besides the evils mentioned above, the country is experiencing another shameful reality because of the prostitution of minors of both sexes. By the end of 1999, the Church had condemned these situations, which were exacerbated by the trafficking of

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<sup>99</sup> Arnoldo Toruño, Aborto Inducido en Nicaragua, *Universitas* 1 (2007): 21-23. The Political Nicaraguan Constitution establishes as constitutional guarantees protection to human reproduction, art. 47. República de Nicaragua, *Constitución Política de la República de Nicaragua*.

<sup>100</sup> Abaunza et al, *Una causa para Rebeldes*, 126.

<sup>101</sup> “En Nicaragua, la mortalidad materna es un problema altamente priorizado por el Plan Nacional de Salud, y el aborto ha sido una causa importante de estas defunciones. En efecto, en 1998, un estudio conjunto del Ministerio de Salud y UNICEF, a la par de calcular una tasa de mortalidad materna de 133 por 100,000 nacidos, señala el aborto como la tercera causa de muerte.” “In Nicaragua maternal mortality is a high priority issue in the National Health Plan, and abortion has been seen as a significant cause of these deaths. For instance, in 1998, a joint survey by Ministry of Health and UNICEF that calculates the rate of maternal mortality as 133 per 100,000 points to abortion as the third cause of death.” Toruño, Aborto Inducido, 21.

minors. This horrible reality was never seen before in the country, but according to the bishops the cause was in part due to the economic situation. This social phenomenon reveals an accelerated moral decay of traditional values, since in addition to sexual exploitation it also reflects the abandonment of the family's role to form children in Christian principles.<sup>102</sup> Prostitution in Nicaragua has become a social practice. For example, many fathers consider that their sons must have a sexual encounter with a prostitute as sign of virility. In other cases many women engage in prostitution as a source of income because of poverty.

#### Drugs and Alcoholism

The presence of drugs and alcoholism have become a true plague in the world, especially for adolescents and young people, and it is a serious problem for families, since it has become a cause of conflict between parents and children, as well as a cause of conflict between spouses. In other cases, dealing drugs is the only way of survival for many families because of unemployment in the country and the consequent poverty of many families. In the last decade Nicaragua has been considered a strategic route for drug trafficking due to its geographical location between South and North America. This fact and the poverty of the country have been decisive in the increase of drug addiction in Nicaragua. Addiction demonstrates, as in other countries, a form of social decay and an evident crisis of Nicaraguan young people's values, since it becomes a social sin that

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<sup>102</sup> Conferencia Episcopal de Nicaragua, "Mensaje con ocasión de la Solemnidad de la Virgen María. August 15, 1999," *L'Osservatore Romano* (Spanish edition) 34 (1999): 8. Carlos Emilio López affirms that child, feminine, and masculine prostitution are spread throughout the country. In addition, prostitution in rural zones is a phenomenon never before seen in Nicaragua. López, *Juventopía*, 56.



damages society because alcoholism and drug addiction destroy the future of people and impoverish the society.<sup>103</sup>

### 1.3.2.2 Justice

#### Definition

Justice is an important value of social responsibility. Justice is the virtue that protects personal and collective rights, maintains the fair distribution of wealth, establishes the public and institutional order, and ensures social peace and mutual respect among individuals. Aristotle defines justice as a virtue that seeks the good of persons.<sup>104</sup> Thomas Aquinas describes justice as “*perpetua et constans voluntas ius suum unicuique tribuens.*” (Justice is a habit which makes a man capable of doing what is just, and of being just in action and in intention).<sup>105</sup>

Within biblical revelation there is a broad vocabulary about justice which guides believers on matters of honesty, perfection, and integrity. Catholic teaching defines justice as “the moral virtue that consists in the constant and firm will to give their due to God and neighbor.”<sup>106</sup> For the late John Paul II justice must be analyzed in depth since it is called “to establish equality and harmony.”<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> Conferencia Episcopal de Nicaragua, “Mensaje Pastoral en ocasión de la Pascua de Resurrección. May 3, 1995,” *L’Osservatore Romano* (Spanish edition) 30 (1995): 11. See the chart no. 5, on page 63 of this chapter.

<sup>104</sup> Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, 1130a (London: Penguin Books, 2004), 115.

<sup>105</sup> St. Thomas Aquinas. *Summa Theologiae*. II-II q. 58, articulus 1, ad 1 (Ottawa: Collège Dominicain d’Ottawa, 1941), 1718a.

<sup>106</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church* no. 1807.

<sup>107</sup> John Paul II, *Dives in misericordia*, no. 12. The Mercy of God, *John Paul II. The Encyclicals in Everyday*; AAS 72 (1980): 1177-1232.

## Justice in Latin America

Justice has been a central concern for Latin America's Catholic bishops. The five regional conferences have chosen social justice as the most important issue for the entire continent.<sup>108</sup> From Medellin in 1968 until the last meeting in Aparecida in 2007, the bishops have maintained the subject of justice as a priority for their pastoral task. The third Conference held in Puebla states: "The situation of injustice forces us to reflect on the great challenge our pastoral work faces in trying to help human beings to move from less human to more human conditions. The deep-rooted social differences, the extreme poverty, and the violation of human rights found in many areas pose challenges to evangelization."<sup>109</sup>

## Justice in Nicaragua

Regarding the subject of justice in Nicaragua, I have no intention to develop an extensive history of the prophetic role that the Nicaraguan Catholic Church has played throughout national history in defending human dignity and seeking the common good. The aim in this section is to focus on the decade of the 1990s, but it is useful to recall some other significant periods in which the Catholic Church has shown its commitment to justice. For instance, during the 16<sup>th</sup> century Antonio de Valdivieso, the third bishop during Spanish colonization, was murdered for defending the rights of indigenous

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<sup>108</sup> The first conference took place in Rio de Janeiro, in 1955; the second in Medellin in 1968; the third in Puebla in 1978; the fourth in Santo Domingo, in 1992; and the last in Aparecida, in 2007.

<sup>109</sup> Consejo Episcopal Latinoamericano, *Puebla and Beyond. Documentation and Commentary*, translated by John Drury, edited by John Eagleson and Philip Shaper (New York: Orbis Books, 1979) no. 90.

peoples. He has been considered the first Nicaraguan martyr because of his struggle for justice.<sup>110</sup>

During the decade of the 1970s the Nicaraguan Catholic Church's role was decisive in the overthrow of the Somoza dynasty that ruled the country for forty years and ended as a highly repressive regime.<sup>111</sup> The decade of the 1980s presented another struggle for Catholics when the Sandinista Revolution seized power and tried to impose Marxist ideology through violating human rights, banning individual freedoms, promoting religious persecution and implementing Marxist education.<sup>112</sup>

In regard to the decade of the 1990s, the Church continued to express its concern about current issues of justice because the rule of law, respect for law and the independence of the branches of government still were not evident. This priority is evidenced in four pastoral documents issued throughout the decade.<sup>113</sup> In summarizing the concerns of the Nicaraguan Catholic church concerning the issue of justice in the decade of the 1990s, the Nicaraguan Episcopal Conference focused on human rights, corruption, and the rule of law, which will be examined in the following section.

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<sup>110</sup> Antonio de Valdivieso was the third bishop of Nicaragua. He oversaw the Archdiocese of Nicaragua from 1544 through 1550 and was assassinated by Governor Rodrigo de Contreras on February 26, 1550. See Zúñiga, *Historia Eclesiástica de Nicaragua*, 53. Another source is Enrique D. Dussel, *Historia de la Iglesia en América Latina. Coloniaje y Liberación 1492-1973* (Barcelona: Editorial Nova Terra, 1974), 95.

<sup>111</sup> Thomas W. Walter, *Nicaragua Without Illusions*, 6.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid*, 8.

<sup>113</sup> Conferencia Episcopal de Nicaragua. "Mensaje en ocasión de la Pascua de Resurrección. May 3, 1995." *L'Osservatore Romano* (Spanish edition) 30 (1995): 11; Conferencia Episcopal de Nicaragua, "Mensaje con Motivo de la Solemnidad de Pentecostés. May 17, 1997," *L'Osservatore Romano* (Spanish edition) 29 (1997): 10; Conferencia Episcopal de Nicaragua, "Mensaje con ocasión de las Fiestas Patrias de 1998. September 3, 1998," *L'Osservatore Romano* (Spanish edition) 40 (1998): 11; and Conferencia Episcopal de Nicaragua, "Mensaje con ocasión de la Solemnidad de la Asunción de María. August 15, 1999," *L'Osservatore Romano* (Spanish edition) 34 (1999): 8.

Transparency International provided another important criticism of corruption in the justice system in Nicaragua.<sup>114</sup>

## Human Rights

The defense of human rights has become a deep vocation for the Nicaraguan Church. It is clear that in Nicaragua the Church shared with the universal Church the concern of Vatican Council II to respond to the call of humankind to respect their elemental rights and to encourage the self-determination of nations. David Hollenbach states that human rights issues moved deeply into the structures of the Church and became critical as international organizations such as the United Nations went forward in defending such rights.<sup>115</sup>

During the Somoza regime government officials censured the release of information pertaining to the persecution and assassination of political and religious leaders and numerous incidents of torture and disappearances from jails.<sup>116</sup> Equally culpable was the Sandinista government, which repeated the same atrocities of its predecessor administration. For example, in 1982 the bishops condemned the violations of the human

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<sup>114</sup> The article states: "In Nicaragua, the disappearance of a large sum of money from a Supreme Court bank account resulted in a public outcry and an in-depth review by Probidad, an organization that, among other things, trains journalists in anti-corruption work. In April 2004, police confiscated \$609,240 from a Colombian and four Nicaraguans who were charged with money laundering and falsification of documents. The money was deposited in a Supreme Court account and the defendants sentenced to three years in prison. While serving their sentences, \$606,000 was withdrawn by an individual representing the defendants with signed authorization from members of the Supreme Court." Transparency International, *Global Corruption 2007. Corruption in Judicial Systems* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 117.

<sup>115</sup> David Hollenbach, *Justice, Peace & Human Rights. American Catholic Social Ethics in a Pluralist Context* (New York: Crossroad, 1988), 91.

<sup>116</sup> Conferencia Episcopal de Nicaragua, "Mensaje Pastoral a los Hombres de Buena Voluntad. August 2, 1978," (Managua: Conferencia Episcopal de Nicaragua Press, 1978), 1.

rights of the Miskito Indians, who were deprived of their lands and were forced to walk long distances with their children, sick people and elderly. In addition to this, the Sandinistas destroyed their homes and belongings and caused the deaths of many under mysterious circumstances.<sup>117</sup>

From 1990 to the present time the bishops have condemned abortion and birth control policies and violations of national laws. With respect to the judicial system, the Nicaraguan Episcopal Conference has emphasized the urgency of achieving the rule of law and promoting a stable society. Regarding abortion, the Church has maintained that these practices constitute a holocaust of innocent lives and a detriment for society. Therefore, the Church has demanded that authorities and all citizens respect the judicial system, traditional values, and the national culture: “Our religious values and the Christian culture that the majority of Nicaraguan people profess must be respected inside and outside the nation.”<sup>118</sup>

### Corruption

During the decade of the 1990s, Nicaragua was hit by unprecedented political and economic corruption, which was never seen before in recent times. The topic of corruption appears in five pastoral documents which underlined the importance of the social doctrine of the Catholic Church because the problem has become a global evil that

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<sup>117</sup> Ibid, 2.

<sup>118</sup> Conferencia Episcopal de Nicaragua, “Mensaje sobre la Dignidad de la Mujer. August 30, 1995.” *L’Osservatore Romano* (Spanish edition) 1 (1996): 12.

negatively affects all nations, particularly the poorest countries.<sup>119</sup> The fourth Latin American Episcopal Conference affirms that corruption is widespread throughout the American continent, thus generating social indifference and skepticism because of the lack of justice and laws that oppose human dignity and Christian principles.<sup>120</sup>

According to the Nicaraguan Catholic church, the country is experiencing generalized corruption practiced for the personal benefit of a few people, particularly civil authorities and the owners of capital, while most of the population lives in misery. There is widespread bribery and special privileges for different levels of government, illicit accumulation of wealth while in public office, unbridled ambition for power by rulers, and influence trafficking, all which have become common behavior in Nicaraguan society. These situations are among the reasons for which many people fear that there has been a significant erosion in traditional moral values and are less likely to confront it. “Corruption has many faces and it is not easy to eradicate, since it demands courage,” the Nicaraguan bishops have said.<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> Conferencia Episcopal de Nicaragua, “Carta Pastoral en la Solemnidad Litúrgica de Cristo Rey. November 24, 1991,” *Documentos Seleccionados*, 119; Conferencia Episcopal de Nicaragua, “Mensaje en ocasión de la Pascua de Resurrección. May 3, 1995,” *L’Osservatore Romano* (Spanish edition) 38 (1995): 11; Conferencia Episcopal de Nicaragua, “Mensaje sobre algunos aspectos de la Pastoral Familiar. August 15, 1996,” *L’Osservatore Romano* (Spanish edition) 38 (1996): 10; Conferencia Episcopal de Nicaragua, “Mensaje con motivo de la Solemnidad de Pentecostés. May 17, 1997,” *L’Osservatore Romano* (Spanish edition) 29 (1997): 16; and Conferencia Episcopal de Nicaragua, “Mensaje con ocasión de las Fiestas Patrias. September 3, 1998,” *L’Osservatore Romano* (Spanish edition) 40 (1998): 11.

<sup>120</sup> “Corruption is widespread. Public funds are mismanaged; demagoguery, populism, and the ‘political lie’ during election campaigns are on the rise, justice is mocked, impunity is becoming commonplace, and the community feels impotent and defenseless against crime. The result is a growing social insensitivity and skepticism when justice is not done, and laws contrary to fundamental human and Christian values are passed. The goods of the earth are not distributed fairly; nature is abused; and the ecosystem is being damaged,” Consejo Episcopal Latinoamericano, *Fourth General Conference*, no. 233.

<sup>121</sup> Conferencia Episcopal de Nicaragua, “Mensaje Pastoral en ocasión de las Fiestas Patrias. 3 de Septiembre de 1998,” *L’Osservatore Romano* (Spanish edition) 40 (1998): 11.

Corruption in Nicaragua has been the custom for a long time; it has been practiced through nepotism among family members that rule the country and the lack of professional ethics regulations concerning those who also occupy governmental positions who also may have economic interests affected by government policies.<sup>122</sup>

### Judicial System

The last topic of this section deals with the judicial system. Nicaragua, like other civilized countries in the Western Hemisphere, has been ruled by a political constitution since it became a sovereign republic after independence from Spain. Its second constitution was enacted in 1986 during the Sandinista government, which had seized power in 1979. This constitution, however, has been questioned by the Nicaraguan Catholic church on the grounds that it is partisan and dangerous to citizens due to its too narrow Marxist conception of justice and human rights.<sup>123</sup> The reputation of Nicaragua has fallen because justice is administrated partially, the application of laws is subjected to political favoritism and any political leader opposed to the current Sandinista government is destroyed.<sup>124</sup>

In theory, the Nicaraguan Constitution establishes four branches of government: executive, legislative, judicial, and electoral. These are supposed to guarantee justice, but

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<sup>122</sup> Rose Spalding J, "The Economic Elite," *Nicaragua without Illusions*, 257

<sup>123</sup> The Nicaraguan bishops state: "Nuestra actual constitución política fue elaborada sin la suficiente participación ciudadana. Dicha constitución responde a autoritarios intereses políticos, lo cual es causa de injusticias sociales." "Our current political constitution was developed without enough civic participation. Such constitutions respond to authoritarian political interests, which cause social injustices." Conferencia Episcopal de Nicaragua, "Exhortación Pastoral ante la Situación que vive el País. October 7, 1992," <http://www.tmx.com.ni/-cen/documentos/1992/Exhortation>; accessed September 28, 2007.

<sup>124</sup> The party *Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional* came to power again in 2007 when they won the general election.

in practice they do not. There is no real independence among the branches of government, and the administration of justice has thus become “negotiable” in Nicaragua. For example, at the present time two major political parties agree on the appointment of the main political positions. The Supreme Court of Justice is composed of 16 magistrates, from which eight are militants of the Sandinista party and the rest are appointed by the Liberal party. These are the two largest parties in Nicaragua. Thus these two parties control the judicial system according to their interests. A deeper analysis of this important issue goes beyond the scope of this dissertation. My intention here is only to refer to the Nicaraguan Catholic Church’s teaching about the judicial system, and mention criticism from other institutions with concerns for justice in Nicaragua.

During the 1990s, the Nicaraguan Episcopal Conference addressed the topic of justice in four documents. They affirmed that the laws are not observed nor is there confidence in the judicial system, which thus constitutes a risk to the country’s institutions and to the rights of its citizens.<sup>125</sup> Other institutions have also questioned this situation previously addressed by the Catholic Church. For instance, the *Instituto por el Desarrollo y la Democracia*, (Institute for Development and Democracy) (IPADE), in a survey made

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<sup>125</sup> Conferencia Episcopal de Nicaragua, “Carta Pastoral en la Solemnidad Litúrgica de Cristo Rey. November 24, 1991,” *Documentos Seleccionados*, 119; Conferencia Episcopal de Nicaragua, “Carta Pastoral para Avivar la Esperanza del Pueblo de Dios. May 1º. 1994,” *L’Osservatore Romano* (Spanish edition) 23 (1994): 9; Conferencia Episcopal de Nicaragua, “Mensaje en ocasión de la Resurrección. May 3, 1995,” *L’Osservatore Romano* (Spanish edition) 38 (1995): 11; and Conferencia Episcopal de Nicaragua, “Mensaje con motivo de la Solemnidad de Pentecostés. May 17, 1997,” *L’Osservatore Romano* (Spanish edition) 29 (1997): 6.



among young people concluded that justice in Nicaragua is not possible for poor people.<sup>126</sup>

Finally, it should be pointed out that the crisis in morality concerning the administration of justice in Nicaragua is due to the fact that many judges and lawyers have abandoned moral principles about justice as a virtue, there is an absence of patriotism, and there is a lack of humanism and solidarity towards others. In addition to this, many judges accept bribes because of the over-emphasis on money in the society; there is thus a general absence of moral and juridical rules to guide the professional work of judges. It must be noted that a high percentage of judges and lawyers are Catholics and were educated in Catholic schools.

### 1.3.2.3 Solidarity

#### Concepts of Solidarity

In addition to the social values already analyzed, it is also necessary to examine the concept of solidarity in order to achieve a full portrait of moral values in Nicaragua. Solidarity is a common term in the secular and Christian language. For instance, the expression is used to mean support for people in need, alliances between employers and workers to agree on salary and social benefits, or international support from rich countries to poor nations. Marie Vianney Bilgriend describes the virtue of solidarity as a

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<sup>126</sup> Instituto para el Desarrollo y la Democracia, *Sondeo de Opinión 'Cultura Política y Valores Democráticos,'* (Managua: Litografía Print Center, 2007), 40.

concern for interdependence among human beings for the sake of the common good that anticipates the needs of present and future generations.<sup>127</sup>

### Solidarity in Nicaragua

The issue of solidarity is explicitly and implicitly expressed in the Nicaraguan bishops' teaching confronting social realities that have afflicted the country. In the decade of the 1970s, the Nicaraguan Episcopal Conference encouraged Catholics to be in solidarity while facing the political system headed by the Somoza family, which had ruled the nation for four decades and was known for corruption and repression.<sup>128</sup>

During the Sandinista regime the Nicaraguan church supported the *Cruzada Nacional de Alfabetización* (National Literacy Crusade) promoted by the Sandinista revolution in the 1980s despite the fact that in addition to literacy, the campaign attempted to inculcate a materialist ideology through the curriculum (conceived according to Cuban model), and to organize the population to support the Sandinista revolution.<sup>129</sup> Since the last decade the ecclesiastical hierarchy has invoked the virtue of solidarity to defend human life and to safeguard the rights of citizens.

It cannot be denied that the teaching and practice of solidarity was present during these crucial periods. From an instructional perspective, the Church clearly taught that

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<sup>127</sup> Marie Vianney Bilgriend, "Solidarity as a Virtue and the Common Good," *Foundation Theology 2000. Faculty Essays for Ministry Professionals*, edited by Robley Edward Whiton (Bristol: Wyndham Hall Press, 2000), 1.

<sup>128</sup> Walker, *Nicaragua Without Illusions*, 6.

<sup>129</sup> Andrew Bradstock, *Saints and Sandinistas. The Catholic Church in Nicaragua and its Response to the Revolution* (Westminster, Epworth Press, 1987), 53.

solidarity is a moral duty which obligates one as a citizen and as a Christian.<sup>130</sup> From a practical view, a huge number of priests, nuns, and laity participated in the two civil wars in different ways, through teaching uneducated people and assuming a prophetic role in defending human rights. The Catholic statements on solidarity and justice were in fact convincing for many Catholics, who played an important role in the political processes of the 1970s and 1980s. Nevertheless, in the last decade the bishops deplored the lack of solidarity by the Nicaraguan population for the common good. For example, in 1994 the bishops reproached the apathy of citizens and demanded personal responsibility for social issues, the participation of all in work for the good of society, and the recovery of the moral values that had degenerated.

The Nicaraguan Episcopal Conference attributed this indifference to excessive protectionism from the state, which had generated almost an absolute dependence on the government.<sup>131</sup> John Morris Ryan argued that the behavior of dependence and paternalism has a long history in Nicaragua as an inheritance from Spanish culture.<sup>132</sup>

### Different Kinds of Solidarity

There are different kinds of solidarity practiced in the spheres that surround the individual, the family, and society. In Nicaragua, people prefer to practice solidarity within their own family. Another example of solidarity in Nicaraguan culture, however, is the outpouring of help for victims of natural disasters, such as earthquakes and frequent

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<sup>130</sup> Conferencia Episcopal de Nicaragua, “*Carta Pastoral sobre los Principios que rigen la Actividad Política de la Iglesia como tal*,” March 19, 1972,” *L’Osservatore Romano* (Spanish edition) 20 (1972): 7.

<sup>131</sup> Conferencia Episcopal de Nicaragua, “*Carta Pastoral para Avivar la Esperanza del Pueblo de Dios*,” May 1<sup>o</sup>. 1994,” *L’Osservatore Romano* (Spanish edition) 23 (1994): 11.

<sup>132</sup> John Morris Ryan et al, *Area Handbook for Nicaragua*, 145.

floods. Regarding solidarity and patriotism, however, the issue is quite different because Nicaraguan political culture is marked by divisions among political leaders and personal ambitions for power.

Looking back at the periods of political solidarity in the decades of the 1970s and 1980s, this kind of solidarity occurred only during the overthrow of two tyrannical systems: the Somoza and Sandinista regimes. The current democratic system, unfortunately, has intensified the individualistic behavior of politicians and parties to the detriment of the common good. Bishops have repeatedly pointed out that specific attitudes have their basis in selfish interests in getting rich at another's expense. Moreover, such divisions are causes of hate, vengeance, death and assassination in Nicaragua.<sup>133</sup> The Nicaraguan Catholic church affirms that political solidarity is a Christian commitment and a patriotic duty.<sup>134</sup> In fact, many Nicaraguan Catholics participated during the civil war in struggling against injustices to end repression from Somoza dynasty, exercise their freedoms, and live in a new society based in the defense of human rights.<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> Conferencia Episcopal de Nicaragua, "Mensaje en Ocasión de la Pascua de Resurrección. May 3, 1995," *L'Osservatore Romano* (Spanish edition) 38 (1995): 11. (Struggles during the decades here mentioned is recognized by the current *Nicaraguan political constitution*).

<sup>134</sup> Conferencia Episcopal de Nicaragua, "Deber del Testimonio y Acción Cristiana en el Mundo Político. June 29, 1971," *L'Osservatore Romano* (Spanish edition) 38 (1971): 7.

<sup>135</sup> República de Nicaragua, *Constitución Política de la República de Nicaragua*, 2. A Nicaraguan writer states: "A considerable number of young people organized in Christian movements entered in direct contact with the people's struggle through the *Frente Sandinista* in 1973, when a humanist and social interest was developed because of Managua's earthquake in 1972. These Christian movements were inspired by the Second Latin America Conference which took place in Medellin, where the main precepts of Liberation Theology were recognized. Thus, the population felt attracted to assist people in need and to have a practical experience in revolutionary activity, convinced to struggle against oppression and exploitation." Henry A. Petrie, *Jóvenes de Nicaragua. Una historia que contar* (Managua: Editorial San Rafael, 1993), 23.

Despite the solidarity in the civil wars and participation in the literacy campaign, especially by young people, in the middle of 1994, the bishops criticized the apathy regarding the common good due to the state's protectionist policies and people's passivity.<sup>136</sup> Later in 1999 they emphasized even more the theological concept of patriotism, which is included in the fourth commandment, in order to encourage Catholics to fulfill their duties demanded by the national reality.<sup>137</sup>

### Extreme Poverty

Extreme poverty is another concern of the Catholic Church that demands common action. Poverty in Nicaragua is an old problem that has been a long-standing concern of the Church. Since Vatican II the social teaching of the Church has become increasingly relevant, and thus in the 1970s the Nicaraguan Episcopal Conference pointed out the economic reality in the country as an ethical issue and a serious problem that affects the majority of the population. Nicaragua has become one of the poorest countries in Latin America.<sup>138</sup> According to the Nicaraguan sociologist Oscar-René Vargas, Nicaragua experienced generalized extreme poverty from 1993 through 2001. Approximately 4.2 million Nicaraguan people cannot afford their basic needs, such as daily food, health, housing, and education, because their income is less than two dollars per day. Another

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<sup>136</sup> Conferencia Episcopal de Nicaragua, "Carta Pastoral para Avivar la Esperanza del Pueblo de Dios. May 1º. 1994," *L'Osservatore Romano* (Spanish edition) 23 (1994): 9.

<sup>137</sup> Conferencia Episcopal de Nicaragua, "Mensaje en ocasión de la Solemnidad de la Asunción de María. August 15, 1999," *L'Osservatore Romano* (Spanish edition) 34 (1999): 8.

<sup>138</sup> Conferencia Episcopal de Nicaragua, "Exhortación Pastoral ante la Situación que vive el País. October 10, 1992," <http://www.tmx.com.ni/-cen/documentos/1992/Exhortation>, accessed September 28, 2007. See also Gilbert, *Nicaragua A country study*, 70.

2.2 million people live in misery, unable to feed their families. Poor people have become poorer and the rich richer.<sup>139</sup>

The Nicaraguan Episcopal Conference says that Nicaragua has gone backwards in its level of development and the well-being of its citizens, the result of which is that the majority lives in extreme poverty.<sup>140</sup> Such a situation is caused by political corruption and an unjust distribution of wealth, which damages the economy and the development of the country. To overcome this situation, the pastors have appealed to government, private enterprise, and wealthy people to promote jobs as a way of expressing solidarity with the poorest.<sup>141</sup> The lack of jobs has obliged many to abandon the country; others who stay home experience great frustration because the country has not given them opportunities to achieve work as professionals or indeed any other form of employment. This reality has become a serious challenge for the nation since young people represent the future of society. Research confirms that Nicaragua is losing its youth because most young people are growing up frustrated and those with promising futures emigrate.<sup>142</sup>

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<sup>139</sup> Oscar-René Vargas, *25 Años después (1979-2004). De los Comandantes a los Banqueros* (Managua: Artes Gráficas, 2004), 59. Another recent analysis states: "Data for 2002 show Nicaragua's population at 5.3 million, with 43 percent living in rural areas. The labor force is estimated at about 2 million, growing at 3.8 percent a year. Gross national income per capita is about \$710. By this standard, Nicaragua is one of the poorest countries in Latin America and the world. Nicaragua runs trade deficits, with annual imports during 1999-2002 of about \$1,800 billion and exports of only \$0.6 billion. Agriculture supplied more than 63 percent of total exports in 1999-2002. Major agricultural export items are coffee and beef, each representing 18 percent of agricultural exports." Ania I. Gómez and Isidro Soloaga, "Nicaragua," *Global Trade and Poor Nations. The Poverty Impacts and Policy Implications of Liberalization*, edited by Bernard Hoekman and Marcello Olarreaga (Harrisonburg: R.R.Donnelley, 2007), 200.

<sup>140</sup> Conferencia Episcopal de Nicaragua, "Carta Pastoral con ocasión de la Solemnidad de la Asunción de María. August 15, 1999," *L'Osservatore Romano* (Spanish edition) 34 (1999): 8.

<sup>141</sup> Conferencia Episcopal de Nicaragua, "Mensaje con motivo de Pentecostés. May 17, 1997," *L'Osservatore Romano* (Spanish edition) 29 (1997): 6.

<sup>142</sup> Gobierno de Nicaragua. Secretaría de la Juventud, *Experiencias Participativas con Jóvenes*, 16.

Suggestions to resolve the issue of extreme poverty appear feasible, but the problem of poverty itself is more complicated since prosperity, which includes personal and social wealth, depends much more on personal initiative than dependence.

## Conclusion

After analyzing the moral situation of Nicaragua in this first chapter, it is evident that the global moral crisis in youth, family, marriage, justice, and so forth includes Nicaragua. Facing such truths, the Nicaraguan bishops have encouraged Catholics to maintain upright morality by defending human life, promoting justice, remaining faithful to Christian tradition and national culture, and remaining in communion with the magisterium of one the universal Church.

As mentioned in the third part of this chapter, the Nicaraguan bishops have developed a moral theology for national reality according to the universal teaching of the Catholic Church and more specifically to the teachings of John Paul II. In the case of Nicaragua, despite the undeniable role played by complex historical, cultural and political factors of long-standing origin, the pastors have insisted that the moral crisis has been principally the result of the atheistic education implemented by the Sandinista revolution and the influence of capitalist and Marxist ideologies. They assert: “The materialist education in

the decade of the 1990s seriously damaged the values of matrimony, family, and young people, which helped discredit morality and the Catholic faith.”<sup>143</sup>

Finally, it must be pointed out that although a grave moral crisis is evident in Nicaragua, not all hope is lost. New values are also becoming evident in the current generation, although their examination is beyond the scope of this work. These new values, such as honesty, moral integrity in political leaders, participation in social projects, and transparency by public servants, are compatible with the gospel. Catholic teaching has the task to discover and support the new values that are emerging from inside and outside the Church and integrate them more fully with the gospel.

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<sup>143</sup> Conferencia Episcopal de Nicaragua, “Carta Pastoral del Episcopado Nicaragüense en el Año de la Familia. November 26, 1990,” *Documentos Seleccionado*, 151.



**CHART 1****CATHOLIC AND PROTESTANT POPULATION  
NICARAGUA****BY YEAR****1970, 1975, 1980, and 2004**

YEAR	TOTAL POPULATION	CATHOLIC POPULATION	PROTESTANT POPULATION
		%	%
1970		91.12	4.01
1975		89.21	5.48
1980		88.42	5.81
2004		76.40	19.6
	<b>0</b>	<b>345.15</b>	<b>34.9</b>

Manuel Ortega Hegg and Marcelina Castillo, *Religión y Política. La Experiencia de Nicaragua*, (Managua:

Source: Print Digital S.A, 2006), 89.

**CHART 2****SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM  
ARCHDIOCESE OF MANAGUA****BY YEAR****1990, 1992, 1994, 1996 and 1998**

YEAR	CATHOLIC POPULATION	BAPTISM NUMBER	%
1990	1,189,000	17,650	1.48
1991			
1992	1,189,118	17,384	1.46
1993			
1994	1,189,400	21,901	1.84
1995			
1996	1,900,000	21,400	1.13
1997			
1998	1,905,000	15,391	0.81
1999			
2000	1,816,800	14,830	0.82
2001	1,818,880	24,092	1.32
2002	1,900,300	29,623	1.56
2003	1,950,310	31,250	1.6
2004	1,807,300	30,350	1.68
2005			
	<b>16,666,108</b>	<b>223,871</b>	<b>13.7</b>

Source: Anuario Pontificio

### CHART 3

#### MARRIAGE AND POPULATION RELATIONSHIP

#### CIVIL MARRIAGE, 1990-1999

INSTITUTO NACIONAL DE ESTADÍSTICAS Y CENSOS  
Dirección de Estadísticas Sociodemográficas

MATRIMONIOS REGISTRADOS POR AÑO, SEGÚN DEPARTAMENTO. AÑOS 1990-1999

Cuadro I-27

Departamento	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
<b>La República</b>	<b>11,960</b>	<b>13,976</b>	<b>16,450</b>	<b>13,730</b>	<b>13,912</b>	<b>19,517</b>	<b>20,907</b>	<b>24,487</b>	<b>20,816</b>	<b>28,005</b>
Nueva Segovi	10	24	321	107	104	421	383	481	605	1,038
Madriz	80	161	212	141	201	230	391	472	495	640
Esteli	675	623	694	659	506	560	681	773	761	1,022
Chinandega	336	319	857	575	788	1,089	1,152	1,274	1,141	1,756
León	1,369	1,263	1,196	895	740	1,299	1,513	1,648	1,758	2,327
Managua	4,496	6,210	6,318	6,169	7,243	7,424	8,106	9,959	6,131	7,790
Masaya	567	573	1,067	796	696	890	1,166	1,341	1,229	1,540
Granada	830	791	840	245	283	708	678	784	695	937
Carazo	654	577	559	584	505	550	726	800	759	800
Rivas	576	549	552	557	519	543	591	652	617	833
Boaco	392	417	493	380	475	499	474	602	574	664
Chontales	568	784	657	468	368	1,462	1,399	1,469	1,512	1,663
Jinotega	292	301	760	655	401	810	833	845	1,081	1,692
Matagalpa	1,020	1,106	1,547	1,386	1,083	1,914	1,688	2,059	1,919	2,792
RAAN	--	--	--	--	--	547	550	656	773	1,424
RAAS	95	242	347	113	--	369	344	393	530	706
Rio San Juan	--	36	30	--	--	202	232	279	236	381

Fuente : De 1990 a 1994 oficinas del Registro del Estado Civil y de 1995 a 1999 Consejo Supremo Electoral

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INSTITUTO NACIONAL DE ESTADÍSTICAS Y CENSOS  
Dirección de Estadísticas Demográficas

DIVORCIOS REGISTRADOS POR AÑO, SEGÚN DEPARTAMENTO.  
AÑOS 1990 - 1999

Cuadro I-28

Departamentos	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
<b>La República</b>	<b>1,838</b>	<b>1,622</b>	<b>1,904</b>	<b>1,836</b>	<b>1,946</b>	<b>2,230</b>	<b>2,574</b>	<b>2,789</b>	<b>2,775</b>	<b>2,903</b>
Nueva Segovia	--	--	28	43	34	28	39	29	32	43
Madriz	18	16	9	13	30	23	33	27	26	37
Esteli	133	87	115	105	82	109	64	115	90	115
Chinandega	27	53	147	128	83	129	116	173	160	194
León	190	184	211	185	204	164	214	225	259	288
Managua	772	684	717	750	845	953	1,080	1,167	1,137	1,090
Masaya	65	54	124	122	98	125	148	149	156	125
Granada	167	164	141	123	100	143	144	172	149	159
Carazo	125	96	86	88	99	98	99	93	92	115
Rivas	101	66	71	78	80	72	87	99	117	108
Boaco	65	37	40	27	34	37	66	53	60	51
Chontales	115	112	72	69	71	73	160	170	164	213
Jinotega	6	5	39	41	44	32	62	62	57	55
Matagalpa	54	52	94	56	141	167	198	172	205	201
RAAN	--	--	--	--	--	23	22	31	25	35
RAAS	--	12	9	8	1	46	29	41	41	50
Rio San Juan	--	--	1	--	--	8	13	11	5	24

Fuente : De 1990 a 1994 oficinas del Registro del Estado Civil y de 1995 a 1999 Consejo Supremo Electoral

Gobierno de Nicaragua. Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas y Censo, *Dirección de Estadísticas Sociodemográficas. Compendio Estadístico 1990-1999*, (Managua: Imprenta Nacional, 2001) 86 and 87.

**CHART 4**  
**SACRAMENTAL MARRIAGE AND POPULATION**  
**RELATIONSHIP**  
**CATHOLIC MARRIAGES**

BY YEAR  
 YEARS 1990 to 1999

YEAR	CATHOLIC POPULATION	SACRAMENTAL MARRIAGES	
		NUMBER	%
1990			
1991			
1992			
1993			
1994			
1995	1,810,000	284	1.57
1996	1,900,000	426	2.24
1997	1,961,000	715	3.65
1998	1,905,000	578	3.03
1999	1,816,000	915	5.04
<b>9,392,000</b>		<b>2,918</b>	<b>15.53</b>

NOTE: The total population is the last FIVE year's average

Source: Archdiocese of Managua. Unpublished

**CHART 5**  
**SEIZED DRUGS**  
**NICARAGUA**

BY YEAR  
YEARS 1990 to 2006

YEAR	COCAINE GRAMS	MARIHUANA GRAMS
1990	535,936	0
1991	762,642	681,308
1992	155,447	509,847
1993	96,209	235,419
1994	1,337,754	400,076
1995	1,512	347,004
1996	398,444	854,980
1997	2,790,196	2,847,248
1998	474,960	612,111
1999	1,213,670	1,067,599
2000	960,783	735,899
2001	2,717,972	561,021
2002	2,207,409	629,862
2003	1,110,074	381,103
2004	6,271,528	468,462
2005	7,311,607	529,606
2006	9,902,613	543,271
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>38,248,756</b>	<b>11,404,816</b>

Source: Policia Nacional de Nicaragua, *Anuario Estadístico 2006*, (Managua: Copy Express, 2006) 21.  
Nicaraguan National Police. Year 2006 Statistics

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **THE MORAL THEOLOGY OF JOHN PAUL II**

This second chapter is divided in four sections. The first section states Karol Wojtyla John Paul II's philosophical and theological thinking, which reveals his key understanding about his moral theology. The second section develops the significance of Vatican Council II for Wojtyla/John Paul II in his doctrine as thinker and pope. The third section summarizes the philosophical and theological foundations of John Paul II's moral theology in which the pope emphasized that moral rectitude belongs to reason and faith. The last section discusses the values of responsibility, such as human life, family, marriage, and the virtues of justice and solidarity, which are inherent to ethics and Christian morality. A brief conclusion ends this second chapter.

#### **2.1. Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II: Philosopher and Theologian**

Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II developed a solid moral teaching in the light of Scripture, tradition, and the magisterium of the Church and maintained great coherence in his thinking. Since his early academic life he conceived and executed a solid doctrine about the person, faith, and the Church, as will be demonstrated in his philosophical and theological writings in the following sections. The aim of this first section is to explain key aspects of the foundations and teachings of his moral theology; therefore, it is useful to review his scholastic formation and its influence on his philosophy and theology.

Well-known biographers of Wojtyla/John Paul II such as Rocco Buttiglione and George Weigel have offered a systematic analysis of the life and the thought of Karol

Wojtyla/John Paul II.<sup>1</sup> Buttiglione describes in depth the culture, the historical context, and the academic background out of which Wojtyla developed his pastoral task and his philosophical convictions. In accordance with other commentators, Buttiglione finds an undeniable Thomistic influence in the young priest Wojtyla due in part to his philosophical formation in Poland and in Rome, where the Polish thinker researched about the of truth of man and the objective moral order. It seems that Wojtyla found in Aquinas the response to what he saw as the metaphysical crisis of an age that was unable to truly understand the human person.<sup>2</sup> According to George Weigel, Wojtyla was interested in researching the underlying truths of human life and when he dedicated his works as university professor to ethics, he was convinced that through the “objective” reality of the world it is possible to understand virtues, the nature of happiness, and the

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<sup>1</sup> Rocco Buttiglione, *Karol Wojtyla. The Thought of the Man Who Became Pope John Paul II*, translated by Paolo Guiettu and Francesca Murphy (Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1997). George Weigel, *Witness To Hope. The Biography of Pope John Paul II* (New York: Cliff Street Books, 1999).

<sup>2</sup> Joseph Rice asserts that in addition to the Thomistic formation he received in Rome, the Thomistic influence on Wojtyla was also due to the tradition of the Catholic University of Lublin, (KUL). In this university there were three philosophical trends while Wojtyla taught there: Thomism, phenomenology, and an analytic-positivistic approach. Rice also notes that Wojtyla in Rome integrated in his thought a traditional and an existentialist Thomism. Moreover, the philosophy department of the KUL confronted the subjectivism and relativism of the time by adopting three fundamental positions: giving priority to metaphysics, focusing on a return to the original experience of Adam in the Garden of Eden; reflecting about the human person to promote a philosophical anthropology; and affirming that there is no contradiction between faith and reason. Joseph Rice, *Karol Wojtyla on 'Acting 'Together with Others,'* doctoral dissertation (Washington D.C: The Catholic University of America, 2007), 15-21. George McLean, writes that Karol Wojtyla was interested in the doctrine of being in terms of late nineteenth century neo-scholasticism in the context of rationalism. In the twentieth century philosophical theory focused on finding the basis for metaphysics but in Aristotelian terms. In the decade of the 1930s a current of thought emerged about the principle of causality led by Cornelio Fabro. Simultaneous to this work arose the existentialism of Sartre, Marcel, Buber and Tillich. Thus Karol Wojtyla in Italy found a parallelism between existentialism and Scholastic-Thomistic circles, which influenced him during his study in Rome after World War II. McLean argues that Fabro saw being in terms of a limited participation in the divine light, which led to the phenomenology and the philosophy of the spirit in the 1950s and 60s. This explains Wojtyla's move between the Christian philosophies of Krakow and Lublin in 1970.” McLean, “Karol Wojtyla's Manual Enrichment of the Philosophies of Being and Consciousness,” *Karol Wojtyla's Philosophical Legacy*, edited by Nancy Mardas Billias et al (Washington D.C.: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2008), 16-17.

moral imperative of life itself. Weigel held that reconstructing the foundations of the moral life was the most important theme in the thought of Wojtyla.<sup>3</sup>

Schelerian phenomenology was of enormous importance to Wojtyla's philosophical teaching. George Weigel says that Wojtyla chose Scheler because he was seeking the reconstruction of the foundations of the moral life, since modern philosophy had abandoned the search for the metaphysical truth about man and a true evaluation of human behavior according to reason, but unfortunately the Polish thinker did not find a sufficient basis for this reconstruction in Scheler. Nevertheless, Wojtyla appreciated the fact that Scheler based his analysis of morality on the experience of moral choice rather than on a formal, abstract Kantian system.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Weigel, *Witness to Hope*, 126. With respect to when Wojtyla began his interest in phenomenology, there are different accounts. Joseph Rice says that Wojtyla started his involvement with phenomenology during his second doctoral dissertation obtained in Poland and he later applied phenomenology to the understanding of human actions. His phenomenological influences, affirms Rice, come from Max Scheler, Edmund Husserl, and in particular Edith Stein. Rice, *Karol Wojtyla on Acting Together with Others*, 16. Unlike Rice, Buttiglione affirms that Wojtyla's interest in experience dates from his early priesthood before his first doctorate in Rome. After Wojtyla's return to Rome, Roman Ingarden, who was a follower of Husserl, considered to be the founder of phenomenology introduced Wojtyla to Scheler and Kantian philosophy. Michael Waldstein explains the two reasons why Wojtyla chose Scheler: first, Catholic ethics has treated the topic of human acts; and second, the approach between moral theology and Scheler is specific because one theme that Scheler analyzed was the Gospel's teaching on following and imitating Christ. Michael Waldstein, *John Paul II. Man and Woman He Created them. A Theology of the Body*, translated and edited by Michael Waldstein (Boston: Pauline Books & Media, 2006), 69. Buttiglione, *Karol Wojtyla*, 44. Jaroslaw Kupczak also affirms that Wojtyla encountered phenomenology for the first time when he wrote his dissertation on Max Scheler, but that the Polish philosopher had shown his interest in experience since his first dissertation and during his work as an artist. Jaroslaw Kupczak, *The Human Person in the Philosophy of Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II. Destined for Liberty* (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2000), 58.

<sup>4</sup> Weigel, *Witness to Hope*, 126-129. In his theory about moral life, the German philosopher distinguishes moral insight and consciousness of duty. For Scheler the content becomes an imposition in itself, which is per se a "moral evidential and good content" which is in itself a true and genuine duty. Therefore an ethics of insight cannot be confused with an ethics on duty, since there is an opposition between them. Max Scheler, *Formalism in Ethics and Non Formal Ethics of Values*, translated by Manfred S. Frings and Roger L. Funk (Evanston, Northwestern University Press, 1973), 194. Karol Wojtyla affirms that "Scheler, in turn, deserves consideration because he formulated an ethical system in the context of phenomenology that contrasts sharply with Kant's system." Wojtyla, *Person and Community. Select Essays*, translated by Theresa Sandok (New York: Peter Lang, 1993), 32.

Wojtyla discussed phenomenology in terms of its positive and negative results seeking for a method to be applied in morality. According to George Weigel, Father Różycki suggested that Wojtyla focused on Max Scheler as a new approach in philosophy to solve the foundations of the moral life. This led to Wojtyla's profound and at times critical approach to Scheler's thought. It is most likely that Wojtyla began his interest for Scheler in 1951.<sup>5</sup> Rocco Buttiglione states that Wojtyla presented his thesis about Scheler in 1953.<sup>6</sup> The Polish philosopher considered as good the fact that Scheler uses phenomenology as a method to examine morals, but he criticized the fact that Scheler reduces values to a mere ethical experience and underestimates the efficacy of the person.<sup>7</sup> Wojtyla maintained that the human person is an efficient cause himself of his actions and is responsible for his acts. For Wojtyla responsibility becomes a confirmation of the relation between a moral action and the value itself. Wojtyla concluded that both Kant and Scheler fail in their analysis of ethics, since their theories do not explain the dynamism of the ethical imperative but instead provide an essential analysis of static forms.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Weigel, *Witness to Hope*, 126.

<sup>6</sup> Buttiglione, *Karol Wojtyla*, 54.

<sup>7</sup> On the one hand Wojtyla describes this efficacy as "the experiential difference that is discernible in the totality of man's dynamism between man's acting and what happens in man. An examination of the facts discloses that it is the moment of efficacy that determines this fundamental difference. In this case the moment of efficacy is to be understood as the having of the experience of 'being the actor.'" On the another hand, Max Scheler states: "Every kind of cognition is rooted in experience. Therefore ethics, too, must have its foundation in 'experience.'" In another part Scheler adds that "a moral evaluation can therefore never be of guidance in our acting and willing; for in the final analysis it is nothing but a symbolic expression of factual relations of power among volitional acts." Scheler, *Formalism in Ethics and Non-Formal Ethics of Values*, 163 and 171.

<sup>8</sup> Wojtyla criticized Kant's whole view of the will and its significance in ethical life, which Kant discussed in the *Critique of Practical Reason*. For Kant, according to Wojtyla, such thinking is partially reducible to an examination of the influence of feelings on the will, which is diluted to an analysis of practical reason and its imperatives. Wojtyla also rejects the Schelerian theory which affirms that "willing has the character of a tendency. For Scheler this tendency lies in emotions which Scheler considers "as an a priori factor in



Jaroslav Kupczak analyses Karol Wojtyla's interest in phenomenology. Briefly summarized, this author affirms that for the Polish thinker all knowledge about human being must consider human experience. Examining Scheler, Wojtyla made it clear that that experience is useful in part for ethical values which should integrate the empirical sciences and psychology. There is no opposition, however, between ethics and morality here since both ethics and morality focus on rectitude in human behavior, ethics being grounded in reason, and morality also being founded on reason and divine revelation. Regarding Schelerian phenomenology, Wojtyla praised Scheler for his method, but argued that unfortunately there are limitations in Scheler's phenomenology because the German thinker was unable to demonstrate the scope of phenomenology as applied to ethics, specifically in the theory of ethical values and in the theory of conscience. According to Kupczak, Wojtyla stated that a phenomenologist pictures the acting person's experience of moral values and human efficient causality, but a phenomenologist is unable to explain the essence of moral values or answer essential ethical questions, such as to clarify what is morally good and morally bad, and why the subject is morally right or wrong while acting.<sup>9</sup>

Kupczak opines that Wojtyla concluded that a moral philosopher must evaluate ethical values according to the objective order of human goods, and not only from human experience. The Polish philosopher applied his phenomenological method in his book *Love & Responsibility*, in which Wojtyla discussed the whole person. Kupczak

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the life of the person." Therefore, concludes Wojtyla, Kantian and Schelerian apriorism in ethics leads to a great deal of research of static forms, which for Kant are imperatives and for Scheler values, but neither of these apriorisms permit us to objectify the dynamic factor of action, which is fundamental for ethics.

Wojtyla, *Person and Community*, 10.

<sup>9</sup> Kupczak, *The Human Person*, 61.

encounters two themes in this book: the first refers to the essential elements of the phenomenon and the important relations between them, and the second consists of understanding the essence of the phenomenon by considering the context of whole person and interpersonal relations.<sup>10</sup>

John McNerney states that the integration of Thomism and phenomenology in Wojtyla is complex and the subject of debate. McNerney explains that the Polish philosopher adopted phenomenology to analyze the human phenomenon by analyzing the context of the whole person and his personal relationships.<sup>11</sup> This author argues that description and analysis are not enough to grasp a human being, only metaphysics provides the notions and categories necessary to interpret human experience. From this perspective, continues McNerney, one understands that Wojtyla did not want “to replace metaphysical reflection with phenomenology but to supplement metaphysical reflection with phenomenological description as a way of gaining access to the whole person.”<sup>12</sup> McNerney concludes that “this is phenomenology’s contribution to the search for the whole picture of the human person.”<sup>13</sup>

Ronald Lawer comments that Cardinal Wojtyla appeared a cautious analyst, creative and imaginative in using phenomenology as a method to understand real human conditions. Lawer also states that Wojtyla employed phenomenology to the study of man, not from a pastoral viewpoint, but rather his use of it was “a sophisticated work of a professional and very original philosopher writing in a philosophical mode not familiar to

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid, 61-62.

<sup>11</sup> John McNerney, *Footbridge Towards the Other* (New York, T & T Clark, 2003), 13.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, 14.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, 14.

most Americans.”<sup>14</sup> Rocco Buttiglione, analyzing the same phenomenological method in Wojtyla, thinks the former pope developed a “mystical phenomenology,” given the emphasis that Wojtyla assigned to the personal character of the encounter between God and man when he was working on his doctoral thesis on St. John of the Cross. The analysis of faith by this mystical doctor became essential to Wojtyla’s theological thought.

Another important aspect of Wojtyla’s moral theology was the Thomistic renewal in its doctrine and its application to morality. Although this topic merits specific research, there are voices that opine that Wojtyla must be accepted as a true disciple of Thomas Aquinas, but not necessarily classified as renewing Thomism. Avery Dulles suggests that an analysis of Wojtyla’s academic life reveals the Thomistic influence in his writings.<sup>15</sup> Robert Harvanek has a similar opinion in affirming that while the former pope did not create original works of ontology or metaphysics, neither in Aristotelian epistemology nor methodology, he did apply Thomistic anthropology and Schelerian phenomenology to Christian morality.<sup>16</sup>

John Conley notes that as pope, Wojtyla combined in many important encyclicals a phenomenological method of analysis with a Thomistic philosophy of action. For instance, in the encyclical *Veritatis splendor*, the Holy Father moved from the physical to the spiritual, from the external to the psychological, and from the historical to the

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<sup>14</sup> Ronald Lawer, *The Christian Personalism of Pope John Paul II* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1980), 35.

<sup>15</sup> Avery Dulles, “John Paul II and the Renewal of Thomism,” *John Paul II & St. Thomas Aquinas*, edited by Michael Dauphinais & Matthew Levering (Naples: Sapientia Press of Ave Maria University 2006), 15.

<sup>16</sup> Robert Harvanek, “The Philosophical Foundations of the Thought of John Paul II,” *The Thought of Pope John Paul II. A Collection of Essays and Studies*, edited by John M. McDermott (Roma: Editrice Pontificia Universita Gregoriana, 1993), 19.

metaphysical. John Paul II applied phenomenology in this encyclical by interpreting the moral crisis in current Catholicism as involving proportionalism and subjectivism and the defense of moral basic principles. Following a phenomenological reading of the narrative of the rich young man the pontiff shifted from the superficial to the deeper, from the empirical to the spiritual.<sup>17</sup> Conley asserts that also in *Evangelium vitae* the pope used a phenomenological method since the pontiff related the conflict between Cain and Abel to the culture of death. Thus, John Paul II in defending human life affirmed the moral truth in terms of mortal sin of homicide represented in the fratricide struggle.<sup>18</sup>

Jaroslav Kupczak states that Karol Wojtyla became familiar with Thomism as a seminarian during the years 1942-46 and then again while studying in Rome for his first doctorate at the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas. Kupczak mentions other authors who argue that Wojtyla experienced three different interpretations of Thomism: traditional, transcendental, and existential. The Polish philosopher opted for existential Thomism, represented by Etienne Gilson who had been introduced into the Catholic University in Lublin by Jacek Woroniecki. Unfortunately, continues Kupczak, there are no scholarly publications by Wojtyla concerning these neo-Thomistic controversies that reveal his position on contemporary philosophical problems.<sup>19</sup>

The philosophical orientation of Wojtyla/John Paul II has led to different comments by some writers because of his application of philosophy to moral theology. For instance, Charles Curran recognizes that Wojtyla/John Paul II is a Thomist, but Curran thinks there

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<sup>17</sup> John Conley, "Philosophy and Anti-Philosophy: The Ambiguous Legacy of John Paul II," *Karol Wojtyla's Philosophical Legacy*, edited by Nancy Mardas Billias, Agnes B. Curry and George F. McLean (Washington D.C: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2008), 34.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, p. 36.

<sup>19</sup> Kupczak, *The Human Person*, 52.

was too much philosophical influence on personal moral questions, such as in the encyclical *Veritatis splendor* no.72, in which the Holy Father taught that “moral life has an essential teleological character.”<sup>20</sup> Taking the opposite view of Curran, Richard Spinello opines that the Holy Father rightly applied Thomistic philosophy to moral theology with regard to essential moral norms and by distinguishing right and wrong.<sup>21</sup> John Conley holds, however, that there is “little consensus” on how Wojtyla’s philosophy influenced his pontifical teaching.<sup>22</sup>

Comparing the previous opinions, there is unanimity about the Thomistic influence in Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II, but Spinello is right since the crisis in some current moral theology, for example proportionalism and consequentialism, lies in part to justify evils, opposite to Catholic doctrine that teaches that an evil act is intrinsically evil. There are acts that are intrinsically evil.

Regarding Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II as a theologian, Gerald McCool suggests that the theological thought of the former pope was in process ever since he became a scholar. To have idea about Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II’s theological doctrine, it is important to cite his important works, such as his first doctoral dissertation about *The Doctrine of Faith According to St. John of the Cross*, in which he broadly discussed the theme of faith according to this Spanish mystic, integrated philosophy and theology, and proposed the phenomenological method as an experience of faith. It seems that his theology was a

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<sup>20</sup> Charles Curran, *The Moral Theology of Pope John Paul II* (Washington D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2005), 104.

<sup>21</sup> Richard Spinello, *The Genius of John Paul II. The Great Pope’s Moral Wisdom* (Lanham: Sheed & Ward, 2007) 71.

<sup>22</sup> John Conley, “Philosophy and Anti-Philosophy: The Ambiguous Legacy of John Paul II,” *Karol Wojtyla’s Philosophical Legacy*, 33

combination of the Carmelite Thomists and an integration of spirituality and culture that he discovered in the theology of Garrigou-Lagrange. One of his works where Wojtyla showed his theological thinking was his first doctoral dissertation in which he broadly discussed the theme of faith according to St. John of the Cross.<sup>23</sup> Wojtyla tried to reconcile theology and philosophy in terms of spiritual experience.

Buttiglione says that Wojtyla began his study of mystical experience under Jan Tyranowski, a layperson, who influenced Wojtyla since his early priesthood to read St. John of the Cross and St. Teresa of Avila, key figures later in his doctoral dissertation, *The Doctrine of Faith According to St. John of the Cross*.<sup>24</sup> Avery Dulles affirms that it is clear from Wojtyla's doctoral dissertation that he has a deep knowledge of the topic of

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<sup>23</sup> There is a Spanish translation of his first doctoral thesis: Karol Wojtyla, *La Fe según San Juan de la Cruz*, (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1997).

<sup>24</sup> Buttiglione states that *The Doctrine of Faith According to St. John of the Cross*, was the first doctoral dissertation that Karol Wojtyla submitted at the Angelicum Theology Faculty in Rome. Buttiglione, *Karol Wojtyla*, 45. Explaining the focus on mystical experience, Buttiglione adds that the thesis "has an evident tendency not to translate the experiential language, which comes from the subject of St. John of the Cross, into a metaphysical language which relates to the object. The young Wojtyla's main preoccupation was to read the writings of St. John of the Cross as a phenomenology of mystical experience. Buttiglione, *Karol Wojtyla*. 47. Michael Waldstein relates that the interest of Karol Wojtyla in St. John of the Cross occurred before his entering seminary because Hitler had attacked Polish parishes since they were a form of "intellectual resistance." A layman, Jan Tyranowski, steered Wojtyla to St. John of the Cross. Seven years later, Wojtyla chose this Spanish doctor of spirituality for his doctoral dissertation, in which Wojtyla focused on faith as a means of union between God and the human person." Waldstein, *John Paul II. Man and Woman He created Them*, 24. John Paul II writes about St. John of the Cross: "El Santo de Fontiveros es el gran maestro de los senderos que conducen a la unión con Dios. Sus escritos siguen siendo actuales, y en cierto modo explican y complementan los libros de Santa Teresa de Jesús. El indica los caminos del conocimiento mediante la fe, porque sólo tal conocimiento en la fe dispone el entendimiento a la unión con el Dios vivo... El Doctor Místico enseña que en la fe es también necesario desasirse de las criaturas, tanto de las que se perciben por lo sentidos como de las que se alcanzan con el entendimiento, para unirse de una manera cognoscitiva con el mismo Dios. Ese camino que conduce a la unión, pasa a través de la noche oscura de la fe." John Paul II, "Grande Maestro dei Sentieri che conducono all'unione con Dio," *Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II*, V, (Roma, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1982), 1138-1139). "The Saint of Fontiveros is the great master who leads us to union with God. His writings remain relevant and in a certain way they explain and complete the books of Saint Teresa of Jesus. He shows the ways of knowledge through faith because only such knowledge in faith disposes the understanding to union with God ... The Mystical Doctor teaches that in faith one must disengage from created things, both from those perceived by the senses and those reached by the understanding, in order to join oneself cognitively with God Himself. This is the way that leads to union with God and which passes through the dark night of the soul." (personal translation).

faith and is undeniably greatly influenced by Thomas. Dulles, like other commentators, affirms that the center of his thesis lies in how faith unites man and God.<sup>25</sup>

Wojtyla analyzed three elements in St. John of the Cross concerning the achievement of this union between man and God: What does it mean? How is possible to obtain it? What is its definitive form? In addition, Wojtyla explained that there are two kinds of union with God: the first regards a natural union, which can be understood as essential, and the second is supernatural, which he called “union of similarity.”<sup>26</sup> Wojtyla interpreted the doctrine of the mystical doctor as describing a union of all the desires of the soul in the form of supernatural communication with God, a participation in divinity through grace and love. Such love also includes a psychological aspect since there is a harmony between human will and divine will.

Avery Dulles notes a certain individualist tendency in Wojtyla’s dissertation about St. John of the Cross that later Wojtyla attempted to overcome in his book *Sources of Renewal* when he was archbishop of Krakow. This work argued for invigorating a social faith based on a relationship between man and God as a *communio personarum*, which embraces all mankind as members of the Church who thus benefit from God’s salvation.<sup>27</sup>

Various passages in Wojtyla’s first doctoral dissertation provide evidence for Dulles’ commentary about a certain individualistic tendency. Even though a detailed analysis goes beyond the scope of this thesis, the following provides an example in which the

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<sup>25</sup> Avery Dulles, “The Enrichment and Transmission of Faith in the Theology of John Paul II,” *Creed and Culture*, edited by Joseph W. Koterski and John J. Conley, (Philadelphia: Saint Joseph’s University Press, 2004), p. 1.

<sup>26</sup> Wojtyla, *La Fe según San Juan de la Cruz*, 38.

<sup>27</sup> Dulles, *Creed and Culture*, 5.

Polish philosopher and theologian emphasized faith as a way of supernatural and individualistic union of soul with God.

“El alma avanza por el camino de la unión siempre en compañía de la fe. Y nuestro objetivo consiste precisamente en averiguar el comportamiento de la fe en relación a todas estas cosas. La fe es solamente medio de unión respecto a lo que abiertamente se llama unión o la parte de la unión. Por ello, el modo de comportarse la fe no ha de ser rechazarlas, sino disponer el alma para mantenerse en humildad y resignación, sin adherirse a esas noticias como a una propiedad. Tal es la justa medida que la fe debe observar en esa experiencia de la unión.”<sup>28</sup>

Gerald McCool is concerned that some theologians would not be able to understand Wojtyła’s thesis about St. John of the Cross, since the Polish thinker analyzed faith “in terms of nature, faculty, act, and virtue following the general lines of the analyses of faith by Garrigou-Lagrange.”<sup>29</sup> McCool explains that the living faith discussed by Wojtyła “was the supernatural virtue perfecting the intellect of a soul elevated by grace and drawn to God by charity.”<sup>30</sup> McCool’s interpretation is that in the mystical relationship between man and God intervenes knowledge. Such adhesion of the intellect, continues McCool, “must still be given to the ‘substance’ of the truths” already known in revelation.”<sup>31</sup>

In *Sources of Renewal* Wojtyła analyzed the teaching of Vatican Council II, particularly numbers 22 and 24 of *Gaudium et spes*. In this essay, the former archbishop of Krakow focused on Christ as the key to interpreting human beings and their problems, and he developed the theme of Christ the Redeemer as essential to understanding the

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<sup>28</sup> “The soul always moves toward union in the company of faith. And our objective is to understand the role of faith to all these things. Faith is only a means of union with respect to what is openly called union or part of a union. Thus faith’s way of working is not to reject these things but to dispose the soul to hold itself in humility and resignation, without holding on to these notions as possession. Such is precisely the role faith should play in this experience of union.” Wojtyła, *La Fe*, 125, (personal translation).

<sup>29</sup> McCool, *The Thought of Pope*, 35.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, 33.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid, 34.



Christian conception of man. Among the topics treated in this work are faith, person, community, consciousness, freedom, and responsibility. From this perspective, Wojtyla will later develop as pope his Christological doctrine in which Christ illuminates the mystery of man and reveals the human vocation. Christ is the gift of God to human beings and the redemption of man.<sup>32</sup>

Paul McPartlan states that in the document *Sources of Renewal* the former Archbishop of Krakow promoted an understanding and integration of all the teachings of the Council, and a strengthening of the faith, thereby fulfilling his duty and as a bishop of faith whose responsibility is to lead people to faith as it was demanded by the Council.<sup>33</sup> Wojtyla, according to McPartlan, was inspired by *Dei verbum* no. 8 among others, to base *Sources of Renewal* on the topic “faith and morals,” between which there should be no separation. Furthermore there is a responsibility for bishops to teach the truth of this inseparability in their doctrine. “It was in this deep sense of almost removing the easily presumed distinction between doctrine and practice that Cardinal Wojtyla understood Vatican II to have been pre-eminently a pastoral Council.”<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Wojtyla states: “the mystery of redemption closely linked with Jesus Christ, his life, death, and resurrection, is the central reality of our faith. Here Vatican II offers a great contribution to the enrichment of faith from the point of view of consciousness of redemption. This central Christian reality is presented to man, in such a way that, following the expression *Gaudium et spes*, we can perceive a specific kind of anthropocentrism emerging through the Christocentrism which the constitution reflects clearly. Thus redemption, the work of Christ, which gives a Christocentric dimension to the life of mankind in the Church, is, in this same dimension profoundly anthropocentric in every man and in humanity as a whole it stands between good and evil, sin and salvation. Redemption is from sin which degrades man, and in this redemption in its essence and effects, we find the fundamental and inexhaustible means by which man is restored to his proper values.” Karol Wojtyla, *Sources of Renewal: The Implementation of the Second Vatican Council*, translated by P. Falla (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1980), 75.

<sup>33</sup> Paul McPartlan, “John Paul II and Vatican II,” *The Vision of John Paul II. Assessing His Thought and Influence*, edited by Gerard Mannion (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2008), 45.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid*, 46.

McPartlan's affirmation coincides with the encyclical *Veritatis splendor* that John Paul II specifically addressed to bishops, in which he reminded them that the church's teaching involves both faith and morals and pointed out that bishops are responsible to protect the truth of Catholic doctrine. "It is the common duty of us, pastors of the church, and even before that our common grace, to teach the faithful the things that lead them to God, just as the Lord did with the young man in the Gospel."<sup>35</sup>

Another theological work authored by Wojtyla is his meditations addressed to pope Paul VI in 1976. The contents of these meditations are known as *Sign of Contradiction*, in which Wojtyla focused on the redemption of Christ and the salvation of human race.<sup>36</sup> Martin Tripole comments that the Polish preacher developed as central topics during this retreat the themes of Christ and His Church to illuminate current "symptoms displayed by modern life." According to Tripole, Wojtyla chose the title *Sign of Contradiction* from Simeon's words to Mary and later he would talk about "signs of our times" to discuss the opposition between Christ and the spirit of the world. Thus, such expressions became for Wojtyla the key to discuss the struggle between the God of the covenant and Satan. Wojtyla interpreted this conflict between God and Satan as a form of rebellion which is manifested in different ideologies, such as secularism and communist collectivism.<sup>37</sup> Further references to this book will be included later in this dissertation.

Finally, his encyclicals, Apostolic Exhortations, and Apostolic Letters provided keys to his theological teachings, which have invigorated moral theology. This dissertation

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<sup>35</sup> John Paul II, *Veritatis splendor*, no. 114.

<sup>36</sup> Karol Wojtyla, *Sign of Contradiction*, translated by St Paul Publications (New York: The Seabury Press, 1977).

<sup>37</sup> Martin Tripole, "John Paul II the Countercultural Pope," *Creed and Culture*, 35.

will focus on four encyclicals: *Dives in misericordia*, *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, *Centesimus annus*, and *Veritatis splendor*.

## 2.2. Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II and the Vatican Council II

This second section treats the participation of Karol Wojtyla in Vatican Council II from its beginning to its end and which deserves a special mention. This participation is very important to his anthropology and his moral doctrine because his ideas played an important role in the Council's deliberations, he participated in the final documents enacted by the Council, and he assumed the task as pope to apply the conciliar teachings in his papal magisterium.

Rocco Buttiglione thinks that Wojtyla probably wrote his book *The Acting Person* during the Council, since the book posed the question about the relation between conscience and truth which was treated by the council. Regarding this theme the former archbishop of Krakow taught that man must follow a right conscience, seek the good and practice the good, and he proposed including the philosophy of being and the philosophy of consciousness in reaching an integrated anthropology based on *the philosophia perennis*.<sup>38</sup>

Avery Dulles holds that Wojtyla/John Paul II elaborated a "metaphysical realism" and used Thomistic philosophy to criticize contemporary philosophical trends, such as phenomenology, Marxism, utilitarianism, and libertarian theories of freedom dominant at the time.<sup>39</sup> Dulles mentions that among the contributions made by the pope toward a

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<sup>38</sup> Buttiglione, *Karol Wojtyla*, 183.

<sup>39</sup> Avery Dulles, "John Paul II and the Renewal of Thomism," *John Paul II & St. Thomas Aquinas*, 27.

renewal of Thomism are the importance of metaphysical realism, which allows us to evaluate reality as a whole including transcendence and the responsibility of personal acts, and also the primacy of the human person focusing on his perfections of freedom, rationality, self-determination, and responsibility. Thomistic philosophy provides the arguments for Catholic philosophers to confront controversial topics within other philosophical systems, such as Marxism and atheism. The *philosophia perennis* also becomes a useful tool for theology, even while distinguishing philosophy and theology as two different sciences.<sup>40</sup>

Buttiglione also mentions that during the Council Wojtyla defended the unity of the Church, which lies around Peter as the Vicar of Christ on the earth, and the union between hierarchy and laypeople, who are responsible for practicing their faith as active subjects in society. In fact, Wojtyla reminded us that “the Church is centered on Peter and his faith,” and this Church remains visible as the ambassador of Christ by staying faithful to the will of Jesus.<sup>41</sup> As pope, he addressed the Apostolic exhortation *Christifideles laici* where he remarked on the importance given by Vatican Council II to the apostolate of laypeople and its doctrinal, spiritual and pastoral foundations.<sup>42</sup>

Another important concern for the Archbishop of Krakow was religious freedom, which was discussed by the Council as a basic human right. The Council declared that religious freedom pertains to human dignity and demanded that governments respect private and public religious practices. The conciliar document asserts that “the right of

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid, 28.

<sup>41</sup> Wojtyla, *Sign of Contradiction*, 107.

<sup>42</sup> John Paul II, *Christifideles laici*, no. 2, The Vocation and the Mission of the Lay Faithful, *The Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortations of John Paul II*, edited by Michael Miller, (Huntington: Our Sunday Visitor Publishing Division, 1998) AAS 81 (1989), 433-460.

the human person to religious freedom must be given such recognition in the constitutional order of society as will make it a civil right.”<sup>43</sup> The Council bases religious freedom “not in the subjective attitude of the individual but in his very nature.”<sup>44</sup> George Weigel asserts that Wojtyla defended religious freedom in his episcopate by building Churches and promoting the public demonstration of Catholicism, especially the annual Corpus Christi procession.<sup>45</sup>

As pope, John Paul II defended catechesis as “a sacred duty and an inalienable right.”<sup>46</sup> The pontiff noted that the Church must instruct the baptized about their faith in order that believers mature in their Christian life. Every Christian, affirmed the Holy Father, has a right and an obligation to seek religious truth “without coercion on the part of individuals or social groups and any human power.”<sup>47</sup> The successor of Peter, after demanding freedom to profess religion without discrimination against parents or those imparting such religious education, strongly criticized those states that ban catechesis and consider such a religious right an offense against the same state itself.<sup>48</sup>

Finally, Buttiglione states that Wojtyla collaborated in the composition of *Gaudium et spes*, which treats the theology of the human person and global problems in terms of “the relation between the creation of the world and of man and their redemption in

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<sup>43</sup> Vatican Council II, *Dignitatis humanae*, no. 2, Religious Liberty, translated by Costello Publishing Company, Inc, edited by Austin Flannery, (Northport, Costello Publishing Company, 1975); AAS 58 (1966), 929-946.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid, 800.

<sup>45</sup> Weigel, *Witness of Hope*, 189.

<sup>46</sup> John Paul II, *Catechesis tradendae*, no. 14, On Catechesis in our Time, *The Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortations*, translated by Michael Miller; AAS (1979) 1276-1340.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid, 14.

<sup>48</sup> John Paul II, *Catechesi tradendae*, no. 14.

Christ.”<sup>49</sup> George Weigel writes that the Polish bishop spoke in the name of the Polish church in demanding that the Council discuss modernity in terms of arguments rather than exhortations. Thus, Vatican Council II proposed a Church in dialogue with the world in the light of the Cross of Christ. In addition to this, Wojtyla faced the autonomy of the secular world, which becomes for the Church a challenge in terms of dialogue with scientists. In this context the former archbishop of Krakow debated the issue of atheism. Wojtyla suggested that to confront this reality, the Church must encounter the human person’s “interior liberty” rather than to impose arguments about the existence of God.<sup>50</sup> From this outlook, Wojtyla pursued a synthesis of Christian doctrine and an examination of the social problems of the present-day.<sup>51</sup> Martin Tripole objects that it is difficult to delineate precisely the interdependency between the thinking and teaching of Wojtyla about *Gaudium et spes* because of his participation in the writing of the document.<sup>52</sup> Tripole’s criticism makes sense since Wojtyla/John Paul II’s writings demonstrated a coherence between his previous works and those after he became pope. Karol Wojtyla as pope emphasized in the application of the Vatican Council II since he began his pontificate. In his documents John Paul II demonstrated a great knowledge of Vatican II. For instance, regarding his anthropological teaching based in the man as *imago Dei* which was important in *Gaudium et spes*, as the foundation of human dignity, the late

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<sup>49</sup> Buttiglione, *Karol Wojtyla*, 186-195

<sup>50</sup> Wojtyla cited De Lubac while preaching to Paul VI: “The tragedy of atheistic humanism so brilliantly analysed by Père De Lubac, is that it strips man of his transcendental character, destroying his ultimate significance as a person.” Wojtyla, *Sign of Contradiction*, 16.

<sup>51</sup> Weigel, *Witness of Hope*, 166-169.

<sup>52</sup> Tripole, “John Paul II, The Countercultural pope,” *Creed and Culture*, 39.

pope often referred this topic in many of his documents, which seemed to be an reinforcement of the Vatican Council II.

Avery Dulles also mentions that Karol Wojtyla contributed to the theme of faith during the Council, a theme that greatly concerned Wojtyla as a theologian and later as pope. According to Dulles, in the conciliar discussions about the “people of God” and on the apostolate, Wojtyla emphasized that “lay persons do not have a merely passive possession of the faith, since the grace of faith itself gives them the right and duty to engage in witness and apostolic activity.”<sup>53</sup> The former archbishop of Krakow developed this topic of faith in depth in his diocese and years later when writing his work *Sources of Renewal*.<sup>54</sup>

### 2.3 The human person: foundation of the moral theology of John Paul II.

This third section will develop the foundation of the moral theology of John Paul II, which is grounded on both philosophical and theological perspectives. The former is based on phenomenology and Thomistic anthropology concerning the philosophy of being; the latter is founded on the theology of creation, incarnation, and redemption. My analysis is based on writings when Wojtyla was Professor at Lublin University, Bishop of Krakow and then pope in terms of the following topics: the concept of person, man as *imago Dei*, dualism, self-determination, and his philosophy of man with respect to human dignity and the human vocation.

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<sup>53</sup> Dulles, “The Enrichment and Transmission of Faith,” *Creed and Culture*, 3.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid, 3.

### 2.3.1 The concept of person

For centuries philosophy has discussed the concept of person. George McLean states that after Aquinas, nominalism downplays the metaphysics of the subject as a result of its reductionist vision of the human person, who was viewed as understanding and being understood by sensory knowledge alone. Consequently, such philosophical views allowed a radical renewal of the objectifying tendency and materialism evident in the writings of Hobbes, Lock and Hume, who rejected metaphysics and embraced a form of utilitarian manipulation. McLean continues that due to such philosophical systems in the decade of 1930s, “mega-ideologies” such as fascism, communism and colonial capitalism led to what was considered the end of modernity in an era devoid of human freedom and dignity. McLean concludes that Wojtyla’s thought must be seen within in the light of the end of the second millennium, since the Polish philosopher attempted to propose a new vision of human life.<sup>55</sup>

In his book *The Acting Person* Wojtyla asserted that the aim of his work is to reach a correct interpretation of the conception of man.<sup>56</sup> The anthropological work of Wojtyla responds in part to the physical and spiritual destruction of mankind by Nazism and the Communist systems in the East, of which he was witness and victim, as he himself will say later as the successor of Peter: “The two totalitarian systems which tragically marked our century -- Nazism on the one hand, marked by the horrors of war and the concentration camps, and communism on the other, with its regime of oppression and

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<sup>55</sup> McLean, *Karol Wojtyla’s Philosophical Legacy*, edited by Nancy Mardas Billias, Agnes B. Curry, and George McLean, (Washington D.C.: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2008) 18.

<sup>56</sup> Wojtyla, *The Acting Person*, translated by Andrzej Potocki, edited by Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka (Boston, D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1979), 15.



terror -- I came to know, so to speak, from within.”<sup>57</sup> George McLean affirms that Karol Wojtyla believed that only a philosophical anthropology could defy Marxism by grounding man as a unique and free image of God in opposition to dialectical materialism.<sup>58</sup>

These political systems were characterized by excluding God from human consciousness and violating elemental human rights. The Holy Father attributed the crisis of the political systems of Nazism and communism and behaviors such as consumerism and ethical relativism practiced in the West to mistaken anthropological theories inherited by modern philosophy. John Paul II praised modern philosophy because it focused on research about the human person, but he also criticized it for not being interested in the ultimate truth and the transcendence of human beings.<sup>59</sup>

John Paul confronted the materialistic era, which was a central topic in Vatican Council II. The Council identified the materialistic tendencies in three areas: first, the materialism of modern science, which accepts only material existence and is divorced from the spiritual dimension; second, the materialistic influence of Marxism, which denies the existence of God; and finally the practice of materialism engaged in by consumerist culture, which also has dehumanized society since it sees man only as an

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<sup>57</sup> John Paul II, *Gift and Mystery. On the Fiftieth Anniversary of my Priestly Ordination* (New York: Doubleday, 1996), 67.

<sup>58</sup> McLean, *Karol Wojtyla's*, 20.

<sup>59</sup> John Paul II, *Fides et Ratio*, no. 5, Faith and Reason, *John Paul II. The Encyclicals in every Language*; AAS (1998): 5-143.

object of consumption. As the Council saw it, this new thought had permeated the philosophy of man.<sup>60</sup>

To confront materialism, Wojtyla grounded the concept of the human person in the traditional Thomistic definition derived from the Boethian definition “*persona est rationalis naturae individua substantia*,” (person is an individual substance of a rational nature),<sup>61</sup> and *as substantiam completam per se subsistentem separatam ab aliis*, (person is complete subsistent “per se,” and different from others). It means that human person is subsistent “per se,” different from other substances “per accident.” Thus, human person is loved by God as “unique.”<sup>62</sup> For Aquinas, the person is an individual substance because it signifies an existent subject in whom accidents inhere. In addition, personal being exists in its own right and not in another being. Finally, Thomas excludes separated souls because a separated soul is part of a rational human nature and not the whole rational nature, and therefore is not a person.

John McNerney affirms that the Boethian definition of the human person signified for Wojtyla the beginning of his metaphysics. McNerney asserts that “the metaphysical site Wojtyla refers to, is the abstraction of the definition rational animal, or individual substance of a rational nature.”<sup>63</sup> In fact, however, the Polish thinker stated that the Boethian definition is too rational and inadequate, and he demands an integration of the

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<sup>60</sup> *Gaudium et spes*, no. 19, Vatican Council II, The Conciliar and Postconciliar Documents, general editor Austin Flannery, translated by Costello Publishing Company (Northport, Costello Publishing Company, 1975); AAS 58 (1966): 1025-1120.

<sup>61</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I, q. 29, first edition (Ottawa: Collège Dominicain d'Ottawa, 1941) p. 191b.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid, III, q. 16, p. first edition, p. 2539a.

<sup>63</sup> McNerney, *Footbridge Towards the Other*, 36.

psycho-physical unity of mankind to understand the integrity of the human person.<sup>64</sup>

Before becoming pope, he stated in his book *Love & Responsibility* that the concept of person cannot be reduced to “rational analysis,” since human beings are more than a rational definition. “The term ‘person’ has been coined to signify that a man cannot be wholly contained within the concept ‘individual member of the species,’ but that there is something more to him, a particular richness and perfection in the manner of his being, which can only be brought out by the use of the word ‘person.’”<sup>65</sup>

In addition to Thomistic anthropology, Wojtyla also discussed the concept of person in the work of Max Scheler. He wrote:

The concept of the acting person which I am presenting was born from my previous works, especially from my analysis of M. Scheler, above all of his *Wertethik*. As it is known, Scheler built his concept of *materiale Wertethik* with the thought of challenging the aprioristic ethic of pure form, or rather, of pure duty, which, as Kant’s heritage, dominated throughout the nineteenth century. Scheler’s critique, irrespectively of his scholarly relations with Husserl, followed the line that had been charted by the master of phenomenology on the foundation of the principle *zurück zum Gegenstand*. This basic controversy, conducted in the name of the return toward that which is objective in ethics (and above all in morality), presents at its very root the problem of the subject, namely, the problem of the person, or of the human being as a person.<sup>66</sup>

According to Schelerian theory, the person is “the spiritual center of activity” and “is not a substance but a hierarchical structure of acts.”<sup>67</sup> While Aquinas founds the concept of “person” speculatively and metaphysically, Max Scheler uses the phenomenological analysis of experience. In discussing Wojtyla, Adrian Reimers states that the Polish

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<sup>64</sup> Wojtyla, *The Acting Person*, 196.

<sup>65</sup> Wojtyla, *Love & Responsibility*, translated by J.J. Willetts (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1993), 22

<sup>66</sup> Wojtyla, *The Acting Person*, xiii.

<sup>67</sup> Max Scheler, *Man’s Place in Nature*, translated by Hans Meyerhoff (New York: The Noonday Press, 1971), 64.

philosopher asserted that the person is whole when the acts of the will are ordered to the good, according to truth. Therefore, Wojtyla's criticism of Scheler is right since man is the efficient cause of good. The person is able to observe and interpret, concludes Reimers.<sup>68</sup>

Michael Waldstein asserts that human reason finds Scheler's concept of the human person "a shock," since Scheler denies that the human being is a subject in its own right and a substance. Waldstein adds that the rejection of the Aristotelian-Scholastic term 'substance' in the definition of person is due to Scheler's belief that this concept of person means "a naively spatial picture of an object under or behind attributes, as spheres of metal are located behind a surrounding magnetic field or a wall lies under a coat of paint."<sup>69</sup>

Jaroslaw Kupczak analyzes Wojtyla's habilitation thesis in which Wojtyla explored the possibility of constructing a Christian ethics using the phenomenological method of Max Scheler.<sup>70</sup> Kupczak summarizes the work of Wojtyla in comparative terms. For example, Wojtyla criticized Scheler's concept of values, which are seen by Scheler as a goal of ethical action, and which comprise material values and ethical values. For Scheler, intentional values are material values, while right and wrong are ethical values. Wojtyla argued that Scheler's analysis lacks clarity in terms of the transition from a value to an intentional object.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Adrian J. Reimers, *An Analysis of the Concepts Of Self-Fulfillment and Self-Realization in the Thought of Karol Wojtyla, Pope John Paul II* (New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2001), 139.

<sup>69</sup> Waldstein, *John Paul II*, 68.

<sup>70</sup> Kupczak, *The Human Person in the Philosophy of Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II*, 10. See also Buttiglione, *Karol Wojtyla*, 54.

<sup>71</sup> Kupczak, *The Human Person*, 11.

Another element pointed out by Kupczak is Wojtyla's concern about the participation of the will, since conscience is determinant in ethical life. Wojtyla criticized Scheler who maintains that ethical evaluation lies in the chosen values and in the ethical ideal of man. Kupczak regards as important Wojtyla's affirmation about the link between conscience and the causality of the subject because according to Scheler conscience is not important in the person's ethical life.<sup>72</sup> Another contribution of the Polish thinker was to clarify that the nature of ethical obligation. Scheler sees moral duty in a negative sense of obligation, but Wojtyla rejects Scheler's view since such a theory is based on emotional presuppositions. In addition, Wojtyla reminded us of the obligation to avoid evil and do the good.<sup>73</sup> To illustrate this teaching, Wojtyla's evoked the young man whom Jesus Christ "invited" to follow the Redeemer, without obligating the young man to follow him. Thus, according to Kupczak, Wojtyla considered it impossible to reconcile Christian ethics with the ethic of love taught by Scheler.<sup>74</sup>

Wojtyla also discussed the conflict between the concept of person and natural law. In his book *Person and Community*, he taught that the conflict arises when the distinction between person and nature is not clearly defined. Nature, he continues, "is the source of actualization for the human being; the person as such is the agent of actions who is over nature."<sup>75</sup> Thus, the pope reaffirmed human nature to demonstrate the greatness of the human person. As universal pastor, he repeated in the encyclical *Veritatis splendor* his

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid, 13.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid, 16.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid, 19.

<sup>75</sup> Wojtyla, "The Human Person and Natural Law," *Person and Community*, 182.

prior teaching that “natural law refers to a human person’s proper nature, which is the person’s self in the unity of body and soul.”

At the beginning of his pontificate, John Paul II developed *The Theology of the Body* in which he greatly reinforced his teachings about marriage, family, and sexuality. Through the speeches that he addressed to a weekly general audience, he explained in depth the concept of the human person from biblical revelation. The Holy Father found in the second story of creation an anthropological foundation since it portrays man as a subject given the gifts of freedom, self-determination and self-consciousness. He taught that in this biblical passage the human person appears as a “subject of covenant, and a body among bodies.” From this certitude of his own body, continues the pope, man is able to conclude that he is similar to other living beings.<sup>76</sup>

Previously in his pontificate he had written in his book *The Acting Person* about the subjectivity of the body. He noted: “While such subjectivity is in itself closely related to the somatic reactivity and to a large extent remains unrecorded in consciousness, the physical subjectivity, which emerges together with feeling on the basis of the body, is already included in consciousness.”<sup>77</sup> Ronald Modras opines that the pope saw his understanding of love and responsibility as part of the truth about man, which he emphasized in his first encyclical *Redemptor hominis*. In *Veritatis splendor* he emphasized this same teaching about this truth of man as a central focus for understanding morality.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> John Paul II, *The Theology of the Body. Human Love in the Divine Plan*, reprinting from L’Osservatore Romano, English edition (Boston: Pauline Books & Media, 1997), 38.

<sup>77</sup> Wojtyla, *The Acting Person*, 228.

<sup>78</sup> Ronald Modras, “Karol Wojtyla the Philosopher,” *The Vision of John Paul II*, 43.

Personalism was another significant contribution by Wojtyla/John Paul II to philosophy and theology. Kleetus Varghese states that personalism appeared in the nineteenth century as a social and philosophical movement focusing on the value of the person as the center of social realities. Among the leaders of this approach pointed out by Varghese is Emmanuel Mounier, who defines the person as a spiritual being through his adherence to a hierarchy of values and developed this teaching as a reaction the individualism of liberal capitalism and the collectivism after the First World War. Varghese cites various commentators on Mounier who think that Mounier treated the “human person as entirely distinct from the political individual,” and as “spiritual being subsisting by his adherence to a hierarchy of values freely accepted.”<sup>79</sup>

Appearing in the twentieth century along with Max Scheler, Christian personalism emphasizes human dignity and human rights and is based on human nature. Among representatives of Christian personalism, Varghese mentions some philosophers, such as Paul Ricoeur, Emmanuel Levinas, and Jurgen Habermas.<sup>80</sup> Varghese considers that throughout history Christianity has been a religion based on values, dignity, and the integrity of the human body. From the perspective of personalism, continues Varghese, “the person finds a primary recognition of his dignity, and an adequate guarantee for its free creative exercise.”<sup>81</sup> Personalism, concludes this author, protects the integral truth of man, human dignity, openness to others, and to the whole of creation.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Kleetus Varghese, *Personalism in John Paul II. An Anthropological Study of his Social Doctrines* (Bangalore: Asian Trading Corporation, 2005), 61.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid, 63.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid, 64.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid, 65.

Peter Colosi also discusses the concept of personalism in Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II's thinking. He points out that Max Scheler and John F. Crosby have developed this concept by philosophical arguments. In case of Wojtyla, Colosi says that the Polish philosopher grounded personalism on the uniqueness of the person rather than on rational nature. On examining the concept of the "uniqueness of persons" in Wojtyla/John Paul II before and after he became pope, Colosi argues that the uniqueness of persons refers to their "incommunicability," which expresses a profound dimension of being.<sup>83</sup>

With regard to the Schelerian definition of the individual value or essence of person, Colosi sees it set by Scheler against the notion of a universal essence with respect to all human beings. Colosi admits the difficulty for readers in understanding personal uniqueness as a source of a person's worth. He notes a statement treated by George Weigel after the death of John Paul II in which Weigel examines a note that Wojtyla sent Henri de Lubac about the pulverization of man, in which, according to Colosi, Weigel omitted the phrase "fundamental uniqueness." For Colosi, Wojtyla understood the fundamental uniqueness of each person, and not merely the uniqueness of our entire species as unique over all other species of created things, as Weigel suggests.<sup>84</sup>

Colosi asserts that Wojtyla treated this "uniqueness" while studying personalism in Max Scheler. Later as pope he affirmed that each man is an individual person, avoiding in this case a focus primarily on the rational nature of man, as in Thomistic philosophy.

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<sup>83</sup> Karol Wojtyla as pope emphasized this "uniqueness" in his teaching. For example, he writes: "The dignity of the person is in the indestructible property of every human being. The force of this affirmation is based on the uniqueness and unrepeatability of every person." John Paul II, "*Christifideles laici*," no. 37, *The Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortations*.

<sup>84</sup> Peter Colosi, "The Uniqueness of Persons in the Life and Thought of Karol Wojtyla/Pope John Paul II, with Emphasis on his Indebtedness to Max Scheler," *Karol Wojtyla's*, 67.



This author adds that the expression “individual person” was suggested by Scheler, which Wojtyla/John Paul II used in his writings.<sup>85</sup> Colosi clarifies that Max Scheler does not posit the opposition of “person” and “individual,” which appears in other personalist authors such as Maritain, Mounier and Hans Urs von Balthasar.<sup>86</sup>

George McLean considers that Wojtyla’s contribution to the notion of the human person is having pictured man as an *esse* a unique, irreplaceable and consciously free being, rather than a merely formal being. Therefore, for Wojtyla, all physical characteristics of the body, sexual distinctions, and personal actions are individual and shape the human person as a unique, free, and responsible being.<sup>87</sup>

Among the major papal encyclicals which he manifested this personalism is *Laborem exercens*. The Holy Father distinguished in this document the subjective and objective dimensions of work. The subjective has a priority over the objective dimension. The worker discovers his human vocation through labor and sharing his secular duties with his Creator. The pontiff pointed out that human beings, family, and society are the most important aspects in human work. Work must be considered as a contribution to social development but workers’ dignity and rights must be defended.<sup>88</sup> In applying the personalistic norm to work John Paul reminded us that labor is more important than capital, jobs must reflect the needs of the economy but even more importantly they should express personal values, and he concluded that the social teaching of the Church

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<sup>85</sup> Ibid, 71.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid, 64.

<sup>87</sup> McLean, *Karol Wojtyla’s Legacy*, 21.

<sup>88</sup> John Paul II, *Laborem exercens*, no. 10. On Human work, *John Paul II, The Encyclicals in Everyday Language*; AAS 73 (1981): 577-647.

should be founded on St. Thomas Aquinas.<sup>89</sup> In the encyclical *Centesimus annus* the pope insisted that “development must be as something fully human, not as something merely material; its real aim is the enhancement of everyone’s capacity to respond to God’s call.”<sup>90</sup> The Holy Father added that human beings have received from God their essential dignity and persons are able to transcend every social order so as to move towards truth and goodness. For him, the concept of alienation needs to be re-analyzed by a Christian vision of reality since such terminology and content “was mistaken,” and the idea of “collectivity” as response to alienation was also wrong. The pope asserted that workers must not be considered as “mere means,” but worthy of respect because of “the Christian vision of the human person and his ‘capacity of transcendence.’”<sup>91</sup>

### 2.3.2 Man as *imago Dei*

John Paul II gave a profound explanation of man as *imago Dei*. In the encyclicals *Redemptoris missio*, *Dives in misericordia*, and *Dominum et vivificantem* the Holy Father discussed the mystery of human beings in the light of the Holy Trinity. This focus is an essential key to his thought. Man created in the image of God is unique and has a particular value in oneself. Peter Ryan considers the teaching of John Paul about man created in *imago Dei* as very important but Ryan objects that the gratuitousness of God to man merits more explanation to reconcile how the human being participates in divine

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid, 15.

<sup>90</sup> John Paul II, *Centesimus annus*, no. 29. The Hundredth Year, *John Paul II. The Encyclicals in Everyday*; AAS 83 (1991): 793-867.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid, no. 41

life.<sup>92</sup> John Paul II explained the analogy of man as *imago Dei* by asserting that such teaching “constitutes the immutable basis of all Christian anthropology,” and that this picture and likeness of God is “essential for the human being.”<sup>93</sup> Further the pope pointed out that the comparison of man as imago and likeness of God in man “can be presumed between Creator and creature.” Therefore, “the creation of man is also marked by a certain likeness to the divine communion.”<sup>94</sup>

Like John Paul II, others theologians have contributed to deepen the truth of man as *imago Dei*. For instance, Servais Pinckaers, in analyzing the doctrine *imago Dei* in the Patristics and in Thomas Aquinas, points out that the theme *imago Dei* has existed for a long time, since it appears in Genesis 1: 26-28, and has been an important topic in the Greek and Latin Church Fathers, as well as in medieval theology, which discussed whether the *imago Dei* of the human being resides in a person as a whole, body and soul, including the distinction between man and woman, or only in one’s spiritual nature. Thus, Pinckaers confronting any dualism regarding human person reaffirms the doctrine of the Catholic Church. In addition Pinckaers affirms the distinction between masculine and feminine gender to oppose current theories that defend the concept of gender as a cultural construction to justify marriage between homosexual and lesbians.

Pinckaers analyzes the doctrine of the *imago Dei* from Thomistic perspective in terms of these key concepts: that acknowledging God is only possible for intellectual or spiritual creatures, persons resemble God if they imitate the knowing and loving if their

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<sup>92</sup> Peter Ryan, “The Desire for Fulfillment: Comments on an Issue Raised in Pope John Paul II’s Letter to Families,” *Creed and Culture*, 215.

<sup>93</sup> John Paul II, *The Theology of the Body*, 448.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid*, 450.

Creator, the *imago Dei* relates not only to the divine nature but also the Trinity of Persons; the *imago Dei* is dynamic in the sense that the soul knows and loves God and the Holy Trinity.<sup>95</sup>

Explaining the transcendence of human beings, John Paul II pointed out three foundations: the first regards the human person as a divine creation. In creation, said the pope, God has made possible an intimate communion between the creature and the Creator, which establishes a real participation between man and the life of God. The pontiff taught that the complete communion between man and God is eschatological, in eternal life, which includes the whole person, since “the perfection of communion is not only conditioned by the perfection or spiritual maturity of the subject, but also in turn determines it.”<sup>96</sup> In the encyclical *Dives in misericordia* the universal Pastor states: “The Father links to humanity by a bond even more intimate than that of creation, not only creating the human person, but enabling us to participate in the very life of God.”<sup>97</sup>

The second foundation is comprised by the divine adoption by God into his family, which was made possible through Christ’s incarnation. John Paul II emphasized that the person “is a mystery.” In each one there is a reality of sin as the son of Adam, but also every subject embodies the presence of God in his own life. This human mystery is revealed in the incarnation of Christ, in which lies the dignity of human beings. The

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<sup>95</sup> Servais Pinckaers, *The Pinckaers Reader. Renewing Thomistic Moral Theology*, translated by Mary Thomas Noble, edited by John Berkman and Craig Steven Titus (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America, 2005), 135.

<sup>96</sup> John Paul II, *Theology of the Body*, 244.

<sup>97</sup> John Paul II, *Dives in misericordia*, no. 7, The Mercy of God, *John Paul II. The Encyclicals in Everyday Language*; AAS 72 (1980): 1177-1232.

Incarnation is the divinization of man and the humanization of Christ, and the inauguration of a new chapter in the universal history for the world and humankind.<sup>98</sup>

Some authors opine that Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II was influenced by the “nouvelle theologie.” Paul McPartlan affirms that the Polish thinker and then pope directly contacted some theologians such as Yves Congar and Henri de Lubac leaders of the new theology. De Lubac promoted the term “nouvelle theologie” (new theology), which criticized the theory of “pure nature” founded in neoscholastics’ thought, such as the mentor of Wojtyla, Garriguou-Lagrange. According to McPartlan, Father Garrigou-Lagrange was concerned by De Lubac’s controversial book *Surnaturel* (1946), whose theory practically eliminated the link between human nature and the supernatural, resulting in a view of the church disconnected from social realities.<sup>99</sup> John Paul II implicitly confronted the “nouvelle theologie” in the encyclical *Redemptor hominis* by putting Christ at “the center of the universe and of history,” and promoting the doctrine of the incarnation as the agenda of his pontificate.<sup>100</sup> In the encyclical *Dominum et vivificantem* the pope explained that incarnation means the physical unity between man and God and the visible universe. “The incarnation opens in a new way the source of divine life in the history of humankind.”<sup>101</sup> John Paul II confronted the nouvelle theology by teaching that human person is a whole, therefore grace and nature are

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<sup>98</sup> John Paul II, *Dominum et vivificantem*, no.52. Lord and Giver of Life, *John Paul II. The Encyclicals in Everyday Language*; AAS 78 (1986): 809-900.

<sup>99</sup> McPartlan, “John Paul II and Vatican II,” *The Vision of John Paul II*, 50.

<sup>100</sup> John Paul II, *Redemptor hominis*, no. 1.

<sup>101</sup> John Paul II, *Dominum et vivificantem*, no. 52.

inseparable, as he criticized moralists that have “created dimension of nature and misunderstanding its integrity.”<sup>102</sup>

Martin Tripole also thinks that the Holy Father was influenced by the “nouvelle theologie,” regarding the theology of incarnation, which offered a new theological reflection about Christian salvation, putting Christ as head of the whole created order. Christ, as the New Man, mentioned by *Gaudium et spes*, no. 22, was one of the conciliar texts most referred to by Wojtyla/John Paul II to develop the truth in light of the incarnation of Christ. Tripole identifies in the first encyclical *Redemptor hominis* clear aspects of this new theology, which had been carefully examined by the pope.<sup>103</sup>

Richard Bulzacchelli finds in Wojtyla/John Paul II concerns about essential theological doctrines, among them the relationship between *nature* and *grace*. This union of grace and nature was analyzed by the new theology, to understand *pure nature* and the *dual end* for the human person. Bulzacchelli involves Wojtyla in the debate between neo-Scholastic Thomism, headed by Reginald Garriguo-Lagrange and the “nouvelle theologie” of the *ressourcement* embodied by Henri de Lubac. Bulzacchelli opines that John Paul II implicitly disapproved of the thesis of pure nature in the encyclical *Dives in misericordia*, rejected the claim of limited election, and affirmed the power of divine affectivity. Bulzacchelli finds in this encyclical that the pontiff elaborated an anthropomorphic vision of God’s revelation. Finally Bulzacchelli concludes that the encyclical *Dives in misericordia* “is not a Thomistic, or neo-Thomistic, document at all,

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<sup>102</sup> John Paul II, *Veritatis splendor*, no. 46.

<sup>103</sup> Martin Tripole, *Creed and Culture*, 45.

but a document of the “ressourcement” in which the pope remarked on the love of the Father in the Church who loves his creature.”<sup>104</sup>

Even though the specific subject of nature and grace goes beyond this dissertation, it should be noted that Wojtyla/John Paul II was concerned about this debate. Among his concerns about nature and grace, Wojtyla dissented from different Christological conceptions widespread by theological theories. For instance, he criticized those teachings that put Jesus only “as symbol of liberation from unjust structures both social and economic, and omit that he is also the sign of liberation for people who are denied freedom of conscience and religious freedom.”<sup>105</sup> In his meditations addressed to Paul VI, Wojtyla deplored that “new formulations will be put forward linking the ‘mystery of Christ’ with the ‘mystery of man’-- with the most acute problems of man’s existence.”<sup>106</sup>

Frederick Christian Bauerschmidt comments that the papal incarnation argument followed Duns Scotus, who saw incarnation as the perfection of creation, different from Thomas Aquinas, who taught reduced incarnation as remedy for sin. Bauerschmidt opines that Scotus’s view is more common in Catholic theology since it allows an integration between the order of nature and the order of grace. Thus, the former manifested himself as a Scotist, since the “fundamental purpose of the Incarnation is the completion and crowning of God’s creature work.”<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> Richard Bulzacchelli, “*Dives in misericordia*: The Pivotal Significance of a Forgotten Encyclicals,” *Karol Wojtyla’s Philosophical Legacy*, 135.

<sup>105</sup> Wojtyla, *Sign of Contradiction*, 108.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid, 107.

<sup>107</sup> Frederick Christian Bauerschmidt, “Incarnation, Redemption, and the Character of God,” *John Paul II & St. Thomas Aquinas*, 32.

The third theological foundation is based on the redemption wrought by Christ by which the Father manifests his entire universal and personal love to all. The cross of Christ is salvation for mankind and a power of transformation for good by confronting the evils that beset the lives of human persons. Redemption is oriented toward the whole man, understood in his total integrity, physical and spiritual. The Church, taught the pope, “cannot remain insensitive to whatever serves a person’s true welfare, any more than it can remain indifferent to what threatens it.”<sup>108</sup>

John Paul II emphasized the teachings of the Vatican Council II about the human person as *imago Dei*. The Council grounded the concept of *imago Dei* in reason, freedom, and conscience.<sup>109</sup> Edouard Hamel asserts that John Paul II theologically reinforced this conciliar doctrine, which he developed in depth in the doctrine of the incarnation.<sup>110</sup> What the Council wanted to teach was that the existential conflict experienced by humanity finds a response in Christ as the new Adam; however, the creation of man as *imago Dei* cannot be reduced to doctrinal formulas, because biblical revelation also illuminates the future of mankind.<sup>111</sup>

### 2.3.3 Dualism

John Paul II demonstrated concern about dualist theories in moral theology which affect human dignity. For instance, in the encyclical *Veritatis splendor*, the pope

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<sup>108</sup> John Paul II, *Dives in misericordia*, no. 13.

<sup>109</sup> Edouard Hamel, “The Foundations of Human Rights in Biblical Theology Following the Orientations of *Gaudium et Spes*,” *Vatican II. Assessment and Perspectives*, Volume II, edited by René Latourelle (New York: Paulist Press, 1989), 466.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid*, 467.

<sup>111</sup> Luigi Rulla, “Anthropology of the Christian Vocation. Conciliar and Postconciliar Aspects,” *Vatican II. Assessment and Perspectives*. Volume II, 408.



recognized conflicts between nature and freedom. Some moralists, asserts the Pontiff, in defending an absolute freedom have risked the corporal integrity of human beings, since mankind is reduced to a biological or social material.<sup>112</sup> The Holy Father reminded us of the Catholic teaching about “the unity of the human person whose rational, spiritual, and immortal soul is the principle of the human being, whereby it exists as a whole, as a person.”<sup>113</sup>

John Paul II expounded his Christian conception about human beings in a way that is totally opposite to a rationalistic and dualistic anthropology. The pontiff recognized that contemporary anthropology tries to explain “the consciousness of the body.” He proposed a discussion of the topic in the light of the structure of man and his divine creation: “The structure of the body allows human beings to be the author of their human activity.”<sup>114</sup>

Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II also confronted Marxism’s flawed attempt to overcome dualism, since it conceives humans as only matter and ignores transcendence. Like the capitalist system that considers the human person as an “economic force,” considering the laborer only as object and not as subject, Marxist collectivism uses persons as a means for class struggle to expand communism around the world. For this political system, the state is over the person, and it denies human rights such as individual liberties and private property. Thus, collectivity is over individuals and matter is over spiritual life.<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> John Paul II, *Veritatis splendor*, no. 46.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid, 48.

<sup>114</sup> John Paul II, *The Theology of the Body*, 40.

<sup>115</sup> John Paul II, *Laborem exercens*, no. 11.

### 2.3.4 Self-determination

Another important aspect of the human person in the thought of Wojtyla/John Paul II was his understanding of self-determination, which implies free will and is essential to the nature of human beings. Self-determination, said Wojtyla, “as an essential of the person rooted in self-governance and self-possession, reveals in the dynamic order the objectiveness of the person or, in other words, of every concrete, consciously acting ego.”<sup>116</sup> Thus, self-determination makes man responsible for his actions and it is important in morality since there is intentionality in personal actions.<sup>117</sup> Wojtyla/John Paul II’s teaching has been treated by others authors to explain responsibility in human actions. For example Robert Harvanek admits two approaches in Wojtyla’s discussion about the truth in human actions. The first is pragmatic, determining what is good and then carrying it out. The second is cognitive since there is a harmony between mind and reality.<sup>118</sup>

The concern of Wojtyla/John Paul II about the understanding of truth and freedom has been debated by philosophy. Thomas Pink raises the same issue when he affirms that freedom and will are inherent to human beings, since individuals are responsible to themselves and to others.<sup>119</sup>

Truth and freedom are essential to self-determination. Wojtyla/John Paul understood truth from a metaphysical viewpoint since it pertains to human nature and is fundamental

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<sup>116</sup> Wojtyla, *The Acting Person*, 108.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid, 109

<sup>118</sup> Harvanek, The Philosophical Foundations of the Thought of John Paul II, *The Thought of Pope John Paul II*, 12.

<sup>119</sup> Thomas Pink, *Free Will. A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: University: University Press, 2004), 9.

to personal decisions; truth is judged antecedently of the good.<sup>120</sup> One of the recurrent places where Wojtyla applied truth and freedom before becoming pope is to human sexuality. He taught that truth and freedom belong to reason, which distinguishes persons from animals. “Freedom and truth, truth and freedom determine the spiritual imprint which marks the various manifestations of human life and human activity. They penetrate the remotest recesses of human action and experience ... [unlike] the lives of animals. It is to this content that love between persons of different sexes owes its special consistency.”<sup>121</sup>

Avery Dulles thinks John Paul II’s insistence on respecting truth and freedom is due to the separation between them. Dulles notes the papal concern when the former pontiff criticized the declaration of religious freedom of Vatican Council II, which did not clearly affirm the connection between freedom and truth. Dulles states that the former pope expounded in depth the topic of freedom and truth in the encyclicals *Veritatis splendor* and *Evangelium vitae*, in which the Holy Father focused on the counter values evident in current culture, especially in industrialized societies.<sup>122</sup> Further, Dulles finds among these claims moral about absolute values the idea of heteronomy, which envisions God as “hostile power imposing terms on humanity as a defeated enemy.”<sup>123</sup> Dulles comments that John Paul II rejected heteronomy since natural law is inherent to reason and there is not opposition between natural law and divine revelation, therefore, man is able to distinguish the good and evil. Opposite to heteronomy, the Holy Father

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<sup>120</sup> Wojtyla, *The Acting Person*, 137.

<sup>121</sup> Wojtyla, *Love & Responsibility* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1993), 116.

<sup>122</sup> Dulles, “John Paul II and the Truth about Freedom,” *First Things* 53 (1995): 36-41, p. 36.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid*, 38.

emphasizes “theonomy,” where intellect participates in the divine law when the human person makes his moral decisions.<sup>124</sup> Another commentator similarly states that the idea of emancipation dominant in the Western hemisphere was of concern to John Paul II, who delivers his warnings to new generations so that they could avoid the mistakes of determinism and totalitarianism.<sup>125</sup>

For John Paul II truth and freedom became the backbone of his pontifical magisterium. For instance in the encyclical *Veritatis splendor*, which should be considered one of his most important teachings on truth and freedom, he used the words *truth* approximately 45 times, and *freedom* 55 times. In this encyclical the Holy Father manifested his concern about the right use of human freedom; in many cases people want it to be separated from human acts, giving freedom an “absolute moral autonomy and sovereignty.”<sup>126</sup> In the same encyclical the pope criticized the separation that “the world” has made between truth and freedom. “As universal and daily experience shows, the human being is tempted to break the harmony between freedom and truth, which only can be resolved by observing the commands of God.”<sup>127</sup>

### 2.3.5. Philosophy of man

After discussing how the human person was the foundation of Wojtyla/John Paul II’s moral theology, I will analyze two approaches to his philosophy of man: human dignity and the human vocation. Before becoming pope Wojtyla confessed that his anthropological teaching is inspired by Vatican Council II, which places the person as

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<sup>124</sup> Ibid, 38.

<sup>125</sup> Jaroslaw Kupczak, *The Human Person in the Philosophy of Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II. Destined for Liberty* (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University Press, 2000), 125.

<sup>126</sup> John Paul II, *Veritatis splendor*, no. 35.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid, no. 102.

central in the world. “The dignity of the human person is the most important voice in our age. Such dignity is based on revelation.”<sup>128</sup>

Wojtyla continued his philosophy of man in terms of action and integration of social relations by considering human beings acting with others. Wojtyla accepted that the current difficulty lies in the transition from traditional ideas to new concepts which deal with the human person. The Polish philosopher criticized the traditional philosophy of man since such philosophical teaching has emphasized man’s individual nature more than his “social nature” and failed to emphasize that the reality of existing and acting, “together with others,” is a fundamental attribute of every human being.<sup>129</sup>

Derek Jeffreys provides another perspective on Wojtyla’s basis for the philosophy of man. Jeffreys notes that Wojtyla founded human dignity on love. Love became a cornerstone for Wojtyla in analyzing the Schelerian theory of life. According to Jeffreys, the German philosopher rejected understanding love in terms of biology or psychology, because such ideas do not explain its essence. Jeffreys discovers in Schelerian theory three elements: love as movement, love and the will, and love and cognition; thus, Scheler moves love toward values without exertion. For Scheler love is understood in terms of the higher values and not as a goal.<sup>130</sup>

Jeffreys continues by noting that Wojtyla praised Scheler’s work, which inspired the Polish bishop to write the book *Love & Responsibility*. As pope, John Paul II focused on

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<sup>128</sup> Wojtyla, “Thomistic Personalism,” *Person and Community*, 179.

<sup>129</sup> Wojtyla, *The Acting Person*, 268.

<sup>130</sup> Derek Jeffreys, *Defending Human Dignity. John Paul II and Political Realism* (Grand Rapids, BrazosPress, 2004), 48-49. Max Scheler says: “If one speaks of ‘duties of love,’ the act of love is replaced by doing good [Wohltun] and, in the extreme case, by ‘goodwill’ [Wohlwollen] (if one does not mean mere deeds [äussere Werke]. In another place the German philosopher asserts: “The most radical form of renewal and growth of the ethos occurs in the movement of love and its power, in which ‘higher’ values (with regard to existing ones) are covered and disclosed.” Scheler, *Formalism in Ethics*, 220 and 305.

love's intentional movement toward values by analyzing different kinds of love, including love as attraction, desire, goodwill, friendship, and self-gift. Thus, Scheler and Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II, according to Jeffreys, agree in rejecting love as a mere biological process. Jeffreys, quoting Wojtyla, says that "[love] is never a biological or even psycho-physiological crystallization of the sexual urge, but is something fundamentally different from it."<sup>131</sup> Among numerous teachings about love, the pope described human love as "an image and above all a model of the love which the husband should show to his wife in marriage, when the two are subject to each other 'out of reverence for Christ.'"<sup>132</sup>

Human dignity was a key concept in papal documents, which are founded on metaphysical and theological perspectives. Since his first encyclical the Holy Father defined his ministry by defending human dignity, which finds its foundation in the Cross of Christ and encourages the Church to work for a "Christian humanism."<sup>133</sup> At the beginning of his pontificate the pope delivered to the United Nations a teaching about human dignity in which he claimed the primacy of the person and spiritual values over science and technology.<sup>134</sup>

A second approach in Wojtyla/John Paul II's philosophy of man is reflection on the human vocation. Discussing philosophical mentalities that reduce human beings to pure

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<sup>131</sup> Jeffreys, *Defending Human Dignity*, 51.

<sup>132</sup> John Paul II, *The Theology of the Body*, 316.

<sup>133</sup> John Paul II, *Redemptor hominis*, no. 10.

<sup>134</sup> "The Progress of humanity must be measured not only by the progress of science and technology, which shows man's uniqueness with regard to nature, but also and chiefly by the primacy given to spiritual values and by the progress of moral life. In this field is manifested the full dominion of reason, through truth, in the behaviour of the individual and of society, and also the control of reason over nature; and thus human conscience quietly triumphs as was expressed in the ancient saying: '*Genius humanum arte e ratione vivit*,' John Paul II, "Dignity of the Human Person Founded on Justice and Peace," *L'Osservatore Romano* (English edition) 42 (1979): 1

matter, the Polish thinker taught that man is called to transcendence. For instance, in his book *The Acting Person* Wojtyla defined transcendence from a metaphysical and epistemological perspective. He argued that the structure of the human being displays a spiritual condition and a concrete personal existence. Thus, human acts are a manifestation of transcendence.<sup>135</sup> Rocco Buttiglione avers that the papal theory about transcendence lies in the will and challenges idealism.<sup>136</sup> It challenges this philosophical viewpoint because ideas are rooted in states of consciousness separate from the world but the will is rooted in action in the world.

Jaroslaw Kupczak states that Wojtyla/John Paul II developed his doctrine of transcendence from a horizontal and vertical point of view. The first pertains to the intentionality of human acts, which also involve volition; in the second transcendence is analyzed by the person's self-determination and freedom.<sup>137</sup> "Human transcendence denotes an aspect of self-possession and self-governance which consists of one's possession of himself and of one's governance."<sup>138</sup>

The era of contemporary consumerism has reduced mankind to slavery, which is against human dignity, as the pope taught in many documents.<sup>139</sup> Social and technological progress at the present time is unable to fulfill the spiritual desires of human beings because of their materialist criteria, which consider human beings as objects and not as subjects.

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<sup>135</sup> Wojtyla, *Person and Community*, 233.

<sup>136</sup> Buttiglione, *John Paul II. The Thought of the Man Who Became Pope*, 141.

<sup>137</sup> Kupczak, *The Human Person*, 113.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid, 132,

<sup>139</sup> John Paul II, *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, no. 28, On Social Concern, *John Paul II, The Encyclicals in Everyday Language*; AAS 80 (1998): 513-586; and *Centesimus annus*, no. 36.

The vocation of the person also regards the spiritual thirst and the personal relationship with the Divinity, which becomes a natural desire of consciousness. Thus one realizes that this necessity is inherent to human nature. This desire confirms the fact of feeling that one is a creature and subordinated to God, the only one able to fulfill human aspirations. Thus, the Holy Father, following Thomas Aquinas, said that human nature is able to establish a relationship with its Creator.<sup>140</sup> For John Paul II the capacity to know God lies in reason and in the human heart.<sup>141</sup> The human vocation also deals with the necessity of loving and being loved. Love is inherent to human nature. Challenging false pleasures and distortions about genuine love, John Paul reaffirmed that human love must be accepted as a vocation which demands responsibility.<sup>142</sup>

The vocation of man reveals itself in carrying out responsibilities to others. Wojtyla taught that his humanness is based on community life. Thus, community and society are ontological realities essential to “humanization.” This social sense is opposite to individualism, by which man becomes egoistical and indifferent to others.<sup>143</sup> John Crosby, in explaining John Paul’s thought, said that the plan of God in human creation only is present when the person is respected by others. Crosby adds that the self-

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<sup>140</sup> John Paul II, *Veritatis splendor*, no. 22.

<sup>141</sup> Joseph W. Koterski, “An Introduction to the Thought of Pope John Paul II,” *The Legacy of Pope John Paul II. His Contribution to Catholic Thought*, edited by Geoffrey Gneuh (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 2000), 28.

<sup>142</sup> John Paul II, *Familiaris consortio*, no. 11, On the family, *The Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortations of John Paul II*; AAS 74 (1982): 81-191.

<sup>143</sup> Wojtyla, “The Person: Subject and Community,” *Person and Community*, 238.



possession of persons “does not interfere with their vocation to interpersonal communion but rather makes it possible.”<sup>144</sup>

In brief, the pope outlined as the philosophy of man the primacy of man over things, the superiority of spirit over matter, and the primacy of ethics over technology and the economy. Throughout his analysis of man, Wojtyla/John Paul II demonstrated his familiarity with the ways anthropological theories have been not able to provide a right definition of human dignity. William Smith thinks that the Christian personalism and Christian anthropology of John Paul were his most important contributions to moral theology.<sup>145</sup> I agree with Smith’s opinion since Wojtyla/John Paul II’s teaching tried to humanize contemporary society from individual and social evils, and he proposed a Christian anthropology as an authentic philosophy that respects human dignity in any cultural context.

#### 2.4. The Moral Teaching of John Paul II.

After analyzing Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II’s moral foundation, this fourth section will discuss the key aspects of his moral teachings that are most important for this academic work regarding the objective moral order, human dignity, and individual and social behaviors. There is a huge amount of writing and research about the moral teaching of John Paul II, but only a few contemporary moral theologians have provided a

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<sup>144</sup> John F. Crosby, “John Paul II’s Vision of Sexuality and Marriage,” *The Legacy of Pope John Paul II. His Contribution to Catholic Thought*, edited by Geoffrey Gneuh (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 2000), 55.

<sup>145</sup> William B. Smith, “John Paul II’s Seminal Contributions to Moral Theology,” *The Legacy of Pope John Paul II*, 51.

complete synthesis of the former pope's legacy in moral matters.<sup>146</sup> This dissertation will develop part of his moral doctrine about the value of responsibility focusing on family, marriage and sexuality, and on virtues of justice and solidarity, in light of his encyclicals *Dives in misericordia*, *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, *Centesimus annus*, and *Veritatis splendor*. This doctrine was also a central theme during the pope's visits to Nicaragua in 1983 and 1996. One of the issues taught by the pope in his first visit regarded parents and teachers' responsibility to educate children in the faith and in moral values, working for peace and practicing the command of love.<sup>147</sup> In his second visit, John Paul II emphasized again the role of family as builder of peace, which is considered a reinforcement of his first visit.<sup>148</sup>

These topics chosen for this dissertation belong to the Catholic tradition but they demand a new illumination according to the signs of the times. John Paul II clarified that he is not adding something new in moral matters but reminding us of the truths of Catholic moral teaching facing current controversies in morality.<sup>149</sup> The themes here

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<sup>146</sup> Charles Curran, *The Moral Theology of Pope John Paul II* (Washington D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2005). Another book is Richard Spinello, *The Genius of John Paul II, The Great Pope's Moral Wisdom* (New York: Sheed & Ward, 2007).

<sup>147</sup> "It must arrive at teaching how to discern truth from falsehood, just from unjust, moral from immoral, what elevates the individual and what makes a tool of him. These are the objective criteria which must guide education, and not the extra-educational categories based on instrumental terms of action, of power, of what is subjectively useful or useless, of what is taught by a friend or by an enemy, by who is accused of being progressive or reactionary," John Paul II, "Continuers of Centuries-old, Fruitful Educational Work. Address to Lay Educators-Assembled in Leon, Nicaragua," *L'Osservatore Romano*, (English edition) 13 (1983): 7.

<sup>148</sup> "Escuchemos atentamente lo que el Apóstol escribe a los destinatarios de su carta y lo que nos quiere decir hoy a nosotros, a todas las familias de Nicaragua. El Apóstol señala la necesidad de crear una atmósfera de amor y de paz, en la que los hombres puedan desenvolverse felizmente y educar a sus propios hijos." Juan Pablo II, Homilía del 7 de Febrero de 1996 en Managua (Managua: Conferencia Episcopal de Nicaragua Press, 1996), 2. "Let us listen carefully to what the Apostle writes to the readers of his letter and what he wants to say to all of us, to all the families of Nicaragua. The apostle points out the necessity of creating an atmosphere of love and peace in which human beings can develop happily and educate their own children," (personal translation).

<sup>149</sup> John Paul II, *Veritatis splendor*, no. 4.

mentioned will be discussed from two points of view. The first is the analysis of such teachings as recurrent. It is evident that John Paul II was concerned about some moral issues, such as human life, defense of basic human rights, global peace, justice, and encouraged leaders, international organisms, and all society to work for a new society, according to objective moral order, according to human dignity, reason, and divine revelation. These keys are implicit and explicit in the encyclicals selected by this study. The second is the examination of these theological virtues as relevant to the Nicaraguan moral situation as described in the first chapter. There is no attempt to debate these virtues in this work rather they are taken as sources of moral formation.

Before discussing the specific issue of family according to God's plan and the magisterium of the Church and the virtues of justice and solidarity as evangelical imperatives, it is important to recall the significance of the term "responsibility." The term "responsibility" has become common and prominent in the vocabulary of moral theology. It refers to the moral acts of individuals and attitudes toward secular and religious duties. There are philosophical and religious concepts about responsibility since such term is view as an imperative of reason. Among authors that have defined responsibility in a religious context is Albert Jonsen, who analyzes responsibility as understood as a response to God in fulfilling religious duties that are made concrete by loving one's neighbor.<sup>150</sup> In addition, responsibility has become an ecumenical expression since Catholics and Protestants use the term in their moral teaching. Gabriel Morgan points out that the sense of responsibility has become important since the last

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<sup>150</sup> Albert R. Jonsen, *Responsibility in Modern Religious Ethics* (Washington D.C.: Corpus Books, 1968), 16.

century but the term as such never appeared as a virtue in the ancient world; therefore, this term is only implicit in Greek philosophers. Morgan adds that historically the imperative of responsibility has signified “being responsible for doing something.”<sup>151</sup>

Catholic morality is founded in the natural law and in the revelation. Regarding the moral imperative, some thinkers have discussed the topic from reason. For instance, William Schweiker explains that the imperative of responsibility means moral integrity since it involves intention and the end of any moral action in which the person knows in advance the good or evil that he is going to do. Schweiker applies moral imperative to integrity and social issues. The former includes not only respecting the physical totality of human beings but also providing them with means to maintain various conditions of life, such as health and social order. It includes respect for human rights. The latter pertains to “social sensibilities,” such as justice, love, mercy, humility before God, and any social issues by which man reveals his ethic of responsibility and Christian commitment.<sup>152</sup>

#### 2.4.1. Responsibility in Wojtyla/John Paul II’s thought

Karol Wojtyla defined responsibility from a metaphysical perspective. In *The Acting Person* he stated that responsibility is the foundation for the moral and legal order. For Wojtyla responsibility involves the whole person, who cannot be indifferent to his obligations. Among these duties, Wojtyla pointed out that responsibility means living an upright moral life. From a theological perspective, the ex professor of Lublin taught that

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<sup>151</sup> Gabriel Morgan, *A Grammar of Responsibility* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1996), 35-37.

<sup>152</sup> William Schweiker, *Responsibility and Christian Ethics* (Cambridge: University Press, 1995), 128.

there is also a particular responsibility toward God: doing good in the present but looking toward personal transcendence.<sup>153</sup>

Wojtyla/John Paul II's doctrine confronted contemporary theories that oppose the correct meaning of responsibility. For example in the encyclical *Veritatis splendor* the Holy Father stated that consequentialism and proportionalism are a detriment to morality and culture itself. As criteria of judgment in human actions, the pontiff insisted on distinguishing right and wrong in human conduct. Good and bad, said the pope, do not admit confusion according to Catholic teaching.<sup>154</sup>

Some theologians consider such theories of consequentialism and proportionalism as "revisionism" because, as the pope argued, they attempt to propose different criteria to traditional Catholic moral teaching. For instance, Ronald Lawler suggests that such revisionism is a kind of "consequentialism," but he argues that it must be carefully evaluated because not all the consequences are necessarily morally wrong.<sup>155</sup> Lawler's concern is echoed in the encyclical *Veritatis splendor*, where the pope criticized certain currents of consequentialism and proportionalism which directly deal with the responsibility of human acts. The first regards the intention and the consequences for human acts; the second measures the proportion between good and bad consequences, opting generally for "the lesser evil."<sup>156</sup>

Similarly, Kenneth R. Melchin criticizes revisionist ethicists both positively and negatively. The negative aspect is that on the one hand they attempt to change Catholic

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<sup>153</sup> Wojtyla, *The Acting Person*, 170.

<sup>154</sup> John Paul II, *Veritatis splendor*, no. 10

<sup>155</sup> Ronald Lawler, *The Christian Personalism of Pope John Paul II*, 60.

<sup>156</sup> John Paul II, *Veritatis splendor*, no. 75.

tradition since they think that the moral criteria for human acts depend only on circumstances that surround the human person, and they thus underestimate deontology. The positive aspect, however, is that revisionists have contributed to moral theology by offering a more human morality by considering that moral acts cannot be divorced from historical circumstances that force one to make decisions. From this point of view the human person is considered as a real subject that is important for moral theology.

John Paul II broadly discussed the relationship between responsibility and the problem of good and evil in moral actions. Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II's frequently argued that there is evil in human nature and in the world. For example, before becoming pope, when he preached a retreat to Pope Paul VI, Cardinal Wojtyla taught that one of the contemporary evils is atheism, whose father is Satan.<sup>157</sup> Wojtyla asserted that the reality of Satan cannot be minimized because his rebellion is inherited in each person, which is a desire to live independent from the Creator. Thus, there is within evil a mystery and a rebellious spirit, he concluded.<sup>158</sup>

According to Jaroslaw Kupczak, Wojtyla found differences between Aristotle and Aquinas in their theories of the good. Kupczak states: "The essence of good consists in being an object of desire. In order to become an object of desire (Wojtyla comments on St. Thomas), the good must possess a certain perfection, i.e., to be in *esse actu*."<sup>159</sup> The Thomistic doctrine agrees with Aristotle's teleological approach to the good, to which Wojtyla responded that the good is prior to the end, and this existential theory of the good

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<sup>157</sup> Of course, *Gaudium et spes* nos.19,20 and 21, provides a much more profound analysis of atheism and notes that some forms of atheism are caused by the behavior of Christians. See Vatican Council II, The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents, p, 918-920.

<sup>158</sup> Wojtyla, *Sign of Contradiction*, 30.

<sup>159</sup> Kupczak, *The Human Person*, 55.

is linked to the Neoplatonic theory of participation. Wojtyla admitted that the most important contribution given by Thomas about the good lies in his account of transcendence.<sup>160</sup>

About the manifestation of evil, John Paul II was categorical. He said the world is dominated by evil and it is expressed in different ways. For instance, he mentioned moral relativism, the lack of education, difficulties in obtaining education and university degrees, economic, social, and political exploitation, as well as the lack of religious freedom and disrespect for human rights, which must be considered as both social and theological issues. The pope warned that often evil is confused with good. Such confusion thus becomes a source of moral ambiguity.<sup>161</sup>

The encyclical *Veritatis splendor* tackles the morality of particular acts and insists that evil acts are evil “per se” and never admit exceptions, since human acts must be ordered toward God.<sup>162</sup> The pope reminded us of the three sources of morality in human acts: intention of the subject, the circumstances, and the object itself of the act. “The primary and decisive element for moral judgment is the object of the human act, which establishes whether it is capable of being ordered to the good and to the ultimate which is God.”<sup>163</sup> Quoting *Gaudium et spes*, the pope focused on some acts as intrinsically evil, such as homicide, abortion, euthanasia, and voluntary suicide, which offend the integrity of the person and, of course, human dignity.<sup>164</sup>

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<sup>160</sup> Ibid.

<sup>161</sup> John Paul II, *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, no. 36 and *Veritatis splendor*, no. 51.

<sup>162</sup> John Paul II, *Veritatis splendor*, no. 63.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid, no. 79.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid, no. 80

In the encyclical *Dives in misericordia*, the Holy Father introduced another important discussion about the opposition between good and evil. Any evil means the damage committed against another. The goodness of God does not mean complacency in the face of evil, and neither is it the opposite of justice; therefore, “reparation for evil and scandal, compensation for injury, and satisfaction for insult are the conditions for forgiveness.”<sup>165</sup>

John Paul II applied the virtue of responsibility in all spheres of life, as it was defined by the Vatican Council II, indicating a harmony between human and Christian duties. For instance, the Council discussed secular issues such as the transmission of human life and the task of families to educate children in virtues as “human and Christian responsibility,” implying there is no separation between human autonomy and Christian principles.<sup>166</sup> The conciliar influence was decisive for some moral theologians such as Bernhard Häring and Karol Wojtyla in spurring them to a renewal in moral theology. For instance, Karol Wojtyla emphasized responsibility in the institution of the family, marriage, and sexual matters. In his book *Love & Responsibility* he affirmed that “responsibility is a fundamental and vital component in the sexual morality of man.”<sup>167</sup>

Among the many ethical situations treated by John Paul in terms of moral responsibility are the defense and protection of human life, the dignity of family and the sacrament of matrimony, the promotion of justice, and the practice of solidarity. These virtues are relevant around the world and particularly in the Nicaraguan context since new generations are practicing free-unions, there is an anti-birth mentality, and political

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<sup>165</sup> John Paul II, *Dives in misericordia*, no. 14.

<sup>166</sup> Vatican Council II. *Gaudium et spes*, no. 50.

<sup>167</sup> Wojtyla, *Love & Responsibility*, 63.



systems are marked by injustices and disrespect for the constitutional order. Some of these topics are examined in the following.

#### 2.4.2. Family, matrimony, and sexual morality

The subjects of family, sexuality, and marriage have been an integral part of Catholic morality. The Catholic Church defends the rights of family and matrimony to accomplish the designs of the Creator regarding the right of procreation, stability of matrimony, and the right of parents to educate children according to natural law and Christian principles for those who are believers. The Church protects the institution of the family and in many countries has publicly demanded that the state recognize its rights, as it has occurred in Nicaragua, where the local Church has demanded that the government not approve laws that harm the family or allow sexual behaviors that harm morality.<sup>168</sup>

The subjects of family, sexuality and marriage were priorities for Wojtyla/John Paul II since the work of his early priesthood and were in part a reaction to widespread utilitarian philosophy which promotes sexual pleasure and civil laws that support

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<sup>168</sup> The Nicaraguan Catholic bishops demanded that Nicaraguan legislators not approve laws against human life: "Demandamos en consecuencia, a nuestros legisladores que, fieles al espíritu de nuestras leyes constitucionales y al sentir de nuestro pueblo, no se legisle a favor del delito. En efecto, si se mata a una criatura inocente absolutamente incapaz de defenderse, entonces se justificarían irresponsablemente el robo, el genocidio, el narcotráfico, el terrorismo. Acaso hay alguna diferencia entre un bus lleno de pasajeros que recibe el impacto de un coche bomba y un instrumento metálico que impacta en el vientre materno para succionar un feto? Conferencia Episcopal de Nicaragua, "Mensaje," Febrero 24, 2003, [http://www.tmx.com.ni/-cen/documentos/2003\\_9/26/2007](http://www.tmx.com.ni/-cen/documentos/2003_9/26/2007).

"As a result we demand of our legislators that, faithful to the spirit of our laws and the feelings of our people, that they not pass laws that favor crime. In effect, if an innocent child absolutely incapable of defending itself is killed, then robbery, genocide, drug, dealing and terrorism are all irresponsibly justified. Is there really any difference between a bus full of passengers that receives the impact of car bomb and a metallic instrument that penetrates the maternal womb to suction out a fetus? Nicaraguan Catholic Conference, "Message, February 24, 2003," (personal translation from Spanish) [http://www.tmx.com.ni/-cen/documentos/2003\\_9/26/2007](http://www.tmx.com.ni/-cen/documentos/2003_9/26/2007).

abortion. George Weigel points out that Wojtyla confronted the communist system in Poland about laws legitimating abortion as a means of birth control.<sup>169</sup>

Many academic works written by Wojtyla focusing on this matter are sources to illuminate Catholic moral teaching, and they have become intellectual resources for contemporary thinkers concerned with the family.<sup>170</sup> One of his first works in this matter before becoming pope was his book *Love and Responsibility*, in which he focused on the true meanings of love, responsibility in the exercise of sexuality, the value of chastity, and the greatness of matrimony.<sup>171</sup>

About the concept and mission of the Christian family, the encyclicals *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, *Centesimus annus*, and *Veritatis splendor* specifically deal with the theme of family, marriage and sexuality, in regards to their foundation and rights. It is interesting that the pope treated these themes both as fundamental and social moral issues. For John Paul II, on one hand, the state and society in general are responsible for respecting and protecting the ends of marriage and sexuality, since the family is the basis of society, and

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<sup>169</sup> “The communist campaign against traditional family life had its own secondary effects on sexual morality, for the linkage the Church taught between marital love and procreation was broken if men and women came to think of children as problems to be solved rather than a gifts to be cherished. Communist materialism also contributed to a cultural climate in which sexuality became morally devalued.” Weigel, *The Witness of Hope*, 141. Richard M. Hogan and John M. LeVoi date John Paul’s family concern to before becoming pope, and his numerous papal writings and addresses could be considered a contribution to a specific sexual morality. Richard M. Hogan and John M. Le Vir, “The Family and Sexuality,” *John Paul II and Moral Theology. Readings in Moral Theology*, No. 10, edited by Charles E. Curran and Richard McCormick (New York: Paulist Press, 1998, 157.

<sup>170</sup> Among academic Karol Wojtyla’s works there are Karol Wojtyla, *The Word Made Flesh. The Meaning of the Christmas Season*, translated by Leslie Wearne (San Francisco: Harper & Row Publishers, 1985); Karol Wojtyla, *Person and Community, Selected Essays*, translated by Theresa Sandok (New York: Peter Lang, 1993); and Karol Wojtyla, *Love and Responsibility*, translated by H.T.Willetts (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1993).

<sup>171</sup> Wojtyla, *Love & Responsibility*.

George Weigel comments that the book of *Love & Responsibility* does not deal with contraception but rather presents his philosophical personalism and the protection of Christian teaching before a distorted and false humanism. Weigel, *Witness to Hope*, 143.

the laws of the state have to provide to families social benefits, such as education and health in order for them to carry out their duties. On the other hand, however, families in particular cannot forget that they have obligations to society, such as that to collaborate in the promotion of the common good.

Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II argued that family has to first be defined from an anthropological point of view and then from a theological perspective, conceived of as a *communion of persons*. He accepted that the Christian family must be based on human nature and seen as an entity in society. From a theological perspective, Wojtyla analogically compared the family to the Holy Trinity and in this vision family should be interpreted only as a small society called to transcendence.<sup>172</sup>

In logical sequence the pope in his encyclicals dealt with the identity and mission of the family. For instance, in *Sollicitudo rei socialis* the family is conceived of as supernatural since it is compared to “a sacred sanctuary” worthy of being respected according to the plan of God.<sup>173</sup> The encyclical *Veritatis splendor* quoted the terminology *communion of persons* in marriage as referring to the imperative of respecting human life because of its sacred character.<sup>174</sup> In *Centesimus annus* the pope emphasized that the family is called to solidarity with others because of its social reality and its divine mission in the world.<sup>175</sup>

Richard Hogan and John LeVoir briefly outline the conception of family and the terminology of “communion of persons” expounded by Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II. First,

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<sup>172</sup> Wojtyla, “The Family as a Community of Persons,” *Person and Community*, 319.

<sup>173</sup> John Paul II, *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, no. 39.

<sup>174</sup> John Paul II, *Veritatis splendor*, no. 13.

<sup>175</sup> John Paul II, *Centesimus annus*, no. 49.

they explain that the pope developed the teachings about the family of Vatican Council II in which he himself participated. Second, the application of the term *communion of persons* in the family is founded on the creation of the couple in the image of God. Wojtyla/John Paul II suggested that a perfect model for the family lies in the Holy Trinity. Thus, through the family it is possible to experience the love of God. This similarity of the family to the Trinity is reflected in the physical gift of the body between a man and a woman.<sup>176</sup> Hogan and LeVair quoted Wojtyla by affirming that family and marriage conceived as the communion of persons is taken from the creation of man as *imago Dei* and the model of Holy Trinity. Like trinitarian communion, the person and the couple are called to living in communion which means the “family is life-giving whereas that of the workplace is not.”<sup>177</sup>

In the encyclical *Dives in misericordia*, in which the pope explained the mercy and justice of God, the parable of the prodigal son served him as a meditation on the fatherhood of the Creator and on the motherhood of Mary. Both terms fatherhood and motherhood are common in secular and religious terminologies, and more specifically found in family vocabulary.<sup>178</sup> George Weigel thinks that this encyclical portrays a spiritual experience of the pope, reflecting his devotion to the mercy of God headed by Sister Faustina in his diocese, as well as to his childhood history in which he lost his parents very early and experienced the lack of a father and mother.<sup>179</sup>

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<sup>176</sup> Hogan and Le Vair, “The Family and Sexuality,” *John Paul II and Moral Theology*, 159.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid, 163.

<sup>178</sup> John Paul II, *Dives in misericordia*, no. 6 and no. 9.

<sup>179</sup> Weigel, *Witness to Hope*, 387.

The encyclicals *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, *Centesimus annus* and *Veritatis splendor* emphasize the plan of God for the human couple and the duties of the family in itself and in society. In addition, the Holy Father strongly demanded respect and protection for life and for the family, since they are human rights and contributions to the common good.<sup>180</sup> As Carl Anderson states, the family is the place where the person finds the meaning of life and his radical dependence on others.<sup>181</sup>

On the basis of the pontiff's doctrine, the unity of the family is like the unity of body and soul. Each member of the family is subject to rights and responsibilities as well.<sup>182</sup> The Holy Father expounded: "the definitive creation of man consists in the creation of the unified nature; their duality, on the other hand, manifests what, on the basis of this identity, constitutes the masculinity and femininity of created man."<sup>183</sup> In the encyclical *Centesimus annus*, the pope summarized the challenges of social life that affect the Christian family and concern Catholic morality. The encyclical calls family the most important institution in the cosmos and affirmed that the family must be founded on the sacrament of matrimony and be open to procreation and the protection of human life. "The family is sacred; it is the sanctuary of life and opposite of the culture of death."<sup>184</sup>

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<sup>180</sup> John Paul II, *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, no. 33.

<sup>181</sup> Carl Anderson, "Veritatis Splendor and the family: The future of Christianity in the Postmodern era," *Communio* 21 (1994): 298-309, p. 306.

<sup>182</sup> John Paul II, *Veritatis splendor*, no. 50.

<sup>183</sup> John Paul II, *The Theology of the Body. Human Love in the Divine Plan* (Boston: Pauline Books & Media, 1997), 47.

<sup>184</sup> John Paul II, *Centesimus annus*, no. 39.

#### 2.4.2.1 Marriage

In the encyclicals *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, *Centesimus annus*, and *Veritatis splendor* the theme of marriage appears in different contexts. The first encyclical deals with the theology of creation, in which the couple is elevated to a divine category. When spouses are conscious of this truth, then they experience the reason for their existence in their role as a married couple.<sup>185</sup> The second encyclical reinforces the place of the couple in creation and defends the Catholic doctrine about marriage as an alliance of love between man and woman, and procreation as one of the aims of matrimony.<sup>186</sup> The encyclical *Veritatis splendor* emphasizes the theology of the *communion of persons*, whose significance is in accordance with the commandments, according to the late pope.<sup>187</sup> Catholic moral teaching has traditionally taught that marriage is a natural union and of divine origin. It is ordered to mutual help, procreation, and to educate children. As a sacrament, marriage is compared by the Church to the spousal love of Christ for the Church.<sup>188</sup>

In interpreting the meaning of the sacrament of marriage, John Paul II differentiated the natural and the supernatural in the union of a man and a woman. When such unity is only contractual, it is somewhat superficial and fragile without a solid foundation. From this outlook the couple could treat themselves as machines of pleasure. When a couple joins in the sacrament of matrimony and then the sexual relationship, there is transcendence in the sexual relationship because the couple responds to God's will, who

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<sup>185</sup> John Paul II, *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, no. 29.

<sup>186</sup> Ibid,

<sup>187</sup> John Paul II, *Veritatis splendor*, no. 13.

<sup>188</sup> Pontifical Council For Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, translated by United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (Washington D.C.: 2004), no. 218.

has extended his being in the human person and charged them to transform creation and multiply the human race. As Richard Hogan and John LeVoir note, the physical union between a man and a woman is not simply a carnal action but rather a manifestation of their marriage vows; thus in this sense, fertility also becomes the manifestation of authentic love. From this point of view, a Christian couple reflects in matrimony a Trinitarian communion of persons.<sup>189</sup>

#### 2.4.2.2 Contraception

Looking at the purpose of marriage, which is procreation, Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II reacted harshly against contraception and birth-control policies. Before becoming pope, Wojtyla argued that artificial birth control used in order to resolve overpopulation was an affront to human dignity and to the family itself. The Polish philosopher saw evidence in the use of contraception of a utilitarian ideology in the sense that human person has become a target for technology and object of pleasure: “A problem arises which adherents of the utilitarian way of thinking prefer to regard as one of a purely technical nature, but which in Catholic moral teaching is first and last an ethical problem,” stated Wojtyla.<sup>190</sup> Wojtyla added that Catholic ethics is opposed to Malthusianism, through which contemporary economists justify birth control policies.<sup>191</sup>

Certain commentators explain why Karol Wojtyla/ John Paul II dealt with contraception. For instance, George Weigel opines that the pope reaffirmed the encyclical

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<sup>189</sup> Hogan and LeVoir, “The Family and Sexuality,” *John Paul II and Moral Theology*, 162.

<sup>190</sup> Wojtyla, *Love & Responsibility*, 64.

<sup>191</sup> Ibid,

*Humanae vitae* in order to confront the era of “sexual revolution.”<sup>192</sup> Richard Hogan and John Levoir examine the topic of contraception from the vantage point of the *communion of persons*. Contraception, they assert, “alters the sexual act and makes it something other than a self-surrender.”<sup>193</sup> John Crosby analyses contraception in papal teaching from a physical and spiritual perspective. He asserts that the pope emphasizes the biological function of the human body and in personal love, which is indispensable for the couple to express their love and to signify the spousal self-donation.<sup>194</sup>

In his book *Love & Responsibility* Wojtyla analyzed the relationship between contraception and love since children must be a fruit of love between a man and woman. A key distinction in his analysis is that between personalism and utilitarianism. The Polish thinker defined personalism as a rational subject open to others: “This personalism must not be confused with individualism. The human being as a person is simultaneously a member of society,” said the former archbishop of Krakow.<sup>195</sup> Wojtyla defined utilitarian concept of love as “a union of egoism, which can hold together only on condition that they confront each other with nothing unpleasant, nothing to conflict with their mutual pleasure.”<sup>196</sup> Regarding the commandment of love according to the New Testament, Wojtyla stated that utilitarian theory is contrary to the gospel since this philosophical mentality seeks only pleasure but not an authentic love. The Polish thinker affirmed that utilitarianism and the gospel are different because the former treats persons

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<sup>192</sup> Weigel, *Witness to Hope*, 335.

<sup>193</sup> Hogan and Levoir, “The Family and Sexuality,” *John Paul II and Moral Theology*, 176

<sup>194</sup> John E. Crosby, “John Paul II’s Vision of Sexuality and Marriage,” *The Legacy of Pope John Paul II*, 66.

<sup>195</sup> Wojtyla, “The Problem of the Theory of Morality,” *Person and Community*, 146.

<sup>196</sup> Wojtyla, *Love & Responsibility*, 39.



“as a means to an end,” and the latter is “love to others.”<sup>197</sup> Wojtyla admitted that the commandment of love is not properly identical with the personalist norm, but in certain sense the commandment of love is a personalistic norm.<sup>198</sup>

In analyzing Wojtyla’s sexual teaching, Ronald Modras says that the Polish philosopher repeated the terms person and love defended procreation from a personalist norm in which there is a bilateral enjoyment of the couple which must be open to procreation. Modras mentions that Wojtyla used Thomistic doctrine of natural law to argue for his personalistic perspective since Wojtyla linked love and the subordination of natural law, as it appears in his book *Love & Responsibility*. For Wojtyla, adds Modras, love does not mean emotion but the virtue of good will; thus reason ratifies the value of a person.<sup>199</sup> Modras continues that this affirmation demands subordination to the laws of human nature and an inevitable battle with concupiscence, which was not clarified by Wojtyla.<sup>200</sup>

Paul Kucharski believes that Wojtyla/John Paul II provided philosophical arguments against those who have created a conflict between natural law and the human person. He also highly regards the manner in which the Holy Father uses arguments from natural law in the encyclical *Veritatis splendor*.<sup>201</sup> The Polish thinker maintained that there is no necessary conflict between personhood and natural law if one accepts a “metaphysical conception of nature in favor of a phenomenological conception.”<sup>202</sup> From a

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<sup>197</sup> Ibid, 40.

<sup>198</sup> Ibid, 41.

<sup>199</sup> Modras, *The Vision of John Paul II*, 38.

<sup>200</sup> Ronald Modras, “Karol Wojtyla the Philosopher,” *The Vision of John Paul II*, 38.

<sup>201</sup> Paul Kucharski, “Pope John Paul II and the Natural Law,” *Karol Wojtyla’s*, 111.

<sup>202</sup> Ibid, 112.

phenomenological perspective, nature concerns instincts, which can be applied to biology, to the human body and its structure; thus, the definition of human nature is understood as the person himself in the unity of soul and body.<sup>203</sup>

According to Kucharski, John Paul II explained the relation between sexual urge and ethics as important to discuss moral issues facing current culture, which denies the universality and unchanging nature of the moral law and attempts to impose a norm of conduct on human beings. The pope stated that by accepting the natural law, human life and human rights will be respected as a result of establishing universal and permanent moral norms valid in any time. The pope was concerned that the idea of natural law had been presented inadequately, because it considers man only as a rational animal, but does not take into account the moral dimensions that dignify individuals.<sup>204</sup>

In the encyclical *Sollicitudo rei socialis* the pope discussed the topic from a juridical, moral, and cultural perspective, since behind the political criteria it is dealing with the morality of human acts and culture. It is easy to infer from the encyclical the pontiff's concern about cultural "control" and discrimination against poor countries, which he saw as contrary to Christian teachings, justice, and human life.<sup>205</sup> In the encyclical *Veritatis splendor* the pope returned to *Humanae vitae*, which had tackled the subject of contraceptives.<sup>206</sup>

John Paul II reinforced this doctrine and asserted that contraception and contraceptive practices are intrinsically evil acts without any exception since they

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<sup>203</sup> Ibid, 113.

<sup>204</sup> Ibid, 121.

<sup>205</sup> John Paul II, *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, no. 25.

<sup>206</sup> John Paul II, *Veritatis splendor*, no. 80.

concern the ‘objective moral order.’<sup>207</sup> John Grabowski states that the pope discusses contraception from a personalist and biblical revelation since it “violates the language of the body,” and breaks “the moral order revealed by God.”<sup>208</sup> Grabowski’s opinion reinforces thus the sacredness of the body and its procreative function. On the other hand, Grabowski defends the unitive and procreative character of the couple as it is clear in the divine command that man was created to multiply creation. At the center of Wojtyla/John Paul II’s teaching regarding contraception there is a defense of human dignity, because of human beings’ duty and right to reproduce the human species. According to his doctrine, contraception is a degradation of man and a cause of frustrations and false hopes in individuals.<sup>209</sup>

In connection with contraception, Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II discussed the concept of concupiscence. Before becoming pope, Wojtyla treated concupiscence as linked with sexuality. He distinguished concupiscence from sexual interest. Sexual interest becomes for Wojtyla a “spontaneous process” that ends in the desire to possess this carnal satisfaction, which is a value in itself, while concupiscence becomes a “tendency” of “carnal love”<sup>210</sup> As pope, he taught that “the power of concupiscence tries to detach the language of the body from the truth, different from the power of love that strengthens it ever anew in that truth.”<sup>211</sup>

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<sup>207</sup> Ibid, 80.

<sup>208</sup> John Grabowski, *John Paul II. The Theology of the Body. Human Love in the Divine Plan*, 19.

<sup>209</sup> Wojtyla, “The Problem of Catholic Sexual Ethics,” *Person and Community*, 295.

<sup>210</sup> Wojtyla, *Love & Responsibility*, 148.

<sup>211</sup> John Paul II, *The Theology of the Body*, 406.

### 2.4.2.3 Abortion

The last issue in this section on family rights is abortion, which was opposed strenuously by Wojtyla/John Paul II. For instance before his pontificate, Wojtyla stated that artificial abortion produces an “anxiety neurosis with guilt feelings at its core, and sometimes even a profound psychotic reaction.”<sup>212</sup> The claims of the former Archbishop of Krakow are founded on the personalistic norm and on the ends of marriage, which is designed to multiply the human race. As Richard Hogan and John LeVoir assert “abortion is an extreme manifestation of selfishness, is a radical contradiction in the familial communion of persons.”<sup>213</sup> James McCartney states that Wojtyla rejected abortion first because only God is the giver of life, and second because children are the fruit of love.<sup>214</sup>

As universal pastor, John Paul II treated abortion as an attack against human life that is widespread everywhere and whose practice reveals “a crisis of the moral sense.” The pontiff reminded us that deliberate abortion is a crime and a grave sin.<sup>215</sup> The encyclicals *Centesimus annus* and *Veritatis splendor* also discuss abortion as a culture of death and an intrinsically evil act that cannot be accepted by Catholic tradition.<sup>216</sup>

The Holy Father warned that abortion carries unforeseen consequences for mankind since abortion is a violation of the fundamental human right to life, and there is a lack of sensitivity to social needs, which could lead to euthanizing the elderly as a consequence

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<sup>212</sup> Wojtyla, *Love & Responsibility*, 285.

<sup>213</sup> Hogan and Levoir, “The Family and Sexuality,” *John Paul II and Moral Theology*, 175.

<sup>214</sup> James Mc.Cartney, *Unborn Persons. Pope John Paul II and the Abortion Debate* (New York: Peter Lang, 1987), 89.

<sup>215</sup> John Paul II, *Evangelium vitae*, no. 58, The Gospel of Life, *John Paul II. The Encyclicals in Everyday Language*; AAS 87 (1995): 402-522.

<sup>216</sup> John Paul II, *Centesimus annus*, no. 39 and *Veritatis splendor*, no. 80.

of a certain utilitarian mentality linked to the logic of the acceptance of abortion. Another potential problem is that anti-life genetic experiments on aborted embryos have effects that are not clearly understood. To face these realities, the pope encouraged all churches and especially the bishops to defend life “sustaining the entire ecclesial community in their own vocation at the service of life.”<sup>217</sup>

Martin Tripole presents contemporary tensions about abortion from the position of a so-called “situation ethicist.” Tripole mentions that Joseph Fletcher suggests a principle of proportionality to approve abortion and infanticide. Tripole criticizes Fletcher because due to such a theory, which implies the autonomy of reason to do whatever it wants, individuals and governments can justify such crimes. Such evils, argues Tripole, are against the truth and morals taught by John Paul II and further against the Catholic tradition that requires the Christian imperative to practice the commandment of love of neighbor.<sup>218</sup> The Tripole opinion confronts one of the roots of current moral teaching crisis regarding the practice of loving others as foundation of morality, which was essential in John Paul II’s moral teaching regarding good and the objective truth; as he stated in *Veritatis splendor* explaining loving neighbor: “the many commandments are really only so many reflections of the one commandment about the good and the dignity of the person.”<sup>219</sup>

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<sup>217</sup> John Paul II, “Particular Pastoral Issues,” *John Paul II in America*, 202.

<sup>218</sup> Tripole, *Creed and Culture*, 43.

<sup>219</sup> John Paul II, *Veritatis splendor*, no. 13.

### 2.4.3 Virtue of justice

Justice is an ethical virtue that concerns government, politics and human rights. Its practice involves both reason and faith. The search for justice is thus aided both by legal reasoning and the fact that as a virtue it is promoted and defended by Catholic social doctrine. Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II dealt with the issue of justice since his early life due to his personal experiences under German occupation of Poland and the subsequent communist regime before becoming pope. He continued to deal with the issue as pope as a result of his familiarity with both communism and capitalism. Wojtyla confronted injustices of Marxist ideology that led to the violation of individual liberties and the imposition of atheism, and he warned against the dangers of unfettered liberal capitalism.

As pope, he continued his earlier criticism of Marxism. He argued that Marxism had failed in its aim “to uproot the need for God from the human heart,” and he supported the aspirations of the new generations to rediscover “the roots of their national culture and the person of Jesus Christ.”<sup>220</sup> The Holy Father defended workers under the Marxist system who demanded that the state respect their rights, justice and dignity in terms of Christian teaching.<sup>221</sup> With respect to capitalism the Holy Father asserted that the system is positive in that it permits a free economy and private property, but he warned that capitalist competition has favored “marginalization and exploitation” particularly in the poor countries.<sup>222</sup>

Wojtyla treated justice beginning with his early writings from the viewpoint of faith and the personalistic norm. In his book *Love & Responsibility*, whose central subject is

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<sup>220</sup> John Paul II, *Centesimus annus*, no. 24.

<sup>221</sup> Ibid, no.26.

<sup>222</sup> Ibid, no. 42.

sexual morality, Wojtyla connected love with justice while rejecting utilitarianism. For the Polish thinker, Christian love goes beyond justice; while justice refers only to material goods, authentic love refers to human dignity and the essence of the person. Wojtyla's criticism regarded the aims of utilitarianism which considered the person as an object of pleasure and exploitation.<sup>223</sup>

According to Karol Wojtyla, justice also is connected to eternity. For believers, according to the Polish philosopher, to practice the virtue of justice is a transcendental duty, since ethical behaviors practiced by believers are an offering to God in accord with the beatific vision when values experience a more complete realization in temporal life. Wojtyla reminded us that "the person is not the Absolute; the human being is a creature, a contingent being. God alone is the Absolute."<sup>224</sup> Wojtyla stated that the task of theology lies in explaining the beatific vision. As a way to establish the link between person and community, Wojtyla also proposes the Thomistic personalism which teaches that "the individual good of persons should be by nature subordinate to the common good at which the collectivity, or society, aims -- but this subordination may under no circumstances exclude and devalue the persons themselves."<sup>225</sup>

As pope, John Paul II discussed justice in numerous speeches and documents. Among the most important writings are the encyclicals *Dives in misericordia*, *Laborem exercens*, *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, and *Centesimus annus*, which will be discussed in the following paragraphs. Throughout his social teaching, the pope treated the defense of human dignity, the protection of human rights, the promotion of the human family, and so forth.

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<sup>223</sup> Wojtyla, *Love & Responsibility*, 42.

<sup>224</sup> Wojtyla, "Thomistic Personalism," *Person and Community*, 175.

<sup>225</sup> Ibid, 175.

In the encyclical *Dives in misericordia*, the pope grounded justice as a result of mercy and encouraging Christian to practice justice as integral part of Christian vocation. The Holy Father explained the link between love and justice. The pope taught that the order of justice has its roots in merciful love, and he explained that, while justice administers goods and distributes material things, mercy makes possible peaceful relationships between mankind.<sup>226</sup> This encyclical demonstrates the coherence of his papal thought with his earlier academic work by showing the thread of personalistic thinking since his early writings. Judith Merkle, in interpreting the encyclical *Dives in misericordia*, states that John Paul II saw justice as much too broad, since such virtue demands supernatural strength to maintain and truly defend human dignity and this is only possible in practicing mercy. Merkle adds that the Holy Father called for “an ethic of justice,” which means in practice to live the gospel in secular life, but the need for justice does not mean forgetting the requirements of justice.<sup>227</sup> The John Paul II’s teaching and Merkle’s commentary illuminates Christian consciousness since believers can experience conflict of conscience claiming for justice before others that can think that a Christian must reject their rights and to forgiveness debt because of mercy. In other words, the teaching is that there is no opposition between justice and mercy.

In applying his ethical personalism, the pope lamented in the encyclical *Dives in misericordia*, that the administration of justice has been so permeated by corruption that it has become insecure and dangerous for human beings, since in the name of the justice itself human life is annihilated and the disrespect of human rights is justified. The papal

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<sup>226</sup> John Paul II, *Dives in misericordia*, no. 14.

<sup>227</sup> Merkle, *The Vision of John Paul II*, 120.



document refers to the corruption of the laws that rule countries and society and to evident social injustices widespread around the world.<sup>228</sup>

In harmony with his way of thinking John Paul II grounded justice in a Christocentric view. He emphasized the human person as redeemed by Christ, who brought redemption to mankind; only redemption can reveal to human beings the truth of their human dignity, their freedom, their capacity for communion, their vocation toward truth and love. The pope taught that humanity has been “recreated” in the mystery of redemption as a manifestation of love by the Redeemer. Thus from redemption has emerged an “authentic humanism” which places Christ in secular history.<sup>229</sup>

In keeping with the Catholic social tradition, John Paul II stated that observing the ancient virtue of justice is essential for moral life and for respecting human dignity. Therefore, the Church cannot be indifferent to justice because it is a human and evangelical cause, as he asserts that the human being is the way for the Church and she is committed to justice.<sup>230</sup> The pope applied the universal principle of justice to specific realities that concern the present and involve the Catholic Church. He insisted that the cause of man is the cause of the Church. In *Veritatis splendor*, John Paul II deplored that justice has been forgotten by men of both reason and faith.<sup>231</sup>

John Paul II noted the practice of justice as a virtue, but pointed out that injustices only can be overcome only if there is sincere conversion that supports the poorest, since such actions are consequences of personal sin which is the root of social sin, as he

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<sup>228</sup> John Paul II, *Dives in misericordia*, no. 12.

<sup>229</sup> John Paul II, *Redemptor hominis*, no. 10.

<sup>230</sup> John Paul II, *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, no. 41.

<sup>231</sup> John Paul II, *Veritatis splendor*, no. 100.

affirmed in the apostolic exhortation *Reconciliatio et paenitentia*. Such conversion means a new way of doing justice toward others especially the poorest, who must not be considered as a burden, but rather as meriting a “just and prosperous world.”<sup>232</sup> Judith Merkle interprets the conversion demanded by the pope as “a new imagination that creates systems that are more interdependent in economic, cultural, political, and religious way in our global society.”<sup>233</sup>

John Paul II grounded justice in human dignity and as an integral part of faith. This papal teaching found its foundation in the Vatican Council II that opted for the human person and demanded that the whole Church face current social situations from a Christian perspective. The council affirmed that the cause of mankind is the cause of the Church, and such secular history experienced by men and women is also a history of salvation according to God’s plan.<sup>234</sup> In the encyclical *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, the pope argued that injustices in the world are caused because mercy and justice and the commandments are not practiced.<sup>235</sup>

#### 2.4.3.1 Human rights

For John Paul II justice was about the defense and protection of human rights, which are founded in human nature and in divine revelation. Human rights are not a concession from the state or society but rather they are inherent to individuals since human beings are the creation of God; therefore, the state and

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<sup>232</sup> John Paul II, *Centesimus annus*, no. 28.

<sup>233</sup> Judith A. Merkle, “John Paul II and Justice,” *The Vision of John Paul II*, 109.

<sup>234</sup> Vatican Council II, *Gaudium et spes*, no. 1.

<sup>235</sup> John Paul II, *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, no. 36.

individuals have to respect the rights of others. George Weigel considers that the pope made human rights an important point of his pastoral task, since it was a recurrent theme in his whole life's work.<sup>236</sup> For John Paul II some essential human rights were life, respect for the institution of the family, matrimony, religious freedom, social benefits, and private property.<sup>237</sup>

#### 2.4.3.2 The State and democracy

After communism collapsed in the decade of the 1990s, democratic systems emerged, especially in east central Europe and in some countries of Latin America, such as Nicaragua, whose leftist government lasted only the decade of the 1980s.

Since the end of the twentieth century, Catholic social teaching has strongly defended the democratic system and human rights. Why the Church has assumed this task should be analyzed in light of totalitarian systems that violated elementary human rights. But this tolerance of democratic systems has been accompanied by conflicts in many cases between moral teaching and civil legislation since some countries (the United States, Poland, and others) have enacted legislation in moral matters that is opposed to most moral law and Catholic moral theology. This legislation has legitimated morally wrong practices such abortion and homosexual unions, which have become political agendas of social activists and a cause of social disorder. Gregory Baum criticizes many democratic practices that have only been a slogan to support military invasions. Confronting this reality, Catholic social teaching has played a positive role forming the

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<sup>236</sup> Weigel, *Witness to Hope*, 289.

<sup>237</sup> John Paul II, *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, no. 33.

conscience of believers in order to denounce social injustices and to promote the authentic meaning of Christian liberation.<sup>238</sup>

In the encyclical *Centesimus annus*, John Paul II accepted democracy as good, but only if it respects natural law and if people are educated to participate in democratic systems, and the dignity of human life is protected in all its stages. In addition, the pope demanded that democracy not be exalted as the definitive truth in looking for the common good.<sup>239</sup> In *Veritatis splendor* the pope denounced a conflict between moral life and the procedures of democratic systems. The encyclical clarifies that moral norms and civil norms are independent, despite the fact that civil law cannot completely ignore morality. Therefore, political freedom does not mean moral freedom and Christian morality cannot be ruled by civil legislation.<sup>240</sup>

Regarding the role of the state, the pope kept in mind that the state exists to defend the poor, promote solidarity, and exercise subsidiarity in fostering the common good.<sup>241</sup> Society is the sum of individuals and institutions committed to the common good. Therefore, the fact of mutual coexistence obligates a necessary participation of all members to obtain goods and to satisfy their essential necessities. Such participation becomes solidarity, which demands responsibility. George Hunston provides an analysis of the concept of state in the thought of John Paul II. He argues that Wojtyla did not see society, community or even family as primordial, but rather that society is composed of

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<sup>238</sup> Gregory Baum, "Religious, Theological, and Biblical Roots of Democracy," *Concilium* 4 (2007): 51-59, p. 54.

<sup>239</sup> John Paul II, *Centesimus annus*, no. 46.

<sup>240</sup> John Paul II, *Veritatis splendor*, no. 113.

<sup>241</sup> John Paul II, *Centesimus annus*, no. 15.

various communities of responsible persons, the totality of which make up the entire society, of which the government is the final and most powerful expression.<sup>242</sup>

#### 2.4.4 Solidarity

Solidarity has been a practice since the origins of human beings. Solidarity pertains to human nature, but it is also a Christian imperative. The definition of solidarity is complex. Russel Hittinger suggests some of its aspects: the sharing of material things, technological and economic interdependence, the personal experience of practicing virtues in relationships with others, participation in common activities, and putting into practice the commandment of love.<sup>243</sup> Susan Toton describes solidarity as an aspect of moral theology in the sense that solidarity seeks to create justice, compassion, and peace.<sup>244</sup>

Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II linked solidarity to justice through metaphysical categories and from his personal experience in his motherland with the Solidarity Movement.<sup>245</sup> John Carney affirms that there is clear evidence in Wojtyla/John Paul's magisterium concerning his support with Poland's struggle for liberation from the Soviet empire and his conception of solidarity as a concrete form of praxis rather than a merely theoretical understanding. According to Carney the Polish philosopher understood

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<sup>242</sup> George Hunston, *The Contours of Church and state in the Thought of John Paul II* (Waco, Baylor University, 1983), 10.

<sup>243</sup> Russel Hittinger, "Making Sense of the Civilization of Love," *The Legacy of Pope John Paul II. His Contribution to Catholic Thought*, 86.

<sup>244</sup> Suzane Toton, *Justice Education: From Service to Solidarity* (Milwaukee, Marquette University Press, 2006), 38.

<sup>245</sup> George Weigel describes that "solidarity movement" born in Gdansk, Poland. This movement started in 1970 when workers demanded social benefits and the right of having a true freedom in their organization. At time, Catholic hierarchy, especially Karol Wojtyla had a great influence over their leaders, being Archbishop of Krakow and later as successor of Peter. Weigel, *Witness to Hope*, 400.

solidarity not as a universal term but rather as grounded context of social theory, as, for example, Marx used the term to signify his opposition to capitalism.<sup>246</sup>

On basing solidarity in praxis, Carey encounters in Wojtyla/John Paul a Greek influence since John Paul invoked the Neoplatonic tradition and the Cappadocian Fathers, who discussed solidarity as a spiritual combination of theory and action. Praxis here means that social movements can contribute to analyzing new interpretations of social situations and extending different perspective of the self and the community similar to the Polish solidarity movement. Through unconscious intentionality praxis also expresses the historical longing of the people.<sup>247</sup>

Finally Carey thinks that Wojtyla/John Paul II adopted from Husserl's thinking the concept of solidarity in the sense that memory is essential. Memory reminds others of history and resistance to political oppression.<sup>248</sup> This author continues that the pope taught that solidarity should be a part of the Catholic educational curriculum since the Pontiff insisted in solidarity as a virtue. Thus, from a theoretical perspective the pope discussed solidarity in his social teachings because solidarity as theory is a result of opposition to political slavery.<sup>249</sup>

In his book *The Acting Person* Wojtyla defined solidarity as "together with others," meaning that one lives in a concrete society and a mutual dependence on others.<sup>250</sup> Thus, Wojtyla analyzed solidarity from the perspective of human reason, which teaches us that

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<sup>246</sup> John Carney, "John Paul II: on the Solidarity of Praxis in His Political Philosophy," *Karol Wojtyla's*, 184.

<sup>247</sup> Ibid, 189.

<sup>248</sup> Ibid, 190.

<sup>249</sup> Ibid, 192.

<sup>250</sup> Wojtyla, *The Acting Person*, 269.

human nature is both individual and social. According to Wojtyla, in living out solidarity one achieves his/her transcendence and personal realization.<sup>251</sup> The Polish thinker admitted that the sense of solidarity is expressed in different terminologies, including the term *participation*, which is associated with this term. He also described solidarity as opposition to something opposing the truth; such opposition becomes a confirmation of solidarity.<sup>252</sup>

Robert Harvanek comments that Wojtyla's analysis of participation as solidarity should be interpreted as a dialectical relation between the individual and the community, which originated among Lublin philosophers reacting against European totalitarianism and British individualism in defending family, marriage, and Polish culture during the Nazi occupation.<sup>253</sup> George Weigel interprets Wojtyla/John Paul II's thought as distancing itself from individualism and collectivism, since the first tends to be egoist, and the second ignores the freedom of the person. Thus, Wojtyla tried to integrate individuality and the common good.<sup>254</sup>

The encyclicals *Sollicitudo rei socialis* and *Centesimus annus* interpret solidarity as duty, principle, and virtue.<sup>255</sup> Solidarity is a duty in itself because of interdependence among human beings. From this perspective any discrimination between rich and poor, strong and weak should not exist. In a certain respect, the pope taught that the world lives in permanent solidarity because of mutual dependence among nations and people. No one

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<sup>251</sup> Wojtyla, *The Acting Person*, 267

<sup>252</sup> Ibid, 285.

<sup>253</sup> Harvanek, "The Philosophical Foundations of the Thought of John Paul II," *The Thought of Pope John Paul II*, 18.

<sup>254</sup> Weigel, *Witness To Hope*, 176.

<sup>255</sup> John Paul II, *Sollicitudo rei socialis* no., 9 and no. 40; *Centesimus annus*, no. 10.

can survive separated from others. He argued that solidarity also concerns relationships between persons involved in commerce when obligations concern monetary remuneration; here there are no human considerations but rather human beings are reduced to machines of production.<sup>256</sup>

Solidarity is in the interests of everyone and thus is based on reason. It merits analysis, however, since much foreign aid from the strongest countries to the poorest nations is trumpeted as “gestures of solidarity” but in many cases they are simple agreements or loans that later become an unbearable cost for those whom they supposedly benefited. This is the case of many poor countries, whose present generations are condemned to living in poverty because their nations are obligated to pay such debt. This social and political topic surpasses the scope of this analysis, but it is important to mention this reality because the origins of many left-wing governments in Latin America (such as Venezuela, Ecuador, Bolivia, and Nicaragua) at the current time are due to neo-liberal policies, which have only benefited a few people and created economic elites in each nation, while abandoning the majority of the population to experience hunger and unemployment.

Describing solidarity as a virtue was another important contribution of John Paul II. Catholic teaching invokes cardinal and theological virtues in moral life. Two biblical texts present solidarity as a virtue, such as the commandment of love in John’s gospel (John 13:34-35), or the Last Judgment in Matthew (Matthew 25: 31-45). The term “solidarity” has had a more secular meaning than a religious one. Catholic moral teaching tends to no longer use the term solidarity. Solidarity has been replaced by

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<sup>256</sup> John Paul II, *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, no. 38



charity, whose practice has acquired a religious meaning since believers offer charity in the expectation of eternal recompense and the good of one's neighbor. It has been a sincere testimony of the commandment of love. Brian Johnstone provides a religious interpretation of solidarity by affirming that in creation God entered into solidarity with human beings, which was consummated by the redemption of Christ founding a brotherly society. Johnstone proposes the Polish Solidarity movement as an example of the fact that solidarity means: 'with', 'acting with', and 'protesting with.'<sup>257</sup>

Inside of Wojtyla/John Paul II's idea of solidarity there is a reaction to two oppositions: the individualist capitalist system, and the collectivist Marxist ideal. The first holds the individual as the primary unit and the ultimate standard of value; the second views the group, whatever it be, (nation, community, proletariat, etc.) as the primary unit of reality and the ultimate standard of value. Critics of John Paul II such as Gregory Baum object to ambiguities in papal teaching, asserting that his analyses of solidarity only focused only on class struggle in an economic sense but omitted the oppressor as an agent of such social injustices.<sup>258</sup> John Chathanatt replies that the encyclical *Sollicitudo rei socialis* is not a judgment of "moral equivalence" of capitalism

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<sup>257</sup> Brian Johnstone, "Solidarity and Moral Conscience: Challenges for our Theological and Pastoral Work," *Studia Moralia* 31 (1993): 65-75, p. 67. Richard Spinello warns against confusing the notion of solidarity with the liberal notion of fraternity, since the first provides an authentic theological doctrine, while the latter suggests an alliance among the persons gathered for particular interests. Spinello, *The Genius of John Paul II*, 77. Charles Curran asserts that at the basis of John Paul II's teaching on solidarity there is a denunciation of the mentality of individualism currently widespread in some societies, particularly in the industrialized ones, which have promoted consumerism and have fortified egoism and converted the person into an object looking for "having" and not "being." Curran, *The Moral Theology of John Paul II*, 252. He deplored the dominant phenomenon of individualism widespread in current society. He saw liberal ideology and the capitalist system as responsible for promoting an extreme independence, which became a setback for human dignity and detriment for morality. Wojtyla, "Thomistic Personalism," *Person and Community*, 174.

<sup>258</sup> Gregory Baum, "An Ethical Critique of Capitalism: Contributions of Modern Catholic Social Teaching," *John Paul II and Moral Theology*, 237.

and Marxism, but rather that the pope denounced poverty and miserable situations of mankind around the world.<sup>259</sup>

It is important to note that the Third Latin American Catholic Bishop's Conference held in Puebla in 1979 expounded solidarity according to John Paul's teaching but from a perspective of both evangelizing and liberating society from structures of sin, which manifest in the violation of human rights, in unjust distribution of justice and in the exploitation people in need. Solidarity in the viewpoint of the Latin American bishops thus means support for people in need and liberation from oppressive structures, both political and economic. Material poverty is the most important for many liberation theologians.<sup>260</sup> But solidarity in Latin America has a broad meaning and is more practical than speculative. For example, José Comblin, distinguished three kinds of solidarity in Latin America: spontaneous in the altruistic sense; tribal, understood as the participation in the same language and customs; and finally a religious solidarity through which believers have the same faith and the practice of charity.<sup>261</sup>

The so-called "globalization phenomenon" poses the question of the fact of solidarity. On the one hand, globalization should be considered as "universal solidarity;" from this outlook it is positive and has decreased distances. It is not an exaggeration of Christian harmony when Paul teaches that Christ has come to make "both groups into one," (Ephesians 2:14) and a renewed Pentecost in which all "speak the same language."

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<sup>259</sup> John Chathanatt, "Interdependent Solidarity. A Fresh Look at Sollicitudo Rei Socialis," *East Asian Pastoral Review*. 26 (1989): 32-38, p. 33.

<sup>260</sup> Consejo Episcopal Latinoamericano, *Puebla and Beyond. Documentation and Commentary*, edited by John Eagleson and Philip Sharper, translated by John Drury (New York: Orbis Book, 1979) nos.1159-1165.

<sup>261</sup> José Comblin, *Called for Freedom: The Changing Context of Liberation Theology*, translated by Phillip Berryman (New York: Orbis Book, 1998), 127.

(Acts 2:6).<sup>262</sup> On the other hand, however, the fact of globalization has exported individualism into the traditional culture of solidarity. Despite of risk of individualism, John Paul II suggested valuing the fact of globalization since it has become “a sign of hope,” for humankind.<sup>263</sup>

The philosophical argument by Wojtyla/John Paul regarding solidarity has been an important contribution to Catholic social teaching. Also important has been the “globalization of solidarity,” but the proponents of this concept fail to analyze deeply the causes of poverty and to distinguish who are the truly poor. John Paul II acknowledged the concept of solidarity in Latin American liberation theology and it is probable that this view of solidarity also had an impact on his thought.<sup>264</sup> The Latin American Catholic Church emphasizes solidarity for those oppressed by economic systems. Although this is true, material poverty is not the only explanation for lack of economic development. There is also the dimension of cultural mentality, since many do not assume the responsibilities of their human vocation, which includes the vocation to work and to struggle for personal achievement. Therefore, not all people are poor because of social injustices but rather some are because of personal choices.

Another potential problem related to practicing solidarity regards the dangers of paternalism. The pope emphasized that solidarity means “being responsible for others,” but it could promote dependence in certain contexts such as economic assistance. It

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<sup>262</sup> New American Standard Bible (New York: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1977).

<sup>263</sup> John Paul II, “Globalization favours sensitization of hearts,” *L'Osservatore Romano* (English edition) 18 [2001]: 6.

<sup>264</sup> John Paul II quoting the Latin American Episcopal Conference regarding the option preferential for the poor states: “A consistent theme of Catholic social teaching is the option or love of preference for the poor. Today, this preference has to be expressed in worldwide dimensions, embracing the immense numbers of the hungry, the needy, the homeless, those without medical care and those without hope.” *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, no. 42.

seems that solidarity has been proposed more in technical and financial terms than in regard to human promotion. The mistake of some current Latin American liberation theology lies in portraying the population as captive to a slave mentality of exploitation and parasitic dependence, but theologians who struggle for social liberation in Latin America have not proposed solutions that take into account personal responsibility. In many cases such theology remained critical of the established order, which is good and necessary, but it lacked proposals that take the whole person into account.

## Conclusion

After analyzing the foundations and some teachings of Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II on moral theology in this chapter, the careful reader would realize the necessity of reading his writings, beginning with those of his early priesthood in order to understand his thinking before becoming pope and then during his papacy. The most likely conclusion of this process would be, however, that Wojtyla/John Paul II maintained a coherent doctrine before and after becoming pope. As universal pastor, he integrated his philosophy and theology in all ecclesiastical fields, (theology, philosophy, moral, pastoral, liturgy and so forth) in a consistent way through his papal documents. The key teachings by the Polish pontiff, regarding the truth of man, the truth of God, the truth of the Church, the defense of life, and the promotion of justice, peace and solidarity also apply in very important ways to Catholic education, which is the theme of the next chapter.

The personalist thought of the Polish thinker and pontiff was one of the most important contributions to the philosophy of man in current moral theology. The remarkable life of Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II made his personalist theory attractive because the foundations of his moral reflections about the human person are based in part in his personal experience, rather than merely philosophical abstractions. Thus, the former archbishop of Krakow and pope confronted ideologies, such as Nazism and Marxism. He was both witness and victim of these systems, and his profound experiences and reflections thus led him to focus on the dignity and transcendence of human beings. As pope, he drew heavily on personalism in his criticism of both Marxism and capitalism. In his view both were mistaken in their ideas about man since the human being is seen as either an object of production or consumption, but what both systems ignore is his dignity as a son of God. From this perspective, Wojtyla/John Paul II took on the cause of human freedom as his own cause, which he emphasized in many documents as he encouraged the Church to work for the liberation of an “authentic humanism” in the light of the Cross and resurrection of Christ.<sup>265</sup>

Wojtyla/John Paul II demonstrated remarkable intellectual leadership as he engaged thinkers of various philosophical trends in different cultures. The Holy Father reinforced the role of the Christian philosophy as the appropriated response to modern philosophy, which like Christianity, also seeks the truth of man and the truth of God.<sup>266</sup> Thus, John Paul II encouraged the Church to be critical of different philosophical theories that appear in history.

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<sup>265</sup> John Paul II, *Redemptor hominis*, no. 10.

<sup>266</sup> John Paul II, *Fides et ratio*, no. 76.

Another important legacy of Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II was his elaboration of a theology incarnated in the cosmos. The pope humanized theology. No longer would anything that occurs in human history remain unconnected to the history of salvation and the Church. His moral theology thus became a global reference for Catholics and non-Catholics alike, since he encouraged people to live in tolerance with each other, to build peace among nations, to respect the human rights and to insist on the duty of the state and society to protect the rights of all persons. Above all, the Holy Father exemplified in his life and teachings that we are not to be afraid to believe in Christ and practice his Gospel.

The moral teachings of Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II also provide to the Nicaraguan Catholic church, especially priests, seminarians, and critics, arguments to deal with local ethics issues that have been treated in the first chapter of this dissertation. There is a convergence between the Nicaraguan Episcopal conference and the legacy of the late pope that certain social structures and decisions against man lie in false conceptions about the human person considered as object of pleasure or pawn for political manipulation, as during the Sandinista revolution. Another harmony between John Paul II and the Nicaraguan Catholic Church is their criticism of the government's rejection of the objective moral order which is expressed in local laws that seek the right to legislate a moral conduct for society. The unity of the family has especially suffered because of liberalized divorce laws, a repressive campaign against procreation, and the tendency of the state to assume exclusive rights to educate children according their narrowly ideological political ends.

## CHAPTER THREE

### CATHOLIC EDUCATION

This third chapter deals with Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II's teaching about Catholic education and summarizes the main ideas which he developed since his early priesthood and later as pope which could be guidelines for universities and Catholic schools. He spent many years as an educator before becoming pope. His apostolate to young people in his ministerial priesthood and his teachings at The Catholic University of Lublin gave him expertise in the field of education.<sup>1</sup>

Among his significant works in which he treated Catholic education as bishop of Krakow is the book *Sources of Renewal*, which was mentioned in the second chapter of this dissertation. In this work Wojtyla applied the teachings of Vatican Council II in the context of a diocesan synod which included among others topics treated in this book the formation of the conscience and attitudes as essential components of Catholic education. For Wojtyla, education in moral values meant to confront the situation of man in the contemporary world with the ideas of human dignity and the ultimate purpose of human life.<sup>2</sup> The Polish thinker also explained that the formation of the conscience includes teaching the truths of faith about creation, redemption, man, and the Church. In regard to the formation of attitudes, Wojtyla focused on how to implement the Council's teachings among the people of God.<sup>3</sup> Even though an analysis of this book is not the aim of this

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<sup>1</sup> Weigel, *The Witness of Hope*, 130.

<sup>2</sup> Wojtyla, *Sources of Renewal*, 280.

<sup>3</sup> "On account of the work creation, the consciousness of the Church is in a sense also consciousness of the world, and conversely awareness of the world, being permeated by the truth concerning creation and the Creator, becomes awareness of the Church at its very foundation, on which we shall continue to build. It seems, indeed, that the enrichment of faith that is the gift of Vatican II does not so much proceed from awareness of the creation to the truths subsequently proclaimed in the Creed, but rather begins with those

study, I will refer to some important insights offered by Wojtyla in order to understand his thinking regarding Catholic education as explained in this work.

Wojtyla taught that Christian education means the enrichment of faith, understood as a personal “rediscovering” in Christ by which man recognizes for himself the meaning of life and his own vocation. Wojtyla explained that the aim of Vatican Council II was the enrichment of faith, understood as an invigorating of the faith itself according to the conciliar documents, and as an enrichment of the lives of the believing members of the Church.<sup>4</sup> For example, in discussing the topics of the formation of attitudes concerning liberty and freedom, the Polish bishop emphasized that the aim of education is to fortify man’s attitude of responsibility.<sup>5</sup>

Wojtyla added that Catholic education must orient people to seek integration and harmony between culture and Christian tradition in order to promote an authentic human development of mankind.<sup>6</sup> Another goal of Catholic education pointed out by Wojtyla is education for peace and justice in order that the Catholic Church might contribute to the common good of the international community.<sup>7</sup>

The thinking of Karol Wojtyla about the formation of conscience and Catholic education remained evident in his pontificate when he implemented the proposals of Vatican Council II, especially from the conciliar documents *Gravissimum educationis*,

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truths and proceeds to awareness of the creation, which it thus provides with a richer context of faith.”

Wojtyla, *Sources of Renewal*, 52.

<sup>4</sup> “This enrichment of faith in the objective sense, constituting a new stage in the Church’s advance towards the fullness of divine truth is at the same time an enrichment in the subjective, human, existential sense, and it is from the latter that realization of the Council is most to be hoped for. The pastoral Council has opened a new chapter of the Church’s pastoral activity, interpreting that phrase in its widest sense.” Ibid, 18.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, 292.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, 300.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, 307.



*Gaudium et spes*, and *Lumen gentium*. For instance, in one of his speeches delivered to Catholic schools the Holy Father insisted that in the light of *Gravissimum educationis* the aim of the Catholic school is to form students in Christian faith “to illuminate knowledge of the whole of reality (world, life, man).”<sup>8</sup> Some of his encyclicals provide educational guidelines, such as *Veritatis splendor* and *Evangelium vitae*, where the Holy Father emphasized the importance of education in morality. For instance the encyclical *Veritatis splendor* states that “moral theologians in seminaries and faculties of theology have the grave duty to instruct the faithful -- and especially future pastors -- about all the commandments and practical norms authoritatively declared by the Church.”<sup>9</sup> Similar words appear in the encyclical *Evangelium vitae*, in which the pope demanded a special dedication to young people to teach them to defend human life and enlighten them concerning the relation between sexuality and human love: “There is a duty to offer adolescents and young adults an authentic education in sexuality and in love.”<sup>10</sup>

The Holy Father focused on essential Catholic education topics in his papacy, such as the aims of Catholic teaching and pedagogical suggestions for working with students. For example, the papal document *Sapientia christiana* states that “thought patterns, standards of judgment, and norms of behavior” must be permeated by the gospel as a task of Catholic education.<sup>11</sup> In the apostolic exhortation *Ex corde ecclesiae*, the late pope demanded that a Catholic university be responsible for illuminating science and modern

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<sup>8</sup> John Paul II, “In Your Witness the Vitality of the Catholic School,” *L’Osservatore Romano* (English edition) 7 (1980): 10.

<sup>9</sup> John Paul II, *Veritatis splendor*, no. 110.

<sup>10</sup> John Paul II, *Evangelium vitae*, no. 97.

<sup>11</sup> John Paul II, *Sapientia christiana*, translated by United States Catholic Conference (Washington D.C.: United States Catholic Conference, 1979), no. 1; AAS 71 (1979) 469-499.

technology according to evangelical inspiration and moral principles through evaluating “the attainments of science and technology in the perspective of the totality of the human person.”<sup>12</sup>

This third chapter also will discuss how the key ideas on Catholic education of the late pope converge with certain educational programs in some Nicaraguan Catholic secondary schools. The word “convergence” has different meanings; in this case it can mean a similarity between educational programs dedicated to moral formation and the teachings of Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II. A sample of this similarity lies in the educational projects chosen for this dissertation, which in general share the same moral values, although they vary somewhat according to each congregation’s emphasis.

Another meaning of “convergence” could focus on direct papal influence on the curricula of religious education. The contents of Catholic education should not contradict papal teaching, since a Catholic school must observe the Catholic doctrine taught by the successor of Peter, but it is not easy to establish unequivocally that the moral values to form pupils are an exact application of papal teaching, even when such values seem to be a repetition or application of the teachings of the Holy Father. This dissertation examines convergence, however, out of the firm conviction that the thinking of Karol Wotyla/John Paul II, especially his focus on the relation between anthropology and theology and the importance of certain key moral teachings about human dignity and Catholic social teaching, can be used to strengthen Catholic secondary education in Nicaragua. To the extent to which the programs analyzed do not fully utilize the pope’s fundamental

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<sup>12</sup> John Paul II, *Ex corde ecclesiae, On Catholic Universities*, translated by United States Catholic Conference (Washington D.C: United States Catholic Conference, 1990), 7, AAS 82 (1990): 1475-1509.

teachings on Catholic education, this analysis can be used to improve their curricula. Furthermore, this chapter will consider how these papal teachings have also been shared in part by the Nicaraguan Episcopal Conference in its policies concerning Catholic schools. This chapter ends with a brief conclusion.

### 3.1. John Paul II's Key Ideas on Catholic Education

For John Paul II the Catholic school is one of the places where Catholic teaching must be faithfully transmitted according to the pupils' capacity. Only in doing this can any Catholic educational institution be accepted as a Catholic school or university. The former pope's teaching about the purpose of Catholic institutions could be summarized in four objectives: to found education from a Christian anthropological perspective, to promote the human and Christian vocation by understanding the mystery of man and his human dignity, to reinforce religious education, and to promote social commitment. These ideas will be treated in what follows.<sup>13</sup>

#### 3.1.1 Christian Anthropology

Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II expounded Christian anthropology during his early priesthood and later as universal pastor. The Polish bishop and pope treated this topic in terms of divine creation in which the Christian faith grounded the origin of man. Before becoming pope, Wojtyla explained that the Trinitarian creation of man indicates on the one hand the immortality of the soul, since man has been created by God, and on the

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<sup>13</sup> John Paul II, "Catholic Education: A Privileged Chapter in the History of the Church in America," *L'Osservatore Romano* (English edition) 46 (1983): 3.

other hand it reveals that the human being is endowed with reason, by which he is capable of living with others in society.<sup>14</sup>

In the light of *Gaudium et spes* and *Lumen gentium*, Karol Wojtyla broadly explained Christian anthropology within the mystery of redemption. In his book *Sources of Renewal*, the Polish thinker developed a Christian philosophy for contemporary man. Wojtyla emphasized the importance of Vatican II, which defended human dignity and encouraged the human vocation while confronting the current materialistic mentality. Wojtyla pointed out that “the consciousness of redemption relates to the whole man, to his inward reality as much as his situation in the external world.”<sup>15</sup>

For the former archbishop of Krakow redemption means a “restoration of man’s value by Christ and is an integral element of faith, linked to the very mystery of the incarnation of God made man.”<sup>16</sup> Therefore, continued Wojtyla, the redemption of Christ is the foundation of an individual and social Christian morality and the basis of linking faith and morals.<sup>17</sup>

Wojtyla repeated the conciliar question about man: “What is man”? He asserted that the question finds its response in the human vocation, understood as man’s acceptance of himself as a person and his living out that reality. The teaching of the Polish bishop about a Christian anthropology is based on *Gaudium et spes* no. 22, which sees Christ as the

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<sup>14</sup> Wojtyla wrote: “Man resembles God not only because of the spiritual nature of his immortal soul but also by reason of his social nature.” *Sources of Renewal*, 61.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, 75.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, 77.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, 99.

new Adam who is the base to treat the theme of human person from an anthropological and theological viewpoint.<sup>18</sup>

*Gaudium et spes* no.22 served as a framework for Wojtyla to provide a broad outline of the morality inherent to human vocation. For Wojtyla human vocation from a Christian perspective meant the restoration of man's value and the elevation of human nature, which is the object of redemption and the source of human values: "In Jesus Christ, God enters human history to reveal himself to man and at the same time to reveal the inmost depths of human nature. In the light of the Council's teaching redemption is seen to be a real though mysterious thing, a soil in which values -- above all human values -- may grow and flourish."<sup>19</sup> Some commentators on Wojtyla/John Paul II's thought opine that the broad emphasis by the late pope regarding *Gaudium et spes* no.22, founding an anthropology in the light of Incarnation of Christ, suggests a response to the theological trends called "nouvelle theologie" (new theology.)<sup>20</sup>

The theme of Christian anthropology in Wojtyla's thought has been treated by different authors. For instance, Jaroslaw Kupczak in commenting on Wojtyla's teaching notes that the debate about a Christian philosophy in the twentieth century was initiated by Etienne Gilson. Gilson provided three arguments in defending his theory: the first regards practical and speculative elements between reason and faith which are in

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid, 75.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, 80

<sup>20</sup> The issue of "nouvelle theologie" is described in the second chapter of this dissertation. Regarding the "nouvelle theologie," Martin Tripoli thinks that "the passage states as 'truth' that the 'mystery of man'" is illuminated only in the "incarnate Word." Thus, Christ as the second Adam, is the perfect man who absolutely reveals man to himself. Christ, as redeemer, "restores the divine likeness" to "the son of Adam," adds Tripoli." Tripoli, "John Paul II the Countercultural Pope," *Creed and Culture*, p. 35-55. The citation is from page 46.

harmony; the second refers to some important Catholic thinkers, such as Justin, Lactantius, Augustine, and Anselm, who have contributed to a Christian philosophy through the exercise of their intellects; and finally Gilson argues that it is only Christian thought that has been able to provide an understanding of the Supreme Being.<sup>21</sup> Thus, Kupczak identifies in Wojtyla's earliest publications a Christian anthropology because his poetic and philosophical works begin with the problem of human cognition, "both natural and supernatural, of oneself and others."<sup>22</sup>

There is continuity in thinking about Christian anthropology in the work of Wojtyla and in his later writing as pontiff. In fact, the former pope stated in his first encyclical that "the mystery of the human being takes on light in the mystery of the Incarnate Word."<sup>23</sup> A Christian anthropology founded on the Incarnation of Christ constitutes one of the great strengths of Vatican II. Building on this teaching, John Paul II developed a solid doctrine about the redemption of human beings by Christ. In the Incarnation, said the pope, God unites himself to man, from which emerges an authentic communion between the creature and the Creator. Therefore, continued the pope, the Incarnation brings about the divinization of human beings.<sup>24</sup> This mystery must be proclaimed and taught; for this reason, the pontiff said that "Catholic education [a university] can

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<sup>21</sup> Kupczak states: "Wojtyla writes that the best way to come to know oneself and others is to close one's eyes. The, one can see everything clearly in the supernatural light of Christ." *The Human Person*, 82.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid*, 83.

<sup>23</sup> John Paul II, *Redemptoris hominis*, no. 8.

<sup>24</sup> John Paul II, *Dives in misericordia*, no. 2.

contribute further to the development of a true Christian anthropology, founded on the person of Christ, which will bring the dynamism of creation and redemption.”<sup>25</sup>

From the beginning of his pontificate, John Paul II outlined a Christian anthropology for Catholic teaching.<sup>26</sup> This premise obliges Catholic education to research the truth of human beings. According to the pope, Catholic education makes sense only if it integrates in its contents research about the truth of the person.<sup>27</sup> One of these truths about the human person pointed out by John Paul II concerns research about the person’s “human nature,” since such nature cannot be completely reduced to scientific or philosophical foundations. The former pope emphasized that there is also a “religious” truth of human beings.<sup>28</sup> To educate in the truth of the person and moral values, John Paul II proposed that Catholic education must offer “an education which aims rather at the person in his or her dignity than at things, more at the search of wisdom than at material things.”<sup>29</sup>

John Paul II pointed out as an agenda of his pontificate the truth about man, as is clear in his second encyclical *Dives in misericordia*: “My first encyclical, *Redemptor hominis*, was devoted to the fact that the truth about the human person is revealed to us in

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<sup>25</sup> John Paul II, *Ex corde ecclesiae*, no. 33.

<sup>26</sup> John Paul II, *Dives in misericordia*, no. 1.

<sup>27</sup> “But there is another challenge facing all those who are concerned with Catholic education. It is the pressing challenge of clearly identifying the aims of Catholic education, and applying proper methods to Catholic elementary and secondary education and religious education programs. It is the challenge of fully understanding the educational enterprise, of properly evaluating its content, and of transmitting the full truth concerning the human person created by God’s image and called for life in Christ through the Holy Spirit.” John Paul II, “Parents are Right to Insist that their Children’s Faith be Respected,” *L’Osservatore Romano* 38 (English edition), (1987): 4.

<sup>28</sup> John Paul II, *Fides et Ratio*, Faith and Reason, *John Paul II. The Encyclicals in Everyday Language*, edited by Joseph Donders, (New York, Orbis Books, 1996), 29, AAS 91 (1998): 5-143

<sup>29</sup> John Paul II, “Overcome the Distance between Human Civilization and Christian Faith and Restore the Alliance between Science and Wisdom,” *L’Osservatore Romano* 42 (English edition) (1988): 6.

Christ.”<sup>30</sup> The late pope argued that the essential truths about man can be understood in the light of divine creation.<sup>31</sup> In another place, the former successor of Peter explained that the truth about man must be understood in two ways: the first is that “man is the only creature in the world that the Creator willed for its own sake, and the second is that man willed in this way by the Creator from the beginning, can only find himself through a disinterested gift of self.”<sup>32</sup> The pope confronted systems of modern philosophy, which has emphasized subjectivity and has avoided explaining the truth about human beings. Among these philosophical systems, the pontiff mentioned nihilism, idealism, atheistic humanism, and positivism.<sup>33</sup>

For the Holy Father, Christian anthropology requires respect and openness to others by accepting that truth, beauty and good exist in others, since God is present in each person. The pontiff pointed out that such attitudes are authentic when they are grounded in awareness and in love. To grasp this philosophy of humanism, the pontiff recommended basing Catholic education on divine creation and encouraging students to reflect seriously on this Christian anthropology. From this viewpoint, continued the pope, pupils will understand that this kind of Christian humanism is not opposite to Christ’s message.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> John Paul II, *Dives in misericordia*, no. 1.

<sup>31</sup> John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them. A Theology of the Body*, edited by Michael Waldstein, Boston, Pauline Books & Media, 2006, (General audience, September 12, 1979), pg. 133.

<sup>32</sup> John Paul II, *Man and Woman*, (General audience, January 16, 1980), pg. 185, citing GS22.

<sup>33</sup> John Paul II, *Fides et ratio*, no. 46.

<sup>34</sup> “This amazement, which is also a conviction and a certitude -- at its deeps root it is the certainty of faith, but in a hidden and mysterious way it vivifies every aspect of authentic humanism -- is closely connected with Christ.” John Paul II, “Care, Gratuitousness and Socialization are the Attitudes of Christian Pedagogy,” *L’Osservatore Romano* 1 (English edition) (1985): 7.



The Catholic doctrine about how human nature is saved by the incarnation of Christ constitutes an essential pillar for John Paul II's teaching concerning human dignity. In the Incarnation, God united himself to man; hence, there is an authentic communion between the creature and the Creator. This union of Christ with man is in itself a mystery. It is the divinization of man.<sup>35</sup> Consequently, an authentic Catholic education prepares individuals for their final end and promotes the meaning of human existence.

The concept of formation of the "whole person" is outlined by Catholic documents, which insist that Catholic schools have been established for this end, according to Christian philosophy. "The Catholic school is committed thus to the development of the whole man, since in Christ, the Perfect Man, all human values find their fulfillment and unity. Herein lies the specifically Catholic character of the school. Its duty to cultivate human values in their own legitimate right in accordance with its particular mission to serve all men has its origin in the figure of Christ."<sup>36</sup>

John Paul II insisted that Catholic schools must develop a solid anthropological doctrine about becoming an authentic human being by defending human dignity and promoting solidarity among mankind. Thus, continued the pope, Catholic teaching could offer a viable humanism concerning the whole person in all societies by reaffirming that human beings are God's creation and granted dignity by their Creator. The pope noted

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<sup>35</sup> John Paul II, *Dives in misericordia*, no. 2.

<sup>36</sup> Congregation for Catholic Education, L'école Catholique, *The Catholic School*, published by United States Catholic Conference (Washington D.C.: 1977), no. 35; *Enchiridion Vaticanum* (EV) 6 (1977): 60-118.

that the gospel is the indispensable basis for founding the doctrine of Christian humanism from which the Catholic school must develop a Christian anthropology.<sup>37</sup>

### 3.1.2. The Human and Christian Vocation

The second pillar of Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II's moral teaching for Catholic education regards the human vocation, which must be promoted by Catholic schools and Catholic universities. The concept of the human vocation could be summarized as a realization of oneself, openness to life, and service to others. Since his early priesthood and episcopal ministry, Wojtyla revealed a deep interest in the human vocation as a result of his profound reflection on anthropology. In *Sources of Renewal*, the former archbishop of Krakow discussed the mystery of man in the light of Vatican Council II, which developed an anthropocentrism from a Christocentric perspective. For Wojtyla, the most important key of *Gaudium et spes* was the truth of human person. The response to this question about truth, added Wojtyla, lies in human vocation. He stated: "What is man? This answer cannot be separated from the problem of man's vocation: man confirms his identity by accepting that vocation and making it a reality." Thus, linking anthropology and Christology, Wojtyla affirmed that Jesus Christ "reveals man to man, and gives the ultimate answer to the question."<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> "You are called to know and to understand young people and their future. You are in the school to affirm the reasons of truth and charity. Your horizons then provide the basis for a complete humanism, as a possibility offered to the whole person and to all persons to grow in the measure of the dignity with which God has endowed every woman and man." John Paul II, "Understand Young People and their Future," *L'Osservatore Romano* 3 (English edition) (1989): 3.

<sup>38</sup> Wojtyla, *Sources of Renewal*, 75.

Beginning with his first encyclical John Paul II continued discussing throughout his papacy humanity's vocation in Christ from the perspective of *Gaudium et spes* no.22. To establish the basis for human vocation, the pontiff taught that "Christ united himself with each human person."<sup>39</sup> For the late pope the mystery of man can only be illuminated in the light of Christ. From this point of view John Paul II stated that the Church is called to share mankind's temporal reality, since the presence of Christ is in everyone. Thus, the former successor of Peter denounced the materialism of his era and emphasized the hunger of human beings for "justice, peace, love, goodness, fortitude, responsibility, and human dignity."<sup>40</sup>

John Paul II explained the characteristics of the Christian vocation, which for him consisted in serving others as a member of the people of God; thus, considered from this perspective, the Christian vocation is an authentic following of Christ.<sup>41</sup> Therefore, for the late pope, the Christian vocation has a communitarian dimension and from this perspective all people of God are committed to serve others in order to build community and witness to the kingdom of God on earth: "Fidelity to one's vocation persevering readiness for 'kingly service,' has just as much a particular significance for married people, faithful in their marriage, as for priests faithful in their commitment to celibacy."<sup>42</sup>

In the apostolic exhortation *Familiaris consortio*, the late pope stated that a comprehensive vision of the human person regarding the human vocation also meant a

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<sup>39</sup> John Paul II, *Redemptor hominis*, no. 18.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid,

<sup>41</sup> John Paul II, *Redemptor hominis*, no. 21.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid, 21.

right understanding of human sexuality, which must be presented “as a value and task of the whole person, created male and female in the image of God.”<sup>43</sup> This exhortation adds that this vision of the whole person also indicates a harmony between conjugal love and the transmission of life, which are grounded “on the nature of the human person and his or her acts.”<sup>44</sup> Thus, concluded the former pontiff, this comprehensive human vocation is not only understood from a natural and earthly perspective, but also as “supernatural and eternal vocation.”<sup>45</sup>

John Paul II also clearly expounded in his apostolic letter *Dilecti amici* the significance of the Christian vocation. He stated that “vocation means something more than plan ... from which emerges an ideal to be realized, an ideal which is attractive to a young heart.”<sup>46</sup> Later the pope explained the relationship of the “plan of life” to the “life vocation” in the light of the dialogue between Christ and the rich young man of the gospels. The Holy Father found in the question “What must I do?” posed by young people the key to affirm that a plan leads to a “life vocation.”

The pope interpreted this vocation as human development and growth as the young person “acquires greater inner maturity.”<sup>47</sup> Nevertheless, the pontiff warned that before Vatican Council II the concept of vocation applied only to the priesthood and religious life, but thanks to the Second Vatican Council, vocation now applies to lay people, since all are called to holiness in virtue of the sacraments of baptism and confirmation. “In

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<sup>43</sup> John Paul II, *Familiaris consortio*, no. 32.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid,

<sup>45</sup> Ibid,

<sup>46</sup> John Paul II, *Dilecti amici, To the Youth of the World*, translated by the United States Catholic Conference (Washington D.C.: 1985) no. 9; AAS 77 (1985) 579-628.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid,

these two sacraments is contained the fundamental deposit of the Christian life and vocation,” concluded the pope.<sup>48</sup>

The document *Ex corde ecclesiae* emphasizes that faith must support Christian vocation, which means the assumption of responsibilities before God, the Church, and society. According to this apostolic constitution a Catholic university encourages believers to live the Christian vocation inspired by Christian principles. This evangelical commitment includes “the promotion of justice for all, the quality of personal and family life, the protection of nature, the search for peace and political stability, a more just sharing in the world’s resources, and a new economic and political order that will better serve the human community at the national and international level.”<sup>49</sup>

### 3.1.3 Religious Education

The third characteristic highlighted by John Paul II in his vision for Catholic institutions dedicated to education is religious teaching, which has been an integral part of the Catholic tradition. For the pope, religious education has to promote the intellect; shape the esthetic faculties of the human being; form students in judgment, will, and emotions; inculcate values, instruct in right attitudes and behaviors; teach cultural values; motivate students to perform good works; and encourage friendship among students of different cultures.<sup>50</sup> The pope emphasized that religious education must form pupils in humanity and freedom and encourage their openness to social commitments, such as

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid,

<sup>49</sup> John Paul II, *Ex corde ecclesiae*, no. 31.

<sup>50</sup> John Paul II, “Molding the Human Person,” *John Paul II in America* (Boston, St. Paul Books & Media, 1987) 79.

justice and solidarity, which are necessary for their exercise of moral responsibility for their society and nation.<sup>51</sup>

When evaluating religious education one assumes that this course is limited only to catechesis and sacramental preparation and is experienced as an imposition by the Catholic school system as yet another academic requirement parallel to other courses. For many, to participate in religious education is to seek a grade because of a course requirement. The pope was aware of this and convinced of the importance and necessity of the transformation of this subject in the Catholic school.

Religious instruction has a decisive influence on the total education of the young. It insists on essential values where human reason is overvalued or where an exaggerated individualism or a consumption-oriented lifestyle could gain the upper hand. It serves as a counterbalance to individual self-fulfillment at the expense of the other, wherever it is a question of the overall development of the human person and the good of society, including openness to the Absolute, to God (cf. Paul VI. Apostolic Letter *Evangelii nuntiandi*, nn 33-34). Finally, religious instruction enables a young person to recognize clearly and avoid the new, emerging forms of idolatry and substitutes for religion, from the occult to the harmful forms of nationalism and to racism.<sup>52</sup>

For John Paul II religious education “is more than just one subject in the curriculum. In the Catholic schools religious education is the ‘core’ of the core curriculum. Nor can religious education be allowed to become only a superficial veneer.”<sup>53</sup> The significance given by John Paul II to religious education in Catholic schools stems from the fact that such religious instruction is a source of formation in faith

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<sup>51</sup> John Paul II, “Religious Formation Remains a Necessary Element in Educating Young People Today,” *L’Osservatore Romano* (English edition) 18 (1991): 1.

<sup>52</sup> John Paul II, “Religious Instruction in Both School and Parish Deserves Special Attention,” *L’Osservatore Romano* (English edition) 51/52 (1992): 5.

<sup>53</sup> John Paul II, The Complete Education of the Human Person Necessarily Implies the Religious Dimension, *L’Osservatore Romano* (English edition) 11 (1988): 6.

and morality, which is one of the goals of Catholic schools. It is a responsibility of the Catholic Church in terms of its apostolate, as he affirmed: “The Catholic schools must be able to propose a real religious education adapted to the different situations of pupils... since [religious education] is fundamental for the moral quality and faith of the new generations.”<sup>54</sup>

### 3.1.4 Social Commitment

The fourth theme of Catholic education developed by John Paul is the teaching and practice of the social doctrine of the Church. In the encyclical *Veritatis splendor* John Paul II emphasized that the church’s social teaching is founded on Scripture and apostolic tradition.<sup>55</sup> The “social concern” inspired by the gospel has belonged to the Catholic tradition since its beginnings as a way to establish the Kingdom of God and pursue man’s salvation.<sup>56</sup> The late pope discussed the subject of Catholic social teaching in several documents, among them the encyclicals *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, *Centesimus annus*, and *Laborem exercens*. Regarding the Catholic school, the imperative of social commitment is also mandatory, as is a genuine practice of Christian love. The Holy Father taught that students should be nourished by “a social consciousness which will move them to meet the needs of their neighbors, and to discern and seek to remove the sources of injustice in society.”<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> John Paul II, “Catholic School Must Offer Authentic Religious Education,” *L’Osservatore Romano* (English edition) 47 (1980): 11.

<sup>55</sup> John Paul II, *Veritatis splendor*, no. 5.

<sup>56</sup> Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, no. 53.

<sup>57</sup> John Paul II, “Parents Are Right to Insist That Their Children’s Faith Be Respected,” *L’Osservatore Romano* (English edition) 36 (1987): 4.

Social commitment pursues the formation of the whole person rather than merely insisting on obligations. Considered in this perspective, the practice of love is not a burden but a true satisfaction. In practicing Christian love, Catholic education encourages solidarity and contributing to the common good as service to the community through political involvement in building just economic structures and promoting social peace by which the person overcomes individualism.<sup>58</sup>

John Paul II was concerned about some current moral trends that influenced by subjectivism and individualism try to separate freedom and morality and propose new interpretations about “the relationship of freedom to moral law, of human nature to conscience, and of the norms for the moral evaluation of human acts.”<sup>59</sup> One of the manifestations of individualism pointed out by the Holy Father lies in the individual liberty to follow one’s individual freedom.<sup>60</sup> The pontiff viewed individualism negatively, however, if it means an exaltation of freedom that is expressed in the lack of solidarity with others.<sup>61</sup> John Paul II tried to demonstrate that individualism is dominant in the contemporary mentality and affects the moral life of believers and all society. From this perspective, the late pope warned Catholic schools that “when choices are made in an

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<sup>58</sup> John Paul II, *Ex corde ecclesiae*, no. 32.

<sup>59</sup> John Paul II, *Veritatis splendor*, no. 34. When John Paul II was critical of “individualism,” he was not devaluing the person in any way. Quite the contrary, he argued that the “uniqueness” of each person is tied to the *imago Dei* and thereby to the intrinsic dignity of the person. He used “individualism” to refer to what he believed to be an error in contemporary thought, which reduces the person to an atomistic subjectivity, self-aware of its own intentionality. He celebrated the “uniqueness” of each person, while recognizing the common metaphysical structure of human nature.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid,

<sup>61</sup> John Paul II, *Evangelium vitae*, no. 19.



individualistic way, there is of illusion of false liberty.”<sup>62</sup> In considering this truth, the pope judged that Catholic schools have to be institutions that are prepared to adopt the church’s teaching. “Since individualism is often alienating, Catholic schools must hand on and reinforce a sense of community.”<sup>63</sup>

Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II’s guidelines on Catholic education have been an inspiration for some educational programs in Catholic schools throughout the world, such as those in Nicaragua where some Catholic schools have applied the doctrine of the Polish archbishop and pope in their curricula. This application will be discussed on the next section.

### 3.2. The Teachings of John Paul II on Catholic Education and the Catholic Schools of Nicaragua.

This section will focus on possible commonalities between educational projects in religious education in some Nicaraguan Catholic secondary schools and the teachings of John Paul II in order to determine if the schools’ teachings regarding the values of responsibility, justice, and solidarity coincide with the teaching of Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II or could be reinforced in the light of the late pope’s vision.

The aim of studying the teachings of John Paul II on Catholic education and comparing them with the program of Nicaraguan Catholic secondary school in religious education lies in the importance of his emphasis on a theological anthropology for moral

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<sup>62</sup> John Paul II, “The Mission of Evangelization Exercised in the School,” *L’Osservatore Romano* (English edition) 31 (1984): 6.

<sup>63</sup> John Paul II, “Exalting and Satisfying Challenges in Instruction and Guidance of Youth,” *L’Osservatore Romano* (English edition) 40 (1984): 13.

teaching. This emphasis could reinforce religious education as Catholic schools further develop their curriculum on moral values in the light of the thinking of the late pope, who evidenced a keen concern for young people and the crisis of values concerning the nature of man.<sup>64</sup>

This section also will attempt to identify some important legacies of the former pontiff as contributions to moral education for Nicaraguan society. Before discussing three educational projects selected for this dissertation, it is useful to describe the Nicaraguan Catholic context and current educational programs in moral matters provided by the government and used, at least in part, by many Catholic schools in Nicaragua.

### 3.2.1 Nicaraguan Catholic schools

Historically, the contribution from the Nicaraguan Catholic Church regarding Catholic education goes back a long time. Edgar Zuñiga observes that the Nicaraguan Church began and organized a national university in the eighteenth century, but even before then the College Seminary of San Ramón Nonato was founded in 1681.<sup>65</sup> Since the end of the nineteenth century, Catholic education has been largely influenced by religious congregations dedicated to education, such as the De La Salle Christian

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<sup>64</sup> Focusing on the nature of man and because of his special interest of John Paul II that Catholic education form students in values based on the truth of man, the pontiff emphasized that Catholic schools must educate in freedom in the light of the Incarnation: "I would like once more to underline the specific resources of Catholic teaching, in rigorous fidelity to its educational project towards the development of the personality of young people. It is not only human culture which endeavours to penetrate their intelligence and sensitivity, to test and shape their freedom, but the explicit reference to Christ which teaches the young to discern clearly the values which are of their true personality and the counter values which are capable of debasing it." John Paul II, "The Explicit Reference to Christ Teaches the Young People to Distinguish between Authentic Values and False Ones," *L'Osservatore Romano*, (English edition) 16 (1999): 2

<sup>65</sup> Zuñiga, *Historia Eclesiástica de Nicaragua*, 259.

Brothers, the Salesians, and the Piarists, to name a few. Most recently, in the decade of the 1990s, the Nicaraguan Catholic Bishops have promoted a network of Catholic parochial schools that are geared to serving the poorest sectors of society. According to present-day statistics, the Nicaraguan Catholic church oversees some 147 Catholic schools, 25,000 students, and 1,100 teachers on the national level.<sup>66</sup>

Since the decade of the 1980s the Nicaraguan Church has written specific documents about Catholic education in accordance with the Vatican Council II's teachings and from a clear anthropological, theological, and ecclesiastical perspective. For the Nicaraguan bishops, Catholic education has the responsibility to shape the "new man" and to construct the "new Nicaraguan society" according to Christian principles to build up the Kingdom of God in the country.<sup>67</sup> The Nicaraguan Episcopal Conference focused two decades ago on the role of Catholic education in the Nicaraguan sociopolitical context by analyzing the Sandinista revolution, which attempted to impose an education inspired by Marxism.<sup>68</sup> This Sandinista educational project has been explained in the introduction

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<sup>66</sup> Arquidiócesis de Managua, Coordinación Pastoral Educativa. Informe 2007, Unpublished.

<sup>67</sup> "La nueva Nicaragua tiene que irse perfilando en la formación de los 'Hombres Nuevos' que ahora se están educando. Estos 'Nuevos Nicaragüenses' tienen que ser cristianos comprometidos; física y mentalmente sanos; libres y responsables; solidarios y serviciales; justos y amantes de la Patria; trabajadores y creativos, críticos y autocríticos; de actitudes comunitarias y desinteresados; constructores del Reino de Dios en una Nicaragua libre, justa, fraterna y cristiana." Conferencia Episcopal de Nicaragua, "Carta Pastoral sobre la Educación Católica," *Documentos Seleccionados*, pg. 42. "The new Nicaragua should take shape by forming the "New Men" who are now being educated. These "New Nicaraguans" should be committed Christians, physically and mentally healthy, free and responsible, caring and helpful, just and lovers and the nation, hard-working and creative, critical of themselves and others, community-oriented and unselfish, builders of the Kingdom of God in a Nicaragua that is free, just, fraternal and Christian" (personal translation).

<sup>68</sup> In the Aims and Objectives and Principles of the Sandinista educational project, the concept of the "new man," is described thus: "La Nueva Educación en Nicaragua se propone como fines: formar plena e integralmente la personalidad del "hombre nuevo" permanentemente en construcción, apto para promover y contribuir al proceso de transformación que edifica día a día la Nueva Sociedad. Este "hombre nuevo" nicaragüense que viene construyéndose desde el inicio del proceso de liberación de nuestro pueblo, se

and in the first chapter of this study. Although the term “new man” is similar to the term used by the Nicaraguan Episcopal conference, the difference lies in its contents: for the Sandinista government, the “new man” meant allegiance to the state, professing socialism as a religion, and class struggle. For the Nicaraguan Catholic bishops the “new man” means loving God and neighbor and working for justice and peace.

The Nicaraguan Church summarized in five goals the aims of Catholic education. The first goal is to humanize and personalize man, which is possible only by accepting the transcendence of human beings. The second aim is to commit students to changing the social structures of the country so that pupils work for social justice in their communities. The third objective of Catholic education lies in educating students for solidarity, which demands substantial changes in Nicaraguan education. The fourth goal envisions an authentically liberating education that releases man from intellectual, moral,

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forma a partir de nuestra realidad, el trabajo creador y de las circunstancias históricas que vivimos. La educación deberá desarrollar las capacidades intelectuales, físicas, morales, estéticas y espirituales del “hombre nuevo.” Formar las nuevas generaciones en los valores y principios de la Revolución Popular Sandinista, desarrollando sus convicciones sobre la participación organizada del pueblo en la gestión social y en las tareas de la Revolución como práctica de la democracia popular: en el rechazo a toda forma de dominación imperialista y en a solidaridad militante con todos los pueblos del mundo. Formar al “hombre nuevo” en el pensamiento y el ejemplo de los Héroes y Mártires, y de todas aquellas figuras que a lo largo de la historia de nuestras luchas de liberación han ido construyendo, definiendo e inspirando la personalidad y esencia de nuestra Patria y de nuestra Revolución Popular Sandinista.” Ministerio de Educación Pública. *La Educación en Cuatro Años de Revolución*. (León: Instituto Técnico La Salle, 1983), pg. 110. “The New Education in Nicaragua proposes as its goals the full and comprehensive development of the responsibility of the ‘new man’ as one in continual formation, capable of contributing to and promoting the development of the process of transformation on which the New Society is built on a daily basis. This Nicaraguan ‘new man’ who has been creating himself from the beginnings of the process of our people’s liberation, forms himself based on our reality, a creative process out of the historical circumstances in which we live. Education should develop the intellectual, physical, moral, aesthetic and spiritual capabilities of the “new man.” It should form the new generations in the values of the Sandinista People’s Revolution as the practice of the people’s democracy and rejecting all forms of imperialist domination in militant solidarity with all the people of the world. It should form the “new man” in the thought and example of the Heroes and Martyrs and all those persons throughout the history of our liberation struggles who have built, defined and inspired the character and essence of our Sandinista People’s Revolution” (personal translation).

and religious slavery. The bishops stated that “the man truly free is someone free of personal sin that is the cause of misery, injustices, exploitation, ignorance, and vices.”<sup>69</sup> And finally the Nicaraguan Episcopal Conference reminded us that Catholic education must shape authentic Christians because Jesus Christ is the center of the Catholic school; this is the center that helps students to find the right meaning of the “new man.”<sup>70</sup>

Years later the Nicaraguan bishops again discussed the theme of the “new man” and the “new society” as important goals of Catholic education in the light of the role of families in Nicaraguan society to create peace and a civilization of love.<sup>71</sup> The Nicaraguan Episcopal Conference was concerned about Nicaraguan national education as implemented by the Sandinista government, which attempted to impose an atheistic education throughout all textbooks and curricula, especially in the humanities. The bishops encouraged families to catechize children in order to be faithful to Christian traditions.<sup>72</sup>

The Nicaraguan bishops opposed the “new values” of the Sandinista revolution as noted above, reaffirming that the “new man” and the “new society” formed by Catholic education derive from a process of humanization. These Christian values are realized through solidarity, the common good, true freedom, and by the creation of authentic Christians. The Nicaraguan Catholic Conference lamented that valuable traditions, so much a part of Nicaraguan society, had been violently displaced by a materialist

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid, 44.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid, 45.

<sup>71</sup> Conferencia Episcopal de Nicaragua, “Carta Pastoral sobre la Catequesis Familiar,” *Documentos Seleccionados*, pg. 58.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid, 60.

educational system that attempted to destroy all intellectual liberty, to promote class struggle, and to introduce doctrines and customs foreign to Nicaraguan culture and contrary to its Christian heritage. Thus, the new democratic government during the Chamorro administration, after listening to Nicaraguan society (most of which is Catholic) ask for moral reconstruction after the civil war, decided to implement a new educational program grounded in Christian principles.<sup>73</sup>

Among these guidelines the Nicaraguan pastors taught that children should hear from their father and mother the first mention of the sacraments of Christian initiation (baptism, confirmation, and the first communion). Another key is the influence in the light of faith of all family members on adolescents regarding the psychological evolution of their feelings and impulses and the dangers they face in terms of their personalities. Focusing on young people, the bishops stated that family life can contribute to youth's making life decisions, their entering society as adults choosing professional careers, and their discernment concerning vocational life. This episcopal teaching also encouraged adults to be humble by accepting that an adult must learn from others. Finally the Nicaraguan bishops praised the work of elders called to demonstrate to new generations a Christian hope that motivates them to be patient with their temporal existence.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Karen Kampwirth states that "after the literacy campaign and until the electoral loss in 1990, Sandinista educational policy would continue to attempt to create 'the new man' -- that is, to inculcate new, more egalitarian values. When the Chamorro government assumed power, it seems that the new government shared the previous Sandinistas' belief that education should shape societal values, but from a different view of what those values should be. Thus, the Chamorro administration edited new textbooks on Morals and Civics in order to inculcate a version of traditional family values, as well as direct discussions of ideal gender and generational relations. The texts emphasized the value of legal marriage, the only form of marriage recognized by the writers of the books, as well as the evils of abortion, which was illegal." Kampwirth, "Social Policy," *Nicaragua without Illusions*, 120-125. The citation is from pg. 120.

<sup>74</sup> Conferencia Episcopal de Nicaragua, *Documentos seleccionados*, pg. 68.

The Nicaraguan Episcopal Conference based its understanding of Catholic education in part on the teaching of John Paul II. For instance in one of these the pastoral letters by Nicaraguan bishops the pastors, quoting the Holy Father, stated that education is vital for the future of Nicaragua and the Church. Invoking the papal speech in his first visit to Nicaragua, the bishops argued that the atheistic education implemented by the Nicaraguan government in schools in the decade of the 1980s became a true violation of basic human rights, such as the freedom of parents to educate children according their faith and culture. Moreover, the Church deplored the fact that the national educational system was deficient in terms educating students for success in both their individual careers and as citizens capable of contributing to the common good of society, and the world, which deficiency thus risked a deterioration of the academic and professional standards of the present and future generations.<sup>75</sup>

Another pastoral letter written by the Nicaraguan bishops one year later found its origins in the teachings of John Paul II concerning the role of the family as educator in

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<sup>75</sup> “Por esto, los Obispos de Nicaragua expresamos nuestro desacuerdo con una ecuación materialista y ateizante que impone a la niñez y juventud nicaragüense la ideología de unas minorías por encima y en contra de los deseos, las creencias, la fe y la cultura de sus padres, violando así sus legítimos derechos. Constatamos cómo la educación media y superior ha descendido en su nivel académico en forma tal que nos hace temer que toda una generación de nicaragüenses se encuentre hoy deficientemente capacitada y carezca de las bases necesarias para una adecuada preparación profesional y aún vocacional; daño éste irreparable que, sumado al éxodo masivo de técnicos y profesionales y a una insuficiente retribución a los maestros, incidirá negativamente en el futuro desarrollo del país.” Conferencia Episcopal de Nicaragua, “Carta Pastoral en la Solemnidad de San Pedro y San Pablo,” *Documentos seleccionados*, pg. 141. “For this reason we, the bishops of Nicaragua, express our disagreement with a materialistic and atheistic education that imposes on children and youth in Nicaragua the ideology of certain minorities, which goes against the desires, beliefs, faith and culture of their parents, thereby violating their legitimate rights. We maintain that the academic quality of secondary and higher education has deteriorated to such an extent that we fear that an entire generation of Nicaraguans is now insufficiently educated and lacks the foundation necessary for professional or even vocational training. This irreparable damage, added to the massive exodus of technicians and professionals and the insufficient remuneration of teachers, will have a negative effect on the future development of the country” (personal translation).

faith. The pastoral document analyzed the role of the “new man” in constructing a “new society,” which is the task of Christian families to build peace and the ‘civilization of love,’ in the country.<sup>76</sup> This pastoral letter again deplored the educational reforms and curricular transformations that attempted to implement a materialistic education. The Nicaraguan bishops’ concern was to encourage families to take on the task of Christian education to think and act according to the gospel and make the beatitudes a norm of moral behavior: “En el seno de la familia deberá ser una realidad la educación de lo más valioso del SER nicaragüense ya que la familia es la base de la sociedad.”<sup>77</sup>

In Nicaragua there is another educational organization dedicated to Catholic education, which comments on the orientations from the Nicaraguan Episcopal Conference about Catholic education. This organization is known as the Federación Nicaragüense de Educación Católica (Nicaraguan Federation of Catholic Education or FENEC), which also analyzes local Catholic education.<sup>78</sup> This organization recommends that Catholic education contribute to an authentic development of Nicaraguan society in the light of national realities and local culture, in order to promote human maturity and the development of a religious awareness and moral principles.<sup>79</sup> Like the Nicaraguan

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<sup>76</sup> Conferencia Episcopal de Nicaragua, “Carta Pastoral sobre algunos aspectos de la Catequesis Familiar,” *Documentos seleccionados*, pg. 48.

<sup>77</sup> “Education in the most important aspect of being Nicaraguan should be a reality in the heart of the family since the family is the base of society” Ibid, 61 (personal translation).

<sup>78</sup> The Federación Nicaragüense de Educación Católica, is an organization that joins together Nicaraguan Catholic schools canonically approved by the Nicaraguan Episcopal Conference as Catholic school.

<sup>79</sup> “Para que los contenidos de las asignaturas de la nueva educación respondan a las necesidades del desarrollo de la sociedad nicaragüense, sugerimos: a) Que partan de la realidad, fomenten la investigación y lleven a un compromiso de transformación creadora de la misma. Para lo cual: debe haber participación de toda la comunidad educativa en la selección y organización de los contenidos; deben introducirse los valores culturales nicaragüenses en la programación curricular; deben privilegiarse los temas nacionales y concretos, especialmente en los primeros grados, sin descuidar tampoco los niveles de contexto internacional y de teorización propios de un estudio científico serio; debe exigirse una diversificación de



Episcopal Conference, this organization unites different Nicaraguan Catholic schools and describes the “new Nicaraguan man” as physically and mentally healthy, responsible, generous, respectful, creative, critical of social realities, and a promoter of the Kingdom of God by implementing justice, love, peace, grace, and truth.<sup>80</sup>

Finally, the FENEC notes that the “new man” shaped throughout Catholic education must express his qualities in the family and school; in the workplace by manifesting discipline and organization; in the mass media, by guiding social realities and promoting solidarity in the local community. Also FENEC encourages students and educators to work for a new society through Catholic education by fostering brotherhood and cultural values; in art by expressing creativity and sensitivity, in religion, by considering believing as a true treasure for youth and integrating religious faith into a real Christian commitment to society; in the army, by demonstrating strength and discipline; and in sport by practicing solidarity and friendship.<sup>81</sup>

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contenidos de acuerdo a las distintas realidades del país; que den importancia a la introducción de contenidos que configuren una formación integral de los educandos: que desarrollen su dimensión religiosa y sus valores morales; que desarrollen su capacidad de teorizar sobre la práctica, asegurando por un lado visiones integrales de la realidad y por otro un trabajo técnico apoyado en la Ciencia. Federación Nicaragüense de Educación Católica (FENEC), *Documento de Respuestas a la Consulta Nacional para obtener criterios que ayuden a definir los fines y objetivos de la Educación Nicaragüense* (Managua: Editorial Unión, 1981) 34.

“In order that the content of the courses in the new education corresponds to the developmental needs of Nicaraguan society, we suggest that they be based on reality, promote research and carry with them a commitment to the creative transformation of that reality. For this the entire educational community should participate in the selection and organization of contents; Nicaraguan cultural values should be included in the curriculum, national and local topics should be given priority, especially in the first years of school, without neglecting the international context of the theoretical framework appropriate to serious scientific study; diverse content appropriate to the various realities of the country should be required; importance should be given to contents that promote the comprehensive education of the students; moral and religious values should be promoted; and the capability to theorize about practice should be developed; thus ensuring both a comprehensive vision of reality and technical work based on science” (personal translation).

<sup>80</sup> Ibid,

<sup>81</sup> Ibid,

Some of these ideals appear implicitly and explicitly in the programs of the Nicaraguan Ministry of Education and in Nicaraguan Catholic schools, which will be treated in the following section.

### 3.2.2. Ethics and Morality in Nicaraguan Educational Programs

Theoretically, in Nicaragua, civil law and state educational programs are supposed to contribute to moral values. For instance, the *Constitución Política de Nicaragua* (Nicaraguan Political Constitution) states that education pursues a comprehensive formation in order to assure a critical, scientific and humanistic awareness, as well as to develop the personality and a sense of the dignity of its pupils. It aims to prepare the individual person for the development of the nation; thus, education is fundamental in the transformation of the person and necessary to the progress of society in general.

Politically, Nicaraguan education is supposed to be based on cultural and social values and on cultivating newer values that are needed in the light of today's national reality.<sup>82</sup>

The *Plan Nacional de Educación* (National Plan for Education), programmed for the period of 2001 to 2015, defines education as the means by which individuals promote social, environmental, ethical, civic, humanistic, and cultural values in order to reinforce

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<sup>82</sup> “La educación tiene como objetivo la formación plena e integral del nicaragüense; dotarlo de una conciencia crítica, científica y humanista; desarrollar su personalidad y el sentido de su dignidad y capacitarlo para asumir las tareas de interés común que demanda el progreso de la nación; por consiguiente, la educación es factor fundamental para la transformación y desarrollo del individuo y la sociedad.” República de Nicaragua, *Constitución Política de la República de Nicaragua*, Art. 116. (Managua: Bibliografías Técnicas S.A. 2004), pg. 33. “The purpose of education is the complete, comprehensive training of Nicaraguans; to give them a critical scientific and humanistic awareness, to develop their personality and sense of dignity and to equip them to take on the tasks of common interests that the progress of the nation demands. Education is a fundamental element in the transformation of the individual and society” (personal translation).

the national identity. The plan also reaffirms respect for religious freedom, respect for minority groups in the country and defense of human rights. This document also promotes tolerance for those groups in Nicaragua that affirm gender differences that are in opposition to Christian principles.<sup>83</sup>

A similar definition is provided by the *Ley General de Educación* (General Law of Education) which describes education as a source of human and social values and as designed to reinforce a common national identity. Moreover, it sees public education as committed to the principle of respect for the diversity of religion, politics, ethnicity, culture and to the psychological realities of children, adolescents and adults, who are supposed to work together for a new society based on human dignity.<sup>84</sup>

In Nicaragua, the Ministry of Education has been responsible for coordinating the ethical and moral formation programs for the national education system, including the Catholic schools. These latter have the option of developing their own curriculum in matters of morals and ethics according to their particular beliefs, or simply following the guidelines given by the State. In general, ethical and moral teaching as prepared by the Ministry of Education in the decade of the 1990s has had a humanistic foundation quite

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<sup>83</sup> “La educación es creadora y forjadora del ser humano y de valores sociales, ambientales, éticos, cívicos, humanísticos y culturales, orientada al fortalecimiento de la identidad nacional. Reafirma el respeto a las diversidades religiosas, políticas, étnicas, culturales, psicológicas y de género, y a los derechos de los demás para la convivencia pacífica. En ese sentido, contribuirá a crear y fortalecer la identidad centroamericana,” República de Nicaragua, *Plan Nacional de Educación*. 2001-2015 (Managua: Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deportes Press, 2001) 6. “Education is what creates and shapes human beings and social, environmental, ethical, civic, humanistic and cultural values; it strengthens the national identity. It reaffirms respect for religious, political, ethnic, cultural, psychological, and gender differences, and the rights of others for living together peacefully. In this sense it contributes to creating and strengthening the Central American identity” (personal translation).

<sup>84</sup> República de Nicaragua, “*Ley General de Educación. Ley No. 582.*” *Diario La Gaceta*, 150 (Managua: Imprenta Nacional, 2006): 6504-6519.

in harmony with a gospel inspiration, even though there is no specific mention of a “Christianity morality,” since Nicaraguan education is “lay” by nature.<sup>85</sup> Nicaragua is a nation characterized by a largely Christian culture, and Catholic education has been traditionally recognized as a contributing force that has influenced both private and public social behavior that shape the nation’s identity. The exception was the recent Sandinista government, which imposed on the nation an atheistic educational system during the 1980s.<sup>86</sup>

In attempting to recover an educational system based on ethics and morality as well as trying to promote the development of the country in the decade of the 1990s, the Ministry of Education implemented a program called *Décálogo del Desarrollo* (Decalogue of Development); which was a combination of the cardinal virtues along with traditional moral values. Concerning these virtues and values, a class in moral education for Nicaraguan secondary schools develops the values of tolerance, love, justice, responsibility, collaboration and respect, which were grounded by the Nicaraguan government on a biblical perspective. For instance, the theme of love is grounded according to Christian principles to understand authentic love.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> The Nicaraguan Political Constitution states about lay education: “La educación en Nicaragua es laica. El estado reconoce el derecho de los centros privados dedicados a la enseñanza y que sean de orientación religiosa, a impartir religión como materia extraordinaria. Art. 124.” Asamblea Nacional de Nicaragua, *Constitución Política de la República de Nicaragua*, (Managua: Bitecsa, 2005), 34. “Education in Nicaragua is secular. The state recognizes the right of religious private schools to teach religion as an extra subject” (personal translation).

<sup>86</sup> Ibid, Article 124.

<sup>87</sup> A textbook for moral and civics states: “Con el cristianismo, el concepto del amor tomó un nuevo rumbo. Para acercarse a Dios es necesario amar a sus semejantes. El amor cristiano tiene como base a Dios. Si uno siente odio por alguien no puede decir que ama. Es el amor de todos los seres humanos el que nos lleva a Dios. Este amor no debe quedar sólo en palabras. La acción que manifiesta ese amor universal es indispensable. Nuestra vida diaria debe reflejar el amor a Dios y al prójimo. Fue así que entre los primeros

Many textbooks have been created along the lines of the civil laws and religious traditions that have inspired recent educational programs. For instance, one of them used by students in the classroom states that values and some moral practices are inspired by the Spanish colonization and the Christian tradition, which have shaped the local customs and behavior of the Nicaraguan people. Throughout history such traditions have become sources and foundations of various civil laws and served as norms of conduct for the majority of the Nicaraguan population.<sup>88</sup>

### 3.2.3 The Similarities between John Paul II's Ideas on Catholic Education and Nicaraguan Catholic Secondary Schools.

Nicaragua, like other countries, has valued the importance of the doctrinal legacy of John Paul II on Catholic education. As mentioned in the introduction to this dissertation,

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cristianos era costumbre que los económicamente más acomodados ayudaran a los cristianos pobres. En adelante, el mensaje cristiano fue un mensaje de amor para toda la humanidad. Miles y miles de cristianos han dado prueba de ese amor a través del tiempo y el espacio. Durante la segunda guerra mundial un sacerdote polaco substituyó a un condenado a muerte para salvarle la vida a otro. En la actualidad miles de monjas de la Orden fundada por la Madre Teresa de Calcuta atienden a miles de pacientes por todo el planeta.” Ministerio de Educación, *Formación Cívica y Social, Segundo Año* (Managua: Ministerio de Educación de la República de Nicaragua Press, 1998) 10. “In Christianity the concept of love took a new direction. To grow closer to God it is necessary to love one’s fellow man. Christian love has its basis in God. If one feels hatred toward someone, he cannot say that he loves. It is the love for all human beings that brings us to God. This love should not be just words. Action that manifests this universal love is essential. Our daily life should reflect love for God and for neighbor. It was like this among the first Christians: it was the custom that those economically better off helped the poor Christians. From then on the Christian message was a message of love for all humanity. Thousands and thousands of Christian have given proof of this love in different places and times. During the Second World War a Polish priest took the place of a man condemned to death in order to save his life. Currently thousands of nuns in the order founded by Mother Teresa of Calcuta take care of thousands of patients throughout the planet” (personal translation).

<sup>88</sup> Karen Kampwirth affirms that the textbooks to teach values to Nicaraguan students were financially supported by international organizations. She states that “textbooks in a series called Morals and Civics were written, published and in children’s hands less than a year after UNO (Unión Nacional Opositora) took office, thanks to a grant of \$12.5 million from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). Officials with the USAID insisted that they merely funded the textbooks and were not directly involved in writing them.” Kampwirth, *Nicaragua, Without Illusions*, 121. The Kampwirth’ comments confirm the importance of the work done by the Nicaraguan democratic government in the decade of 1990 to rescue moral values that were lost during the Sandinista government era.

the pope addressed Catholic educators in his first pastoral visit to Nicaragua in 1983 and encouraged them to form the consciences of their students in terms of their “own self dignity, a sense of responsibility, a spirit of solidarity, an availability in favor of the common good, a sense of justice and righteousness.”<sup>89</sup> However, in both of his pastoral journeys to this country, 1983 and 1996, it was his life and his charismatic personality that left a lasting impression on the youth of Nicaragua.

As was said at the beginning of this chapter, there is a continuity from his philosophical work to his papal teaching that runs throughout the thought of Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II, a continuity notable despite his unique style characterized by repetitions, in which he attempted to clarify doubts, pointed out errors, and reminded us of the doctrine of the Church. Behind this method there was the Holy Father’s concern to furnish criteria to establish a solid teaching to confront current ideas, theories and doctrines which have been influential in changing human behavior and have permeated moral teaching. Such moral trends have extolled the idolatry of freedom and have allowed moral relativism the liberty of making decisions about human behavior.

After reading some educational projects on religious education proposed by various Catholic schools in Nicaragua, one realizes that many of the elements they contain have been suggested by John Paul II’s writings and pronouncements regarding general moral values such as respect for human dignity, promotion of peace, solidarity, and justice, creating instances of dialogue and mutual tolerance, and the reinforcement of Christian commitments. But most of these Nicaraguan educational programs on religious education

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<sup>89</sup> John Paul II, “Continuers of Centuries-old, Fruitful Educational Work,” *L’Osservatore Romano* (English edition) 13 (1983): 7.

lack an emphasis on other moral matters such sexual topics, the family, and matrimony as they are taught by John Paul II. The teaching of morality in the Catholic school would help shape a morally productive life so important to the human development of the family, such as a focus on human sexuality and the institution of marriage, which were so essential to the pope's teachings. This dissertation tries to demonstrate whether there is similarity between papal doctrine on sexual matters and these educational projects by analyzing the contents of their curricula.

In Nicaragua there is no survey or similar instrument that measures opinion concerning the influence of the pope from students' and teachers' perspectives, but students admired the late pope for defending human life, promoting peace, and opening a viable dialogue between different religions. In general, they do not understand his moral theology in any great depth, and even fewer students and educators are able to grasp his personal life experience and testimony as possible foundations for a program of moral studies within the Nicaraguan Catholic secondary school system

John Paul II had the virtue of applying his global instructions to all spheres of Christian life and specific moral subjects, such as responsibility towards political life, scientific experiments involving human life, solidarity, etc. For the successor of Peter, mankind, social institutions, and believers cannot avoid their responsibility to the duties of life. From this viewpoint, the pope encouraged Catholic schools to confront contemporary challenges and to review methods and contents of education, so that these ecclesiastical institutions make sense as an educational system and truly accomplishes

their mission as a prolongation of Christ on earth. Thus the Catholic school must remain in permanent revision of itself as it seeks authentic human and Christian formation.

The Catholic Church has demonstrated its wisdom by preaching the good news around the world in different cultures and languages, respecting local customs. This harmony is evident in the Catholic school, which is called to form thinkers and citizens to address concrete social realities where the school is located. From this perspective, in Nicaragua, as in other countries, the Catholic school tries to educate students according to local cultural identity and in light of Christ's message. Such a task becomes more difficult every day as contemporary youth experience different models of life due to the phenomenon of globalization.

In Nicaragua, classes in moral education have different names: "religious education," "education in the faith," and "philosophy and ethics." These various terms will be referred as "educational projects" in this dissertation. Of course, a detailed study about different curricula would require additional research not contemplated here. The aim of this section is limited to showing a sample of virtues and values highlighted in some educational programs and their integration within Catholic education, with the goal of seeking to identify connections with the anthropological foundations of the moral theology of John Paul II.<sup>90</sup>

For Wojtyla/John Paul II the most essential aspect of his theological anthropology is the unity of man as body and soul. From this perspective the former philosopher and pope

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<sup>90</sup> The second chapter of this dissertation is broadly tackles the anthropological thought of Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II. Also at the beginning of this third chapter there is a specific section about the Christian anthropology of the late pope.



reaffirmed the transcendence of human acts, which cannot be reduced to simply the spiritual, but which involve the whole person. Thus, the pope gave importance to all human acts in which man shows above all his humanity as a rational being. Consequently, any rational act done by a Christian reveals his humanity. Wojtyla/John Paul II emphasized that morality involves the whole person regarding his or her will and freedom and therefore a moral orientation must reinforce the value of the person in which the Christian person is formed. These keys of morality given by the late pope are valid for the Catholic school

Since the beginning of his pontificate, John Paul II applied his anthropological vision to sexual morality and demanded an education that treats essential topics of human creation and the family. For instance, in his *Theology of the Body*, he examined current scientific research to study the human person in terms of masculinity and femininity and marriage and procreation. Both topics, sexuality and family, are recurrent in his teachings.<sup>91</sup> To confront contemporary “pornography,” the late pope encouraged Catholic church to educate people in “chastity.” For the former pontiff, moral teaching cannot be indifferent to what he called current “pornovision” and “pornography,” since this concerns “an extremely important and fundamental sphere of values to which man cannot remain indifferent because of the dignity of humanity, because of the personal character and eloquence of human body.”<sup>92</sup>

The anthropological emphasis in John Paul II’s moral teaching is grounded in large part in *Gaudium et spes* since the Council dealt with the significance of the theology

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<sup>91</sup> John Paul II, *Man and Woman*, (General Audience, January 2, 1980), pg. 177.

<sup>92</sup> John Paul II, *Man and Woman*, (General Audience, April 29, 1981), pg. 371.

concerning the concrete human being. The understanding of humanity as outlined in the introduction and first four chapters of *Gaudium et spes* is the most exhaustive and theologically rich treatment that can be found in the council documents. This constitution states as pivotal point a total presentation of human person, called to salvation of Christ in his totality.<sup>93</sup>

John Paul II assumed in his pontificate the conciliar dispositions. Since his first encyclical, the former pope reminded and encouraged the Church to be committed to mankind in the light of the incarnation of Christ, who saved the “whole person.” For this reason, the late pope proclaimed that the human person is the path of the Church. Therefore, the Catholic Church must consider all material and historical circumstances that surround the human person.<sup>94</sup> In this same encyclical, John Paul II explained that the church finds her reason for being and mission if she shares the personal history of each human person.<sup>95</sup>

A key issue in theological anthropology is the attempt to understand the divine-human relationship. The council attempted to overcome the distinction between the supernatural and the natural, between grace and nature, as though they were two completely separate entities. In this line of thinking, grace becomes something “added on” to human nature.

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<sup>93</sup> “It is man himself who must be saved: it is mankind that must be renewed. It is man, therefore, who is the key to this discussion, man considered whole and entire, with body and soul, heart and conscience, mind and will.” *Gaudium et spes*, 3.

<sup>94</sup> “Because they are ‘persons’ they all have their own history of their soul, through numerous bonds, contacts, situations, and social structures as regards family, people, and the whole of humanity. The human person is the primary route the church must travel in fulfilling its mission: the human person is the primary and fundamental way for the church.” John Paul II, *Redemptor hominis*, no. 14.

<sup>95</sup> “If Christ ‘united himself with each human person.’ (GS 22), the church will find its nature and mission by entering this mystery, being itself Christ’s body and sharing this mystery with each human person.” John Paul II, *Redemptor hominis*, no. 18.

John Paul II confronted philosophical and moral trends such as empiricism, that promote a mistaken concept of person, opposed to Christian anthropology, which defines person as “a whole.”<sup>96</sup>

The coherence of John Paul II in terms of his anthropology is evident throughout his papal teachings. For instance, the encyclical *Veritatis splendor* examines human dignity from an anthropological point of view by demanding “impartiality, respect for the rights of political adversaries, safeguarding the rights of the accused and honest use of public funds.”<sup>97</sup> These exhortations by the late pope are based “in the transcendent value of the person and the objective moral order,” since morality is at the service of the individual and society.<sup>98</sup> Gerard Mannion points out that John Paul II evidenced since his first encyclical the anthropological and personalist turn in modern theology that marked his pontificate. Mannion states that the late pope “never departed from his understanding of the theologian vis-à-vis the magisterium; indeed such sentiments were also clearly present in the first encyclical *Redemptor hominis*.”<sup>99</sup>

Richard Spinello notes that the former pope provided a personalist anthropology that was essentially Thomistic.<sup>100</sup> Another commentator, Ronald Modras, in defending the anthropology of Wojtyla/John Paul II opines that some philosophers have read the work of Wojtyla as merely philosophical anthropology and have ignored that Wojtyla was

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<sup>96</sup> “Human nature and the human body would be foreign (extrinsic) to the person, the subject, and the human act, a way of thinking that would divide the human person. It contradicts the church’s teaching on the unity of the human person whose rational, spiritual, and immortal soul is the principle of the human being, whereby it exists as a whole, as a person.” John Paul II, *Veritatis splendor*, no. 48.

<sup>97</sup> John Paul II, *Veritatis splendor*, no. 101.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid,

<sup>99</sup> Gerard Mannion, “Defending the Faith. The Changing Landscape of Church Teaching Authority and Catholic Theology,” *The Vision of John Paul II*, from pages. 79-106. The citation is from pg. 89.

<sup>100</sup> Spinello, Richard, *The Genius of John Paul II. The Great Pope’s Moral Wisdom*, 68

doing theological anthropology from Thomistic perspective as in the *Summa Theologiae*.<sup>101</sup>

Martin Tripole states that Wojtyla/John Paul II developed an anthropology based on objective truth and objective good, by which the human person is responsible for his acts. Tripole asserts that these criteria were essential in his writings because the late bishop and pope faced a contemporary “Christian context” since his earliest days.<sup>102</sup> Tripole does not describe in detail this “Christian context,” which he calls “Christian influences,” but this author points out that Wojtyla/John Paul II assumed “a campaign to defend human dignity” to confront socialist culture and materialism in Western culture.<sup>103</sup> Tripole distinguishes two different periods in Wojtyla/John Paul II’s anthropology: the first was during the early years of his Episcopal ministry, where he developed an anthropology from a simply philosophical viewpoint; the second began when he became pope. This is when John Paul II emphasized “the dignity of the individual human person and his determination to preserve that dignity, no matter the cost to philosophical, or moral causes.”<sup>104</sup>

After this short review of John Paul II’s anthropological and theological foundations of moral theology, one realizes his relevance and importance for current moral formation, especially young people who are in need of persons and teachings to help them to

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<sup>101</sup> Ronald Modras, “Karol Wojtyla the Philosopher,” *The Vision of John Paul II*, from pgs. 29-44. The citation is from pg. 40.

<sup>102</sup> Tripoli probably understands “Christian context” as the application of the anthropology of Wojtyla/John Paul II to current moral topics. In fact, Tripoli pointing out the teachings of the late pope states: “It is an anthropology that is easily converted into the theological and moral positions of his encyclicals and letters as pope because it was already set in a ‘Christian context,’ due to the many Christian influences upon his thought from the earliest days.” Tripoli, *Creed and Culture*, 38.

<sup>103</sup> Tripole, *Creed and Culture*, 38.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid,

confront some current human behaviors such as consumerism, hedonism, drug and alcohol abuse, and social injustices. The Catholic school always has been one of the places where mankind is formed in ethics. Thus, the former pope's vision on strengthening moral education from a human perspective in the light of the Incarnation should be a useful option for any Catholic secondary school.

Regarding the methodological approach of this section, this study will consist of analyzing specific moral teaching of three Nicaraguan Catholic secondary schools chosen for this dissertation by examining the values of responsibility, justice and solidarity in their religious education classes.<sup>105</sup> The goal is to identify whether such virtues and values taught for these schools converge with the vision of the former pope, and if not to suggest ideas and resources to develop these classes so that in the future they are more fully shaped by Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II's thinking.

In Nicaragua there are many Catholic secondary schools that are associated with different religious congregations or the Nicaraguan Episcopal Conference. Among these I have chosen three Catholic religious communities involved in Nicaraguan education because they attempt to implement an academic program regarding the formation of conscience. These educational programs are those of the Jesuits, Piarists, and the De La Salle Christian Brothers which does not necessarily mean, however, that their curricula are directly inspired by specific teachings of John Paul II.

The first example selected for this dissertation is the Society of Jesus. This study is based on pamphlets, handbooks, and research about formation in values and morals

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<sup>105</sup> The three Nicaraguan Catholic schools are: Society of Jesuits, the Piarists, and the la Salle Christian Brothers.

according to the Ignatian charism. The Jesuit educational project promotes a variety of moral values such as compassion as opposed to egoism and indifference; just distribution of production and wealth; justice with respect to the structures of sin; peace in opposition to violence; honesty combating corruption; protection of the environment; the promotion of Nicaraguan culture; solidarity in challenging a consumer society; and contemplation and gratitude as opposed to pragmatism and utilitarianism.<sup>106</sup> However, among these moral teachings, this analysis will focus specifically on the virtues of responsibility, justice, and solidarity, as they pertain to this dissertation.

In a manner comparable to the teachings of John Paul II, the Jesuits pursue an education in values able to confront dehumanizing ideologies, particularly materialism, which produces poverty for the majority of the population. Their educational project also confronts radical secularism and alienation caused by marketing and consumerism.<sup>107</sup> The Jesuits state that educating in values requires a philosophical viewpoint to explain the essence of moral values, since currently the concept of value is mainly understood in terms of monetary values.<sup>108</sup> The Holy Father affirmed to Catholic schools that the

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<sup>108</sup> “La reflexión filosófica sobre los valores ha insistido en diferenciar el orden del ‘ser’ del orden del ‘valer’ para poner en evidencia que la aproximación racional es insuficiente para captar la esencia del valor. Los valores que ‘valen’ sólo se comprenden en ‘polaridades.’ Lo señala nuestra lista de valores a promover: amor-egoísmo, justicia-injusticia, paz-violencia, honestidad-corrupción, solidaridad-individualismo, sobriedad-consumismo, gratuidad-contemplación, pragmatismo y utilitarismo. Suponen el conocer racional pero mucho más: una valoración que en sí misma es una comparación y una decisión. Nada vale si no tiene un precio, una pena, un sacrificio, una espera. Implica una ética del carácter.” Conferencia de Provinciales Jesuitas de América Latina, *Proyecto Educativo Común (PEC) de la Compañía de Jesús de América Latina*, Asunción, Ediciones Montoya, 2006, pg. 121. “Philosophical reflection on values has insisted on distinguishing the nature of ‘being’ from the nature of ‘having value’ to make clear that a rational approach is insufficient to capture the essence of having value. Virtues that ‘have value’ are only understood as ‘polarities.’ This is pointed out in the list of values to be affirmed: love-selfishness, justice-injustice, peace-violence, honesty-corruption, solidarity-individualism, frugality-consumerism, self-giving/contemplation-

“secularization of every area of life and the privatization of religion does not even spare the schools.”<sup>109</sup> The pope was concerned about the current loss of the sense of transcendence and indifference to faith which have negatively influenced the Catholic school and religious education.<sup>110</sup> Throughout his episcopal and pontifical ministry, Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II paid attention to the human vocation, especially in regard to youth. He explained to youth how a secular plan of life becomes an authentic Christian vocation. A plan of life, taught the pope, includes a hierarchy of values from which ideals emerge.<sup>111</sup>

The topic of justice is one of the most important in the Jesuit educational project. This religious order interprets justice as a rational attitude and act of faith since justice means human tolerance and is a fruit of conversion. For the Society of Jesus, by practicing justice a Christian demonstrates a coherence of life as a follower of Christ; therefore, through justice a believer reveals his or her identity as a disciple of Christ. But the Jesuits’ educational programs explain that justice must be practiced in charity to be truly a Christian virtue.

The Jesuits’ educational project proposes that the teaching of justice must permeate all of the curriculum, since the option for justice involves the whole institution. For the

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pragmatism/utilitarianism. They presuppose rational knowing but much more: an evaluation that in itself is a comparison and a decision. Nothing is value if it does not have a price, a sorrow, a sacrifice, a hope. What is implied is the ethics of one’s character” (personal translation).

<sup>109</sup> John Paul II, “Religious Instruction in Both School and Parish Deserve Special Attention,” *L’Osservatore Romano* (English edition) 51/52 (1992): 5.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>111</sup> John Paul II, *Dilecte amici*, no. 9.

Jesuits all members of their Catholic schools (parents, administrators, teachers, and authorities) have to be involved in the practice of justice, but especially the students.<sup>112</sup>

The concept of justice in the Jesuits' educational project is in harmony with John Paul II's concern about the misinterpretation of justice. In his encyclical *Dives in misericordia*, the late pope deplored the fact that programs in the name of justice "sometimes suffer from distortions such as spite, hatred, and even cruelty."<sup>113</sup> The late pope asked society for a right understanding of the essence of justice and mercy for the human person, who is a victim of these distortions that fail "to establish equality and harmony" among human beings.<sup>114</sup>

Another similarity of Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II's thinking to the curriculum of the Jesuits concerns the concept of solidarity as a practice of justice. One of the fundamental goals of the Society of Jesus educational program is to form men and women in mercy and solidarity.<sup>115</sup> The Jesuit educational project bases solidarity on love to confront

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<sup>112</sup> "En el diseño curricular hay infinidad de oportunidades para que el tema de la justicia y la promoción del valor puedan ser objeto sustancial en las distintas áreas. Aunque por su natural vinculación es más obvio que la justicia tiene mayor espacio en el área de Ciencias sociales, no hay ninguna razón para marginarla en otras áreas como Comunicación y Literatura, Arte, Educación Física e incluso en el área aparentemente más abstracta de las Matemáticas o en la aparentemente menos vinculada a los comportamientos humanos como en el área de las Ciencias básicas naturales." J. Montero Tirado, *Educación Ignaciana y Cambio Social*, Asunción: Ediciones y Arte S.R.L, 2003, pg. 101. "In curriculum design there are infinite possibilities through which the theme of justice and the promotion of values could be a major part of various areas of study. Although because of its natural connection it is more obvious that justice has a greater place in the social sciences, there is no reason to marginalize it in other areas such as communication and literature, art, physical education and even the subject area seemingly more abstract such as mathematics or those thought to be less linked to human behavior such as the basic natural sciences" (personal translation).

<sup>113</sup> John Paul II, *Dives in misericordia*, no. 12.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid,

<sup>115</sup> "La finalidad del Colegio Centro América es ayudar a formar hombres y mujeres para y con los demás en el contexto de un humanismo cristiano. Pretendemos la excelencia integral para mejor amar y servir. El objetivo es formar personas competentes, comprometidas, compasivas y solidarias." Colegio Centro América, *Ideario y Manual de Convivencia* (Managua: Colegio Centro América Press, 2003) 4.



individualistic consumerism that reflects utilitarianism.<sup>116</sup> One of the texts that develops the virtue of solidarity with the poorest, according to the Society of Jesus, describes as the poorest as those without material goods, those with disabilities, those deprived of elements to survive, all those who cannot live a life fully “human.”<sup>117</sup> The Jesuit Catholic schools propose to reach this goal by helping their students to discover the true meaning of God as merciful Father, achieve a fundamental understanding of Catholic social teaching concerning following Christ with commitment to the poor; and develop a clear attitude of service towards others and an ethical awareness that integrates the principles of Christian humanism.<sup>118</sup>

Like the Society of Jesus, John Paul II discussed the topic of the poorest and provided a comprehensive anthropological and theological reflection on this theme. The

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“The purpose of the Central American School is to help educate men and women for others in the context of Christian humanism. We seek an all-around excellence to better love and serve. The purpose is to educate persons who are competent, committed, compassionate and caring” (personal translation).

<sup>116</sup> “Desde una lógica de “polaridad” podemos hacer el “perfil del egoísta:” se instala en un mundo egoísta, indiferente, autoreferenciado y se aleja del amor como valor, opta por el individualismo consumista y rechaza los valores de la solidaridad y la sobriedad, queda encerrado en la competitividad utilitarista y no se anima a la gratuidad y contemplación.” Conferencia de Provinciales Jesuitas, Proyecto Educativo Común, 121. “From a logic of ‘polarity’ we can create a profile of the ‘selfish person:’ he settles into a selfish world, indifferent, self-centered, he moves away from love as a value and chooses individualistic consumerism and rejects values such as caring for others or moderation, he remains in a world of utilitarian competition without gratitude or contemplation” (personal translation)

<sup>117</sup> “Reflexionando sobre la situación real del mundo de hoy y respondiendo a la llamada de Cristo, que tuvo un amor y preocupación especial por los pobres, la Iglesia y la Sociedad de Jesús han realizado una “opción preferencial por los pobres.” Se incluye aquí a quienes carecen de medios económicos, los minusválidos, los marginados y todos aquellos que, de un modo u otro, no pueden vivir una vida plenamente humana. En la educación de la Sociedad esta opción tiene su reflejo tanto en la admisión de los alumnos como en el tiempo de formación que se imparte.” Cuadernos de Pedagogía Ignaciana, Volume 1, no. 85, pg. 18. “Reflecting on the situation of the world today and responding to the call of Christ, who had a special love and concern for the poor, the Church and the Society of Jesus have achieved ‘a preferential option for the poor.’ Included here are those who lack economic means, the handicapped, the marginalized and all those, in one way or another, cannot live a fully human life. In the Company’s education this option is reflected both in the admission of students and the kind of formation that is imparted” (personal translation).

<sup>118</sup> Ibid, p. 7.

late pope argued that the Catholic Church must take the part of the poor because they are persons and created in the *imago Dei*. Thus, defense of and love for the poorest is important not for sociological reasons but because it is an evangelical obligation to follow Jesus, who paid special attention to the poorest.<sup>119</sup> The Holy Father, encouraged Christians and all society to practice solidarity with people in need as an expression of loving and practicing justice as an evangelical imperative.<sup>120</sup>

The Holy Father reminded the Church of the importance of forming students in solidarity but from an eschatological viewpoint, exercising a “dynamic apostolate” that demonstrates a true concern by Catholic schools about social needs.<sup>121</sup> The pope added that according to Christian tradition, Catholic schools must prepare students to respect human dignity and be sensitive toward the poor as a practice of the social doctrine of the Church, which envisions an education that cultivates sensitivity and practices the commandment of love.<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> John Paul II, *Redemptoris missio. The Mission of the Redeemer*. The Encyclicals in Everyday Language, no. 60; AAS 83 (1991): 249-340.

<sup>120</sup> John Paul II, *Centesimus annus*, no. 58.

<sup>121</sup> “In the face of an environment poor in relationships, the Catholic school transmits and strengthens a sense of community, of social concerns, and of universal solidarity. Its finality, drawing continually from the sources of the mystery of Christ, is to prepare young people to see themselves as cooperators in human salvation, committing themselves concretely with an apostolate dynamism to the pressing needs, according to their own state in life.” John Paul II, “Overcome the distance between human civilization and Christian faith and restore the alliance between science and Wisdom,” *L’Osservatore Romano* (English edition) 32 (1988): 6.

<sup>122</sup> “On the basis of what they see and hear, students should become ever more aware of the dignity of every human person and gradually absorb the key elements of the Church’s social doctrine and her concern for the poor. Catholic institutions should continue their tradition of commitment to the education of the poor in spite of the financial burdens involved. In some cases it may be necessary to find ways to share the burden more evenly, so that parishes with schools are not left to shoulder it alone.” John Paul II, “Students Have the Right to Learn the Church’s Teaching in all Its Richness,” *L’Osservatore Romano* (English edition) 22 (1998): 7.

The subjects in the Jesuit educational project cover a broad range, but one of the important topics in the above paragraphs indicates concern for a Christian humanism, since the curriculum of the Jesuits seeks the building of a society of love through respecting human dignity and combating selfishness. In the explanation of its educational project, the Society of Jesus affirms that its education is humanist in terms of orienting students to face social realities; humanizing science, technology, and the humanities, and stimulating pupils to be critics of their skills and feelings.<sup>123</sup>

In the encyclical *Redemptor hominis* the pope taught that the Catholic Church has the inescapable mission in the present time to create a Christian humanism in the light of the cross, death and resurrection of Christ.<sup>124</sup> In the encyclical *Fides et ratio* John Paul II pointed out that the lack of ethical reference is the root of separation between faith and reason, and he proposed a renewed study of scholastic philosophy since “modern philosophy moved further and further away from Christian revelation, often explicitly opposing it.”<sup>125</sup> The same encyclical points out that “reason without faith risks losing sight of its final aim, faith without reason risks ending up in myth and superstition.”<sup>126</sup>

One suggestion for Jesuit schools to harmonize their curriculum more completely with John Paul II’s teaching on Christian humanism would consist of including a philosophy course to focus on the ultimate truth of man. Thus, students would consider responsibility in morality. Each person has a standard of behavior by which he lives. If a person believes that he is nothing more than a highly-evolved animal, then the moral standards

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<sup>123</sup> Conferencia de Provinciales Jesuitas, *Proyecto Educativo*, 147.

<sup>124</sup> John Paul II, *Redemptoris hominis*, no. 10.

<sup>125</sup> John Paul II, *Fides et ratio*, no. 46.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid*, no. 48.

by which that person tries to live will be no more than biological rules; he will live as an irrational being. Man's morality in such cases is reduced to a morality of instinct. In the encyclical *Fides et ratio* the late pope emphasized that philosophy is essential for understanding Catholic doctrine, and he suggested a return to metaphysics that deals with the philosophy of being and the existence of God among others.<sup>127</sup> The former pope recommended that Catholic schools discuss the dignity and freedom of the human person and the person's transcendence in the light of Scholastic philosophy.<sup>128</sup> The pope added that philosophy helps moral theology in issues of conscience, freedom and responsibility, and it illuminates social situations such as peace, justice, the family, the defense of life, and the defense of the natural environment.<sup>129</sup>

After evaluating the Jesuit educational program on Christian values, one finds several topics on moral issues expounded in terms of ideas and goals, and a strong social emphasis according to the bibliography available. The value closest to the teachings of John Paul II that appears in the Jesuits educational program is the virtue of justice, which appears in terms of strategies, practice and intentions. In contrast, the former pope developed a comprehensive doctrine of justice from a theological and anthropological vision.

John Paul II demonstrated his concern for justice and human dignity in important social encyclicals. For example in *Centesimus annus*, the pope explained that injustices against humankind and in particular the Jewish people occur "when human beings turn

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<sup>127</sup> Ibid, no. 83.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid, no. 61.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid, no. 98.

against God.”<sup>130</sup> The late pope demanded that justice defend human life because its violation becomes an authentic “structure of sin,” which he considered as “a war of the powerful against the poor.”<sup>131</sup> The pope added that this “conspiracy against life” is detrimental to personal and social relations and “distorts the relations between peoples and states.”<sup>132</sup> John Paul II emphasized the seriousness of sin regarding injustices, since it affects “the will of the Triune God, his plan for humanity, his justice, and his mercy.”<sup>133</sup> Therefore, this papal teaching encouraged the Catholic school to form the social consciousness of students as a human and Christian duty.<sup>134</sup>

Comparing Wojtyla/John Paul II’s social teaching to the curricula of Jesuit schools, one finds that certain similarities in terms of justice and solidarity from a biblical perspective and according to the tradition of Catholic social doctrine. Thus the late pope demonstrated that Catholicism has always been concerned about man. In the light of the thinking of the former Polish bishop and pope, educators and students will find doctrine and arguments to confront present social realities in Nicaragua, such as the abuse of human rights, the unfair judicial system, injustice, and violations of the rule of law, which have been discussed in this dissertation.

Despite the fact that the virtues of justice and solidarity appear in Jesuit educational programs, which thus corresponds in part to the focus of this dissertation, the Society of

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<sup>130</sup> John Paul II, *Centesimus annus*, no. 17.

<sup>131</sup> John Paul II, *Evangelium vitae*, no. 12

<sup>132</sup> Ibid,

<sup>133</sup> John Paul II, *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, no. 36.

<sup>134</sup> “Help them [students] to understand the implications of justice and mercy. Foster in your students a social consciousness which will move them to meet the needs of their neighbors, and to discern and seek to remove the sources of injustice in society. No human anxiety or sorrow should leave the disciples of Jesus Christ indifferent.” John Paul II, “Parents Are Right to Insist That Their Children’s Faith Be Respected,” *L’Osservatore Romano* (English edition) 38 (1987): 4.

Jesus educational project does not specifically develop other themes relevant for Wojtyla/John Paul II such as his treatment of sexual matters, family, and marriage. These issues are important to the Nicaraguan Catholic church, which is facing a widespread family crisis in the country involving adolescent pregnancy, widespread divorce, abortion, disintegrated families, single mothers, new ideas about gender as a cultural construction, and the acceptance of lesbian and homosexual activity as morally acceptable behavior.

The second educational project briefly considered here is that of the Piarists, who propose an integrated formation program that includes both physical and spiritual development, related to values such as achievement, social commitment, creativity, sensitivity towards political situations, respect for culture, openness to different mentalities, ideas and beliefs, and the encouragement of a Christian commitment to people in need.<sup>135</sup> This study is based on a pamphlet edited by the Piarist congregation, which serve as a handbook for the students, other writings, and the Calazans congregational constitution. Among the values treated by the Piarist educational project are the integration between faith and culture, justice, the family, and the identity of the Catholic school. This research will refer to those virtues of interest to this dissertation.

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<sup>135</sup> “Una auténtica pedagogía calasancia nos debe llevar a un análisis crítico de los proyectos educativos que se nos proponen en los lugares donde trabajamos. Muchos de ellos parten de planteamientos filosófico-antropológico insuficientes, reduccionistas. Por otra parte, el complejo sistema de relaciones y expectativas que se dan en las escuelas generan un “currículo oculto” que determina a veces, muy a nuestro pesar, el proceso educativo.” Congregación general de las Escuelas Pías, *Misión Compartida en las Escuelas Pías* (Madrid: Publicaciones ICCE, 1999), 47. “An authentic Calazans educational practice should lead us to a critical analysis of the educational projects that are proposed to us in the workplace. Many of them originate from philosophical and anthropological assumptions that are insufficient and reductionistic. Furthermore, the complex system of relationships and expectations in schools generate a ‘hidden curriculum’ that at times, much to our regret, controls the educational process” (personal translation).

Justice and solidarity are goals for the Piarist educational project. This project seeks to form students with a critical attitude toward social realities as part of an authentic Catholic education about living the gospel in the world as the prophetic mission of the baptized. This curriculum also seeks to contribute to society by protecting environment and promoting a “healthy ecology.”<sup>136</sup> This social aspect of the Piarist educational project is in accordance with the magisterium of John Paul II, who insisted from the beginning of his pontificate on the solidarity of the Church with the world. He stated in his first encyclical that “the church, living these realities, looks beyond time but at the same time is full of care for all that affects human life in time.”<sup>137</sup>

Another goal identified by the Piarist educational project is promoting the role of the parents in the formation of their children. To attain this objective, the Piarists propose the participation of parents in the educational process of school by seeking high academic standards and sharing the Calazans spirit of charity toward the poorest.<sup>138</sup> In another

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<sup>136</sup> “Nuestra escuela promueve la renovación de la Sociedad, como instancia crítica y activa, a la luz del evangelio, siendo una escuela que trabaja por la Paz, la Justicia y la Solidaridad, y opta por el respeto y cuidado del medio natural y una sana ecología. Como institución debe ser voz profética, ‘para poner de relieve las raíces del mal y proponiendo intervenciones que den a las estructuras sociales, políticas y económicas una configuración más justa y solidaria.’” Congregación General, *Misión Compartida*, 34. “Our school as a critical and active agent promotes the renewal of society in the light of the gospel since we are a school that works for peace, justice, and solidarity, and chooses respect and care for the environment and a healthy ecology. As an institution we should be a prophetic voice ‘to make clear the roots of evil and proposing changes that make social, political, and economic structures more just and caring’” (personal translation).

<sup>137</sup> John Paul II, *Redemptor hominis*, no. 18.

<sup>138</sup> “Considerar a la familia como ‘finalidad explícita de nuestro Ministerio.’ Ellas son las que en primer lugar ‘educan, capacitan, motivan, respaldan a sus miembros.’ Nuestra acción educativa irá dirigida también a ella y por tanto propiciará una estrecha relación con los padres de los alumnos, alentando todo lo que impulse la mejora educativa, el beneficio de los propios padres y la colaboración familia-escuela.” Congregación General, *Misión Compartida*, 38. “The family is considered to be ‘the explicit goal of our ministry.’ Families are those that in the first instance ‘educate, train, motivate and support their members.’ Our educational activity will also be directed toward families and therefore promote a close relationship with students’ parents, encouraging everything

place, the Piarist educational project adds that parents must consider education as a true ministry and the home as the most important school for their children.<sup>139</sup>

Finally, another emphasis within the Piarist educational project is the Christian identity of the Catholic school and its evangelical mission as an institution called to shape each student as a disciple of Christ by teaching the truths of faith and motivating pupils to practice and celebrate their faith.<sup>140</sup> This is in keeping with John Paul II's assertion that "Catholic schools possess all the elements that allow them to make the Church present in society, as real and authentic ecclesial institutions. They are a place of evangelization, of genuine apostolate, of pastoral action."<sup>141</sup>

For the Piarist educational project faith and culture seem to be very important since the theme recurs in its descriptions of it. For the Piarist the understanding of culture is in the light of *Gaudium et spes*, which bases culture on the human person and the person's relations with others and God. Culture becomes for the Piarist congregation the

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that promotes better education, benefits the parents themselves and promotes cooperation between school and family" (personal translation).

<sup>139</sup> "Es claro que ellos las madres y padres de familia son los primeros y principales educadores de sus hijos. Su deber, en consecuencia, no se agota con enviarlos a un Colegio, sino que en la familia deben continuar educándolos y en el Centro Educativo han de colaborar con la dirección en un clima de confianza, participación y diálogo, asumiendo, al mismo tiempo, las implicaciones de la educación cristiana que todo Centro Calasancio debe propiciar." Colegio Calazans, *Mínimo Disciplinario*, 5.

"It is clear that mothers and fathers in families are the first and most important teachers of their children. Their responsibility, therefore, does not end with sending them to school; the family should continue educating them. And the parents should cooperate with the school leaders in a climate of trust, participation and dialogue as they take on the requirements of Christian education that every Calazans school should promote" (personal translation).

<sup>140</sup> "Así, pues, la escuela calasancio fue concebida por su Fundador, de acuerdo con la finalidad pastoral-social de nuestro ministerio, como lugar de evangelización de las personas y las culturas; en ella ocupa por tanto un puesto privilegiado la formación en la vida cristiana, la educación en la fe y su celebración." (Ibid, 29) Thus was the Calazans school conceived by its founder, in accordance with the social-pastoral goals of our ministry, as a place of evangelization of persons and cultures; it occupies therefore a privileged place in the formation of Christian life, and education in and celebration of the faith" (personal translation).

<sup>141</sup> John Paul II, "The Catholic school is a Place of Evangelization, Genuine apostolate, and Pastoral activities," *L'Osservatore Romano* (English edition) 9 (1989): 3.



circumstances that surround man; such conditions influence the human person, and they must be understood by means of education in the light of the gospel. The Piarists interpret the integration of faith and culture as a missionary duty of the Catholic school and as a way to transform social realities.<sup>142</sup> Although the topic of faith and culture deserves specific research that goes beyond the scope of this dissertation, this subject nevertheless merits the brief summary that follows.

Karol/Wojtyla John Paul II treated the topic of faith and culture as an integral formation of the whole man in terms of spiritual and material realities that shape human conduct. John Paul reminded believers that the aim of the Catholic school is to integrate faith and culture, so that pupils would be capable of practicing their faith in the secular world. Faith requires instruction and conviction by teachers, and culture demands a right understanding of its history and its influence upon man. The pontiff taught that culture is not an abstract concept, but rather “a form of knowledge,” which enables the evaluation of religious and social values. Regarding faith, the Holy Father asserted that teachers must not separate their faith from their teachings and should practice their beliefs in their personal lives.<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>142</sup> “Nosotros, escolapios, religiosos y laicos, ‘Cooperadores de la Verdad,’ como San José de Calazans hace más de 400 años, nos sentimos hoy enviados por Cristo y la iglesia a: evangelizar educando desde la primera infancia, a los niños y jóvenes, especialmente a los pobres, mediante la integración fe y cultura, piedad y letras, en aquellos ambientes y lugares a donde nos guía el carisma, para servir a la iglesia y transformar la sociedad según los valores evangélicos de justicia, solidaridad y paz. Colegio Calazans *Mínimo Normativo Disciplinario Cansancio para la Convivencia*, (Managua: Colegio Calazans Press, 2007), 3.” We Piarists, religious and lay, cooperating with the truth, as did Saint Jose Calazans 400 years ago, feel today sent by Christ and the Church to evangelize youth from early childhood on, children and youth, especially the poor, through integrating faith, culture, compassion and the humanities, in those places and contexts where our charism guides us, to serve the Church and transform society according to the evangelical values of justice, solidarity, and peace” (personal translation).

<sup>143</sup> John Paul II, “Prepare Students to Live the Faith-Culture Relationship,” *L’Osservatore Romano* (English edition) 15 (1981): 8.

John Paul II asked the Church to consider the cultural changes in contemporary society that are critical for Catholic education because in current society there is a fissure between the gospel and a culture that “undervalues the saving message of Christ and considers it of only marginal importance.”<sup>144</sup> After protesting this separation between culture and the gospel, the Holy Father reminded Catholic schools of the importance of education regarding culture. Catholic education, continued the late pope, is thus called to form the greatness of the human person, a process which he defined as “enabling man to become more man, to ‘be’ more than just to have more, and consequently, through everything he has everything he ‘possesses,’ to ‘be’ man more fully.”<sup>145</sup>

In *Ex corde ecclesiae*, he paid attention to evaluating contemporary cultures and the plurality of Christian traditions in light of the gospel, proposing as criteria human dignity, the sense of responsibility, and the family as the fundamental and primary institution in culture.<sup>146</sup> Regarding the role of Catholic institutions to teach and promote a Christian culture, the pope said: “Catholic universities will seek to discern and evaluate both the aspirations and the contradictions of modern culture, in order to make it more suitable to the total development of individuals and peoples.”<sup>147</sup>

The encyclical *Centesimus annus* affirmed that culture means the “life of the person,” and for this reason one cannot be indifferent to the contemporary destruction of

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<sup>144</sup> John Paul II, “*Iuventus Patris*,” translated by L’Osservatore Romano (English edition) 6 (1988): 1, *EV* (1988-1989): 112-153.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid*,

<sup>146</sup> John Paul II, *Ex corde ecclesiae*, no.45.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid*,

culture.<sup>148</sup> Alessandro Maggiolini, commenting on the thought of the late pope notes that culture reveals the conscience and creativity of man; therefore, through culture one expresses thought and actions.<sup>149</sup>

In his encyclical *Veritatis splendor* the pope taught that speaking about culture means referring to the human person, which itself transcends culture.<sup>150</sup> This rational truth is an essential point in protecting human life in all its forms and in denouncing the so-called “culture of death,” a term which the pope applied to violence, poverty, malnutrition, the spread of drugs, and the promotion of sexual activity and abortion, among others things.<sup>151</sup> But the pontiff went deeply into the subject of culture by linking it to morality. After affirming that by culture one reveals one’s personal ego, the pope affirmed that each culture must be oriented to and informed by the moral order. Therefore, continued the Holy Father, despite the variety of cultures, “there is the need to discover the best formulation for those absolute moral norms in the light of different cultural contexts.”<sup>152</sup>

Regarding the topic of culture in Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II, there are some commentators that emphasize the contribution that the late pope made concerning culture. For example, Avery Dulles states that John Paul II elaborated a real “theology of culture,” since he became bishop. As pope, his theology of culture was inspired by the divine creation of man and by the redemption wrought by Christ. The former implies the

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<sup>148</sup> John Paul II, *Centesimus annus*, no. 18.

<sup>149</sup> Alessandro Maggiolini, “Faith and Culture in the Teaching of John Paul II,” *John Paul II. A Panorama of His Teachings*, edited by Giacomo Biffi (New York: New City Press, 1989) 161.

<sup>150</sup> John Paul II, *Veritatis Splendor*, no. 53.

<sup>151</sup> John Paul II, *Evangelium vitae*, no. 10.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid*, no. 53.

sociability of the human being, created for communion with another in a specific habitat where he feels identity and belonging. The latter regards the mystery in which “all human beings” have been saved. It was from this perspective that the Pontiff contributed to a Christian anthropology with which to evaluate contemporary culture.<sup>153</sup>

The issue of evaluation of culture also has been treated by the Congregation for Catholic education as a goal for Catholic education. For example, the document *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School* presents the responsibility of the Catholic school concerning culture. First, Catholic teaching recognizes the autonomy of culture; second, believers cannot separate culture from their faith, since they are called to humanize any culture.<sup>154</sup> Catholic education, however, has to discuss in depth the fact of culture, since it is not a superficial human expression but reveals one’s ideas and behaviors. It is also an interconnected system because the person influences others and others influence the person. Thus culture is a combination of internal and external factors that impact the whole person. John Paul II taught that culture also is spiritual and thus it transcends itself. From this perspective reason cannot ignore moral norms despite the diversity of cultures. Thus, the challenge for morality is the formulation of universal norms to be applied in each culture, concluded the pope.<sup>155</sup>

The Congregation for Catholic education declares that the Catholic school aims for a critical assimilation of culture and an integration of faith and culture, which means

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<sup>153</sup> Avery Dulles, *The Splendor of Faith. The Theological Vision of Pope John Paul II* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1999), 117.

<sup>154</sup> Congregation for Catholic Education, *Dimensioni religiosa nella scuola cattolica, The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic school* (Washington D.C: United States Catholic Conference, 1988) no. 51, EV 11 (1988): 262-313.

<sup>155</sup> John Paul II, *Veritatis splendor*, no. 53,

transmission of values and finding the truth about human beings. Discovering it, students develop their personality and their Christian commitment. The Congregation notes that to attain this combination teachers have to witness to their religious convictions by practicing their faith.<sup>156</sup>

After this fleeting treatment of papal teaching concerning faith and culture one realizes the breadth, importance, and complexity of the issue. John Paul firmly maintained that the human person, at the center of culture, has to be respected as a whole person. In addition, he proposed the evaluation of culture in the light of the gospel as the base of an authentic culture, but he warned that cultures have to be evaluated in terms of right and wrong.

An assessment of contemporary culture in light of John Paul II's moral teaching indicates that an evaluation of contemporary ethics in a secularized world demands a clear orientation and pastoral efforts adequate to the task. This analysis includes the positive and negative elements of current cultures, which are shaping new concepts and behaviors. The first reality lies in the fact that a new culture exists and no one will be capable of stopping its aggressive advance. In his apostolic exhortation *Christifideles laici*, the Holy Father expressed his concern about a culture divorced from Christian faith and from human values, as well as the incapacity of contemporary science and technology to respond to queries about "truth and well-being that burn in people's

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<sup>156</sup> Congregation for Catholic Education, *L'école Catholique*, 41, *The Catholic School* (Washington D.C.: United States Catholic Conference, 1977), no. 41, EV 6 (1977) 60-118.

hearts.”<sup>157</sup> Such a situation, said the pope, demanded an immediate pastoral response from the Catholic Church, which should be integrated into Catholic education, particularly Catholic schools and Catholic universities, and also in artistic areas, taking into account positive and negative aspects of each culture according to the gospel and the Christian faith.<sup>158</sup>

To integrate faith and culture also implies a responsible distinction between good and evil, as was previously stated. A culture has values and countervalues. Every right value has an evangelical significance when it looks for the good since the Kingdom of God means putting into practice attitudes that promote justice and peace in society. It is undeniable that many correct values clearly find biblical foundation, and others at least have an evangelical inspiration, but the evaluation of values is a task proper to moral theology by identifying those secular values that are in harmony with the demands of the evangelical message.

Regarding doctrines and countervalues in this new culture, the Holy Father listed several theological trends and symptoms occurring at the present time which have to be unmasked by moral theology. Here the so-called “culture of death” has a broad meaning. Usually this expression refers to killing human life, but it could be extended to cultural

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<sup>157</sup> John Paul II, *Christifideles laici*, The Vocation and the Mission of the Lay Faithful in the Church and in the World, *The Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortations of John Paul II*, edited by Michael Miller (Huntington: Our Sunday Visitor Inc. 1998), no. 44, AAS 84 (1989): 393-521.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid,

experiences of frustration of human hope due to lack of opportunity for achievement or simply consumerism and false ideologies that are unable to fulfill the human vocation.<sup>159</sup>

The topic of faith and culture treated by John Paul is quite broad, and it has generated a large amount of specific research.<sup>160</sup> Seeing this topic as a task of the Catholic school demands a total revision of its curriculum in order to update a Catholic education so as to be able to confront present day moral currents. It means establishing a solid philosophical doctrine and abandoning theories and practices that in many cases have failed in experimental educational programs.

Based on the foregoing summary of some sources concerning the connection between faith and culture according to the late pope's doctrine and the Congregation for Catholic education, one finds a convergence between the Piarist educational project and the teachings of John Paul II about faith and culture. Like the late pope who demanded that society and especially Christians reflect on contemporary culture and evaluate human acts in the light of the gospel, the Piarists consider culture as a priority in their Catholic schools. One recommendation for the Calazans congregation would be to utilize the thinking of Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II to research in more depth the topic of faith and

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<sup>159</sup> Martin Tripole enumerates current moral theories mentioned by John Paul II that have distorted the relationship between faith and morals. Among them, Tripole notes: "relativism, subjectivism, individualism, empiricism, liberalism, situationalism, consequentialism, proportionalism, secularism, totalitarianism, and utilitarianism." Martin Tripole, "John Paul II the Countercultural Pope," *Creed and Culture. Jesuit Studies of Pope John Paul II*, edited by Joseph W. Koterski and John J. Conley (Philadelphia: Saint Joseph's University Press, 2004), 43.

<sup>160</sup> Among the treatments of culture according to John Paul II, there are John Conley, *Creed and Culture. Jesuit Studies of Pope John Paul II*, edited by Joseph W. Koterski and John J. Conley (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Saint Joseph's University Press, 2004); Avery Dulles, *The Splendor of Faith. The Theological Vision of Pope John Paul II* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1999); Andrew Nicholas Woznicki, *The Dignity of Man as Person* (San Francisco: Society of Christ, 1987); and George Francis, *Inculturation and Ecclesial Communion. Culture and Church in the Teaching of Pope John Paul II* (Rome: Urbaniana University Press, 1990).

culture according to the teaching of the Church in order to confront Nicaraguan social realities through an enriched curriculum in social studies and humanities classes that integrates faith, sociology, and philosophy.

To achieve the goal of strengthening the Catholic identity of the Piarist educational project, the Catholic school must encourage pupils to practice the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation. As Christians, students are called to witness to their faith by involvement in social welfare projects, such as aiding the elderly and those with disabilities, as well as participating in decisions for the common good of community life and the political system. The former Holy Father said to young people: “you must also rethink -- and very profoundly -- the meaning of Baptism and Confirmation. For in these two sacraments is contained the fundamental deposit of the Christian life and vocation.”<sup>161</sup>

The parallelism of Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II with the Piarists’ educational project lies in an integral formation that considers freedom, solidarity and the truth of the human being as the center of the curriculum of the Catholic school as it integrates education and evangelization, faith and culture. The Piarist educational project asserts that the student, as person, is at the center of education and is the most important criteria in this educational project.<sup>162</sup> John Paul II insisted on the formation of the personality of students and the priority of the person. For the late pope this formation means clarifying

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<sup>161</sup> John Paul II, *Dilecte amici*, no. 9.

<sup>162</sup> “La educación del niño, según esta línea educativa, es el criterio principal sobre el que se asienta la organización del centro. Todas las personas, organismos, planes y métodos deben estar de hecho al servicio del niño.” *Carácter propio*, pg. 14. “The education of the child, according to this educational approach, is the main idea on which the school is based. All personnel, institutions, plans and methods should in fact serve the child” (personal translation)



the “primacy of truth and perennial values of the human person” that focus on human dignity rather than things.<sup>163</sup> But the Holy Father recalled that such formation of personality is based on “the explicit reference to Christ which teaches the young to discern clearly the values to the construction of their true personality and the countervalues which are capable of debasing it.”<sup>164</sup>

In the Piarist educational project there are four emphases: a personalized education, a relationship between faith and culture, an approach to justice and solidarity, and the Catholic identity of the Catholic school. Focusing on a personalized education, the Piarist educational project broadly converges with the teaching of Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II in his emphasis on forming the person as a whole since this educational project pursues a solid human and Christian formation as individuals and members of society. For instance, this congregation defines education as an activity that includes the whole person.<sup>165</sup> The Calazans constitution integrates an anthropological and theological formation of students. This educational project interprets the formation of the whole person in terms of seeking the truth and humanizing society as a way to build the Kingdom of God on earth. Thus, pupils, as persons and Christians, make progress in understanding the true meaning of freedom and working for eternity.<sup>166</sup>

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<sup>163</sup> John Paul II, “Overcome the Distance between Human Civilization and Christian Faith and Restore the Alliance between Science and Wisdom,” *L’Osservatore Romano* (English edition) 42 (1988): 6.

<sup>164</sup> John Paul II, “The Explicit Reference to Christ Teaches the Young People to Distinguish between Authentic Values and False ones,” *L’Osservatore Romano* (English edition) 16 (1989): 2.

<sup>165</sup> “Entendemos por educación la intensificación ordenada del proceso de desarrollo del niño como persona en lo físico, afectivo, intelectual, social, moral y cristiano.” Provincia de las Escuelas Pías de Valencia, 13. “We understand by education the ordered intensification of the child’s development as a physical, emotional, intellectual, social, moral and Christian person” (personal translation).

<sup>166</sup> “Esta misión educadora tiende a la formación integral de la persona de modo que nuestros alumnos amen y busquen siempre la verdad y trabajen esforzadamente como auténticos colaboradores del Reino de

This dissertation has summarized in the previous pages of this chapter the emphasis of Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II on the inseparability of soul and body and its repercussions for morality. This emphasis is clear in his encyclical *Veritatis splendor*, in which the late pope rejected the separation between spirit and matter.<sup>167</sup> Another important aspect of the Piarist educational project focuses on faith and culture as a commitment of the Catholic school to influence society. The topic of faith and culture seems to occupy a very special place in the curriculum of this religious congregation.

Analyzing the contents of the Piarist educational project, one realizes that the closest approach to the general virtues of responsibility, justice, and solidarity in the curriculum is found in how the values of solidarity and justice work together in the family in the formation of children. But these values of solidarity and justice seem not be sufficiently developed in the Piarist curriculum if they are to be the chief aims of the educational project. These social values of justice and solidarity are briefly mentioned but there is not an exhaustive exposition of them, despite the fact that the values of justice and mercy are specifically mentioned as one of the goals of this congregation's project to educate in faith.<sup>168</sup> Solidarity was one of the virtues firmly grounded from an anthropological and

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Dios en la construcción de un mundo más humano, y mantengan un estilo de vida que sea coherente con su fe. Así, progresando a diario en la libertad logren un feliz transcurso de toda su vida y alcancen la salvación eterna.” Curia General de la Orden de las Escuelas Pías, *Constituciones de la Orden de las Escuelas Pías*, Madrid: Congregación Calazancia Press, 2004, pg. 181. “This educational mission is oriented to comprehensive personal formation so that our students love and seek the truth and work hard as authentic co-builders of the Kingdom of God in the construction of a more human world, and their lifestyle is consistent with their faith. Thus progressing daily in freedom, they achieve happiness during this life and reach eternal salvation” (personal translation).

<sup>167</sup> John Paul II, *Veritatis splendor*, no. 48.

<sup>168</sup> “Estimulamos el sentido de la justicia y la misericordia en las relaciones personales y en las estructuras sociales, económicas y políticas, mediante la adquisición de una conciencia cristiana, crítica y activa, que le permita ser fermento de la comunidad humana.” Provincia de las Escuelas Pías de Valencia, pg. 14. “We promote a sense of justice and compassion in personal relations, and in social, economic and political

theological view by the late pope. John Paul II asked for solidarity with those who suffer social injustice and violations of human rights and affirmed that “solidarity is not a feeling of vague compassion or a shallow sadness but a firm and persevering determination to the common good.”<sup>169</sup>

Among other favored topics broadly tackled by Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II were the themes of sexuality and marriage, which are not taught as specific subjects in Piarist religious education. The absence of these issues in any Catholic school educational project is deplorable since youth need to be formed in a right sexual education to prepare them to establish their own families. Facing moral permissivism in sexual matters, the Catholic school together with students’ parents should include this topic as a current priority. While reminding parents of their responsibility in terms of how and on what issues parents must educate their children in obedience, honesty, loving God, their neighbors, and so forth, a more explicit curriculum would cover, for instance, topics such as sexual desire, contraception policy, abortion, and understanding homosexual people among others, which are sensitive areas for Nicaraguan young people and also concern the Nicaraguan Catholic church. As noted in this dissertation, Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II provided extensive teachings on these matters.

A last example of a harmony between Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II and some Nicaraguan Catholic schools is the project of the De La Salle Christian Brothers, whose educational effort focuses on the significance of the gospel in the curriculum, especially

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structures through the development of a critical and active Christian awareness, which enables it to be a ferment in the human community” (personal translation).

<sup>169</sup> John Paul II, *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, no. 38.

the parable of the Good Shepherd, which provides the aims, methodology, and contents for Christian educators in creating an authentic Catholic education. This educational project proposes from a Christocentric perspective a hierarchy of values capable of influencing change in society.<sup>170</sup> Like the other two educational programs, the analysis of this one is based on a handbook and a text book that provides the guidelines of this educational project and will be analyzed here in terms of responsibility, justice and solidarity.

In a manner close to Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II's teaching, the De La Salle Christian Brothers try to promote an educational project that shapes the human person as a subject who loves, respects and protects human life, opens himself to transcendence, and can face contemporary challenges, such as achieving professional training and humanizing technology. Students are to be committed to the gospel which contributes to the common good, promotes evangelical values, interprets of the signs of the times, and builds justice, peace, and solidarity. As with other Catholic school systems, the theme of solidarity

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<sup>170</sup> "La escuela lasallista, es cristiana y, por lo mismo, el Evangelio se convierte en el centro de su proyecto educativo. Jesús nos pide ir a todas las gentes para anunciarles la Buena nueva. En este Evangelio encontramos figuras que nos recuerdan de modo permanente la relación de Jesús con sus destinatarios, mismas que pueden iluminar nuestras actitudes en relación con nuestros discípulos: Buen Pastor que conoce a sus ovejas, maestro que revela los secretos del Padre a sus amigos, que sirve a sus discípulos, que explica a las parábolas que no comprenden, que se compadece de la multitud, que propone las bienaventuranzas como proyecto de vida, que anuncia el Reino, que se ofrece como pan de vida, que nos presenta la santidad como algo alcanzable y la vida eterna como premio; el triunfo sobre la muerte y la promesa del banquete eterno." Instituto Pedagógico La Salle, *Proyecto Educativo Lasallista* (Managua: Instituto Pedagógico La Salle Press, 2007) 20. "A Lasalle school is Christian and therefore the gospel becomes the center of the educational Project. Jesus asks us to go to all people and announce the Good News. In this gospel we encounter persons who remind us constantly of the relation between Jesus and those whom he spoke. These same relations shed light on our attitudes with respect to our disciples: the Good Shepherd who knows his sheep, the teacher who reveals the secrets of the Father to his friends, who serves his disciples, who explains the parables they do not understand, who feels compassion for the crowds, who proposes the Beatitudes as a life project, who proclaims the Kingdom, who offers himself as the bread of life, who shows us as attainable an eternal life as a reward, the triumph over death and the promise of an eternal banquet" (personal translation).

occupies an important place in the De La Salle Christian Brothers educational project, which cites the social thinking of John Paul II, who reminded us of social justice as one of the issues of morality.<sup>171</sup> This educational project describes solidarity as compassion because this virtue promotes sensitivity to the poorest and respect for human dignity and is universal since solidarity involve the practice of responsibility. From this perspective, De La Salle Christian Brothers strive to shape pupils in this virtue by urging that students be critical of social realities and practice solidarity with others.<sup>172</sup> Other challenges of the De La Salle Christian Brothers educational project are the humanization of society, promoting social programs, supporting people in need of education, protecting the environment, promoting development and social justice, and criticizing mass media that do not promote human dignity or the dignity of family.<sup>173</sup>

The educational ideal of the De La Salle Christian Brothers also envisions a Church that promotes a reconciliation grounded in a true peace that respects the principle of multicultural realities in Nicaragua and all of Central America; a Church committed to the poorest; a prophetic Church that denounces social injustices, corruption, wars, and

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<sup>171</sup> “Particularmente en sus enseñanzas acerca de la economía globalizada el papa Juan Pablo II propuso una visión de Justicia social que se enfrenta al estrecho debate político acerca de los “valores morales.” Programa Lasallista de Formación Docente. *Educación para la solidaridad, Diplomado en Innovaciones Educativas y Desarrollo Humano*. Guatemala: Hermanos de la Salle Press, 2007, pg. 39. “Especially in his teachings about the globalized economy pope John Paul II proposed a vision of social justice that confronted the narrow political debate about ‘moral values’” (personal translation).

<sup>172</sup> “Por lo tanto, podemos dirigir nuestro trabajo pedagógico en el ámbito de la solidaridad al desarrollo de una serie de dimensiones éticas que, sin duda, facilitan un aumento de la autonomía, un espíritu crítico y el desarrollo de determinados valores y actitudes, como la solidaridad, entre otros. Ibid. pg. 91. “Thus, we can direct our pedagogical work in the context of solidarity and developing a series of ethical dimensions that, without a doubt, facilitate an increase in autonomy, a critical spirit and he development of specific values and attitudes, such as solidarity, among others” (personal translation).

<sup>173</sup> Ibid, 18.

unemployment; a Church that evangelizes and faces current social changes with an openness to ecumenism.<sup>174</sup>

Finally, another emphasis of this third educational project is the prophetic mission of the Catholic school to confront social injustices, which are evident in the numerous people who live in poverty, the reality of political corruption, and economic problems that lead to external debt.<sup>175</sup> The La Salle Christian Brothers concern about evil in society was also a concern for the late pope regarding the human person, as he stated that “whatever insults human dignity, such as subhuman living conditions, arbitrary imprisonment, slavery, prostitution, the selling of women and children,” is evil that the upright conscience cannot ignore.<sup>176</sup> Regarding unjust laws, John Paul II encouraged

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<sup>174</sup> “Queremos una iglesia que anuncie el Evangelio: que es perdón, justicia, amor, libertad, fraternidad; en una palabra, vida para las mujeres, hombres y pueblos centroamericanos. Centro América está en el umbral de la esperanza rejuvenecida, en un contexto social en crisis; por ello se busca vivenciar una iglesia reconciliadora, cimentada en la paz, respetando de hecho el principio de pluriculturalidad. Deseamos una iglesia, que antes los cambios de la sociedad, se adapte a los mismos por su aptitud renovadora y creativa, dialogando ante los cuestionamientos de las otras iglesias históricas y denominaciones cristianas y no cristianas, para lograr el deseo de Jesús: ‘que todos sean uno.’” Instituto Pedagógico La Salle, *Proyecto Educativo Lasallista*. 18.

“We seek a church that proclaims the gospel, which is pardon, justice, love, freedom, brotherhood; in a word, life for women, men and all Central America people. Central America is on the threshold of a renewed hope in a social context that is in crisis. For this reason what is sought is to experience a reconciling Church, rooted in peace and respectful of the fact and principle of multiculturalism. We seek a Church, that facing social changes, adapts to the changes through its self-renewing and creative abilities, in dialogue with challenges from other historical churches, Christian denominations and non-Christian groupings, in order to achieve what Jesus wants: ‘that they all be one’” (personal translation).

<sup>175</sup> Actualmente [en Nicaragua] hay mucha corrupción y una desigual distribución de la riqueza que genera injusticia y desigualdad. Un gran porcentaje de los habitantes vive en extrema pobreza, con un alto índice de desnutrición en la población en general y una deuda externa e interna heredada de gobiernos anteriores, que han generado problemas sociales de gran magnitud como son: salud, educación, vivienda, desempleo, deficiencia en los servicios básicos, así como la injusta política salarial, entre otras.” Proyecto Educativo Lasallista, pg.10 “Currently (in Nicaragua) there is much corruption and unequal distribution of wealth that create injustice and inequality. A large percentage of inhabitants live in extreme poverty with a high level of malnutrition in the general population and a huge external debt inherited from previous governments, all of which has created social problems of very large proportions concerning health, education, housing, unemployment, lack of basic services, as well as unfair wage policies, among others” (personal translation).

<sup>176</sup> John Paul II, *Dominum et vivificantem*, no. 43..

believers to resist any laws that infringe on the rights of the human person and to consider this rejection resistance as a “basic human right,” which must be protected by civil law.<sup>177</sup> In the encyclical *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, the former pope explicitly mentioned some “evils” in social matters as clear exploitation such as “economic, social, political, and even religious oppression of the individual rights, and discrimination, of which the meanest is racism,” which demand a prophetic attitude by Catholics.<sup>178</sup>

My suggestion for the De La Salle Christian Brothers regarding the prophetic task of the Catholic school lies in analyzing social Catholic doctrine, the important contribution made by Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II on the theme of solidarity, and the study of the encyclicals *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, *Laborem exercens*, and *Centesimus annus*, as key social documents in which the former pope dealt with these social issues. In addition to this study, solidarity cannot be divorced from the analysis of global and local social realities. Research about solidarity also would provide specific information on inequalities of wealth in Nicaraguan social realities and the unjust distribution of the national budget for health, housing, and education in order to analyze such situations and illuminate them from a gospel perspective.

Analyzing the De La Salle Christian Brothers educational project, also one realizes that this project is the sum of many goals, regarding the development of personality, care for environment, and commitment to social causes. The values proposed to educate students in morality, service, hope, responsible consumerism, creativity, brotherhood, solidarity, peace, respect for environment, healthy life, compassion, and work, while not

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<sup>177</sup> John Paul II, *Evangelium vitae*, no. 74.

<sup>178</sup> John Paul II, *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, no. 15.

opposed to the gospel seem to have more humanistic emphasis than a solid theological foundation.

The analysis above about moral formation suggests two important topics: comprehensive formation of the students and the promotion of justice and solidarity.<sup>179</sup> These values of justice and solidarity in this educational project are close of the virtues of responsibility, justice, and solidarity. The first of these values regards the promotion of justice which, according to the De La Salle Christian Brothers attempts to influence society by promoting education, economic production, social development, and a culture of peace. For John Paul II, justice is not only for humanizing society in this way, it is also the practice of the “merciful love that is the message of the gospel.”<sup>180</sup>

Regarding other spheres of moral responsibility, such as sexuality, family, and marriage, which have become topic of interest for governments, the Church, and society, the De La Salle Christian Brothers do not mention this specific theme, nor are there specific contents about these spheres in its educational project. A comprehensive formation should include the topic of sexuality, which demands a specific curriculum so that the topic can be taught from anthropological, legal, and doctrinal viewpoints. Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II broadly discussed sexuality from an anthropological and theological perspective, and he demonstrated skill in communicating his theological doctrine with a simple language, so that young people could understand his teachings.

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<sup>179</sup> I do not attempt to affirm that only these values appear in the De la Salle Christian Brothers. There are other values pointed out in the educational project: faith, service, hope, consumerism, creativity, brotherhood, peace, respect to environment, healthy life, compassion, work, and happiness, which are linked in these three relevant values. Instituto Pedagógico La Salle. *Proyecto Educativo la Sallista* (Managua: Instituto Pedagógico Press, 2007), 42.

<sup>180</sup> John Paul II, *Dives in misericordia*, no. 14.



In summary, one finds some similarities among these laudable educational projects regarding the virtues of responsibility, justice and solidarity. The Catholic secondary school projects of the Jesuits, the Piarists, and the De La Salle brothers try to promote a comprehensive education in terms of forming the personalities of pupils encouraging them to practice justice and solidarity. Also these educational projects attempt to promote solidarity with the poorest and to humanize social and political structures of society in the light of the gospel and the social Catholic teaching. These educational projects do not oppose the teachings of the John Paul II, and the anthropological and theological emphasis of the late pope here mentioned could be considered as having influenced these curricula. A notable shortcoming, however, is the absence of the specific moral matters of sexuality, marriage, and family that concerned the late pope and which concern all societies and the Catholic Church, since there is an increase in evils such as abandoned children, abortion, and single mothers among others.

Given the present decline in human values in Nicaragua society, regarding the practice of justice and solidarity, degradation of human sexuality, disintegrated family, fewer couples embracing the sacrament of marriage, and increasing divorces and abortion, the Nicaraguan Catholic Church and its educational institutions (schools, colleges, and universities) are faced with an urgent need to redefine their educational programs in the light of a stronger and better understood Catholic identity. There is no doubt that this current situation here noted was due in part by the Nicaraguan Ministry of Education that in the decade of the 1980s wanted to eliminate Catholic education. The civil authorities saw Christian formation as an obstacle to the total control that the

totalitarian government wanted to exercise over the education of future generations of Nicaraguans. The value system proposed by the national government was consistently humanistic and atheistic at the same time. Moral values such as those that the Catholic Church proposes were considered counter-productive and opposed to the “revolutionary” principles.

The Catholic school, if allowed to exist in such an atmosphere, must find its way to a social role through which it can preserve the moral and ethical values put forth by the gospel and the Church. Now more than ever, Catholic educators should reinforce their moral formation from a solid anthropological and theological viewpoint in the light of John Paul II’s teachings as they have been presented in this dissertation. Some ideas about possible curricular changes will be treated in the following section.

### 3.3. The virtues of responsibility, justice and solidarity

After analyzing in the above section the practice of Catholic education in Nicaragua and some Catholic schools in Nicaragua in light of their harmony with Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II’s teachings on Catholic education, the following section will treat the key concepts of responsibility, justice and solidarity in Catholic secondary schools according to Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II’s thought as it has been applied by the Nicaraguan Episcopal Conference to catechesis within Nicaraguan Catholic schools. Some issues of responsibility relevant to Nicaraguan society were discussed in the first chapter of this dissertation, such as those concerning family, which as in other countries is suffering rapid changes because of divorce and remarriage.

Among attacks against human life in Nicaragua are the aggressive campaigns in favor of using contraceptives and increased abortion. Along with these trends there are the problems of the administration of justice in a country which has suffered an evident deterioration in terms of disrespect for human rights, political corruption, and the unjust distribution of wealth which affects the common good. Finally, the lack of a sense of solidarity in the country is evident in increasingly deficient public services such as education, housing, and health. This section provides ideas for educational programs in Nicaraguan Catholic secondary schools based on the teachings of the late pope, the Nicaraguan Church, and the Latin America Episcopal Conference.

Regarding responsibility, Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II developed a solid teaching based on Vatican Council II in terms of a right formation of the conscience. Wojtyla grounded his view of responsibility on the *Declaration on Religious Liberty*, which, according to the former archbishop of Krakow, clearly explains its essence of Christian responsibility.<sup>181</sup> In his book *Sources of Renewal*, he distinguished three spheres of responsibility. The first, regarding marriage and the family, he defended the dignity of family life and explained the vocation of matrimony.<sup>182</sup> The second area of responsibility pointed out by Wojtyla focused on the development of culture, in which the Polish bishop affirmed that science and technology cannot be separated from spiritual values; that there is an ultimate harmony between knowledge and wisdom, and that elites should share wealth as a form of solidarity with other members of society.<sup>183</sup> Finally, Wojtyla argued

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<sup>181</sup> Wojtyla, *Sources of Renewal*, 290

<sup>182</sup> Ibid, 294.

<sup>183</sup> Ibid, 298.

that Christian responsibility means a commitment to transform social, economic and political realities.<sup>184</sup> Regarding Christian commitment, Wojtyla explained in the light of *Apostolicam actuositatem* that Catholics must collaborate with the common good and integrate their patriotism with their faith.

Prior to summarizing the three spheres of responsibility, Wojtyla analyzed responsibility as a harmony between “human identity” and “Christian responsibility,” and he treated the topic as an enrichment of faith by considering that the Christian life is enriched by Christ himself. Regarding responsibility as a duty both human and Christian, the Polish bishop affirmed that there is no contradiction between a human attitude and a Christian commitment because Christian morality is based on the human person, and the mission of believers is in harmony with the mission of Christ. Wojtyla thus interpreted responsibility in terms of participation, which cannot be indifferent to morality. For Wojtyla “the attitude of human identity inwardly permeates the attitude of participation whereby the Christian identifies himself with the mission of Christ himself.”<sup>185</sup>

### 3.3.1 Responsibility and Eschatology

Responsibility is linked to eschatology because by carrying out temporal duties believers seek eternal life. Karol Wojtyla broadly discussed this topic of responsibility and eschatology in the light of the constitution *Gaudium et spes* in his book *Sources of Renewal*. The former Polish archbishop explained the eschatological issue from the temporal history of man which became a history of salvation: “God’s advent determines

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<sup>184</sup> Ibid, 304.

<sup>185</sup> Ibid, 273.

the issue of salvation in the historical context also, that of the history of salvation.”<sup>186</sup>

Wojtyla also affirmed that “history and eschatology complement each other substantially, and this enables us to appraise exactly the specific character of the story of salvation.

Eschatology does not undo its historicity but gives it a sense other than the usual meaning of history.”<sup>187</sup> Thus, Wojtyla asserts that a Christian identity means above all the

acceptance that being a Christian means living differently from others in the world and

having an awareness of the truth about oneself and one’s relations with others. Wojtyla

pointed out that “human identity consists not only in accepting the situation of man in the modern world but in sharing fully in the aspirations which have as their end the true

dignity of man.”<sup>188</sup>

### 3.3.2 Responsibility and Faith

Responsibility as the enrichment of faith is another contribution to Catholic education by Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II. Wojtyla asserted that one of the aims of Vatican Council II was to reinvigorate the faith of the people of God through its renewal since faith should not be static but dynamic. In addition, Wojtyla reminded us that people should accept revealed truths and practice morality by faith.<sup>189</sup> The Polish bishop stated that “faith is essentially supernatural, takes into itself the whole dynamic structure of human knowledge, permeates it and expresses itself in it.”<sup>190</sup> Wojtyla connects responsibility and

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<sup>186</sup> Ibid, 157.

<sup>187</sup> Ibid, 161.

<sup>188</sup> Ibid, 280.

<sup>189</sup> Ibid, 245

<sup>190</sup> Ibid, 245.

faith. He states that there is a responsibility in the light of revelation to know and obey faith as characteristic of “an active and committed attitude,” as handed on by the magisterium of the Church.<sup>191</sup> For Wojtyla this responsibility towards revelation “has always permeated and given form to the advance of knowledge in the Church, including theology, philosophy and other sciences.”<sup>192</sup>

Since early in his pontificate the Holy Father emphasized that the aims of Church teachings and the aims of Catholic education are the same.<sup>193</sup> The pope considered that forming students in faith is a right and duty of Catholic education which must be “neither distorted neither reduced, but complete, in all its rigour and vigour.”<sup>194</sup> The Holy Father called the teaching of faith and morality in Catholic schools a true apostolate for contemporary generations and a legitimate educational program by the Catholic Church.<sup>195</sup>

John Paul II insisted that Catholic schools teach the truths of faith from a rational perspective and noted the capacity of man to understand such truths from rational argument, which demonstrates “God’s existence as the prime, absolute and necessary principle, and man’s ability to know his attributes by analogy.”<sup>196</sup> To carry out this task of Catholic education through reasoning, the pontiff insisted on honing the reasoning capability of students to enable them to discover religious truths. Such a mission of the

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<sup>191</sup> Ibid, 254.

<sup>192</sup> Ibid, 256.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid, 291-292.

<sup>194</sup> John Paul II, “In Your Witness the Vitality of the Catholic School,” *L’Osservatore Romano* (English edition) 7 (1980): 10.

<sup>195</sup> John Paul II, “Catholic School Must Offer Authentic Religious Education,” *L’Osservatore Romano* (English edition) 47 (1980): 11.

<sup>196</sup> John Paul II, “Mission of the Catholic Teacher Is to Train the Mind to Accept the Truths of the Faith,” *L’Osservatore Romano* (English edition) 16 (1985): 5.

Catholic school, affirmed the pope, is in accordance with the dignity of students and a responsibility of the Catholic school's teaching.<sup>197</sup>

Even though the topic of responsibility and faith deserves a specific study, John Paul II discussed the topic of faith and morals throughout his pontificate. For the late pope faith and morality cannot be separated, and the crisis of responsibility in moral behaviors lies in a crisis of faith. John Paul II based the link between faith and morality on the fact that a baptized person, as a member of the Church, has to follow her teachings. For instance, in the encyclical *Veritatis splendor* the pontiff emphasized that the divorce between faith and morals constitutes "one of the most serious pastoral problems" in the present day: "One also hears frequently the opinion that questions the link between faith and morality, as if one could remain a member of the church based on one's faith alone, while in the sphere of morality all kinds of behavior and opinions could be tolerated."<sup>198</sup> The pope stated that unity between faith and morals has been inherent to the Catholic tradition since its foundation, but there are current moral theories that attempt to separate faith and morals, which is dangerous for the unity of the Catholic Church.<sup>199</sup> Thus, the successor of Peter demanded an evangelization to rescue faith and the moral sense.<sup>200</sup>

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<sup>197</sup> Ibid,

<sup>198</sup> John Paul II, *Veritatis splendor*, no.5, Martin Tripole considers that the encyclical *Veritatis splendor* is marked by "a metaphysics of objective truth and morality." Tripole points out as important the link made by the pope between the splendor of truth as a reflection of God and the truths of faith and morality based on the gospel. From this perspective the encyclical rejects current philosophical trends such as subjectivism, individualism, utilitarianism and others that are opposed to Catholic morals. It reaffirms that the morality of human actions cannot be determined merely by the subjective intention of the agent, but by the objective moral order." Tripole, *Creed and Culture*, 43.

<sup>199</sup> John Paul II, *Veritatis splendor*, no. 27.

<sup>200</sup> Ibid, no.106.

John Paul II based the encyclical *Veritatis splendor* in part on St. Augustine in discussing the topic of faith and morality. The link between this encyclical and the African bishop's thinking should not be over-emphasized, of course, but it is the case that the pope dealt with some of the same topics treated by St. Augustine such as freedom and grace, eternal law, and obeying the commandments, which have belonged to the tradition of the Catholic Church.<sup>201</sup> According to Eric Springsted, Augustine described faith as the way that God moves the soul toward its Creator; this concerns the nature of the self and its relation to God. As a consequence, human beings feel a need to return to themselves, others, and God. Springsted continues, following Augustine, that from this perspective man is obligated to acknowledge God. Faith provides moral and spiritual elements to base a moral life, to reconstruct the deformed soul and to recover God's image.

Some documents of the Congregation for Catholic Education demonstrate the application of John Paul II's moral teaching to Catholic schools, which treat among others the subjects of morality and faith. One of these documents that shows the influence of John Paul II is *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School*, which considers religious education in the Catholic school a form of evangelization which promotes Christian commitment, the practice of the sacraments, and apostolic work on the part of students.<sup>202</sup> This document proposes three aspects of religious education. The first area concerns a Christology adapted to students according to their

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<sup>201</sup> John Paul II, *Veritatis splendor*, nos: 13; 17; 22; 23; 24; 43.

<sup>202</sup> Congregation for Catholic education, *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic school*, no. 69 pg. 34. The references of John Paul II in this documents are the numbers: 32,33,35,48,52,53,56,66,70 and 74. Also this document relates St. Augustine in the number 61.



culture and language. The second regards a Christian anthropology, by which students learn about human dignity. The third area deals with ecclesiology, in which students learn about the Church as one great family, how it increases through the sacraments, and how the Church provides a school of morality whereby pupils discern good and evil. This document states that “these truths of faith contribute to human and Christian maturity in several important areas. They provide a sense of the dignity of the person, as destined to immortality.”<sup>203</sup>

Regarding the first area, Christology, this class must be taught in the light of Sacred Scripture in order that students have a personal knowledge of Christ and see him as a model to follow. The document invites students to be open to the voice of God and to collaborate in the plan of salvation assisted by the grace of God. “Faith is thus based on knowing Jesus and following him; its growth depends on each one’s good will and cooperation with grace.”<sup>204</sup>

John Paul II provided ideas for a specific Christocentric moral life. Among his significant documents which treat this theme is the encyclical *Veritatis splendor*.<sup>205</sup> The encyclical emphasizes that Jesus is the only source, model, and the means of life which believers must imitate since He is the only one who can fulfill the desire for self-realization and the attainment of happiness: “his words, his deeds, and his precepts constitute the moral rule of Christian life.”<sup>206</sup> Livio Melina states that John Paul II establishes in *Veritatis splendor* a Christocentrism of the virtues: by linking morality and

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<sup>203</sup> Ibid, no. 81.

<sup>204</sup> Ibid, No. 74.

<sup>205</sup> John Paul II, *Veritatis splendor*, no. 8.

<sup>206</sup> John Paul II, *Veritatis Splendor*, no. 20.

virtue; basing the virtues in the grace of Christ in order to found a Christocentric morality; integrating the totality of Christian moral life; and incorporating virtues and commandments in the moral life.<sup>207</sup>

A second area pointed out by the document *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School* concerns Christian anthropology. Human nature must be studied in the light of science and from the perspective of creation and redemption in order to research the mystery of man. Through this area students will be capable of understanding human transcendence and to see history as a history of salvation. In addition to this grounding in Christian anthropology, young people can discern their human vocation and respond to the will of God.<sup>208</sup>

The third point proposed by the *Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School* deals with ecclesiology as inspired by the Constitution *Lumen gentium*. The statement emphasizes the importance of being members of the Church and the practice of sacraments, and living a holy life, all of which help young people to face distractions they find in the world and to distinguish good or evil.<sup>209</sup> This area and the others listed above help students to reinforce the virtue of faith and the practice of the Christian religion.<sup>210</sup>

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<sup>207</sup> Livio Melina, *Sharing in Christ's Virtues: For a Renewal of Moral Theology in Light of Veritatis splendor* (Washington D.C.: Catholic University Press, 2001), 135.

<sup>208</sup> Congregation for Catholic education, *Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School*, no. 76.

<sup>209</sup> Ibid, no. 78.

<sup>210</sup> Ibid, no. 75.

### 3.3.3 Responsibility in sexuality, family, and marriage.

After describing the common ground between human responsibility and faith developed by Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II, as an important subject for Catholic education, this section focuses on three subjects treated by the Holy Father before becoming pope and during his pontificate: sexuality, family, and marriage.

#### Sexuality

Karol Wojtyla emphasized the virtue of chastity as value and a responsible attitude towards procreation and human love. In his book *Love & Responsibility* Wojtyla deplored the disdain for chastity in the contemporary mentality. The Polish thinker affirmed that such behavior means a rejection of the objective truth about the love between man and woman and implies a subjectivist mentality.<sup>211</sup> As pope he encouraged and defended parents in their task to educate children in a correct understanding of sexuality that includes valuing education for chastity, which is “absolutely essential since such instruction develops a person’s authentic maturity and makes him or her capable of respecting and fostering the ‘nuptial meaning’ of the body.”<sup>212</sup>

Regarding procreation, Karol Wojtyla also treated the topic as a moral responsibility. After affirming that a “full spiritual development of a human person” is the result of an authentic education, Wojtyla stated that procreation is inherent to the sexual urge, which

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<sup>211</sup> Wojtyla, *Love & Responsibility*, 167.

<sup>212</sup> John Paul II, *Familiares consortio*, no. 37. Michael Waldstein explains that the term “nuptial meaning of the body,” come from Latin *nuptiae*, wedding in English language. “In the *Osservatore* translation, the English ‘nuptial’ is used 117 times, mostly as a rendering of ‘*sponsale* (spousal)’ in ‘nuptial meaning of the body.’ The Italian text contains only the following instances of *nuziale* always translated above as ‘wedding.’ Waldstein, *John Paul II. Man and Woman He Created Them. A Theology of the Body*, (Boston: Pauline Books & Media, 2006), pg, 724.

therefore enhances respect for human dignity, the spirituality of each person, and thus the love between a male and female.<sup>213</sup> The Polish thinker added that a man who is aware of himself and responsible for his actions “cannot abandon to instinct the whole responsibility for the use of the sexual urge.”<sup>214</sup> Thus, Wojtyla concluded that this responsibility is “the vital component in the sexual morality of man.”<sup>215</sup> In his book *Sources of Renewal*, Wojtyla quoted Vatican Council II about procreation as one of the aims of marriage. Wojtyla insisted that there is a harmony between conjugal love and procreation and between the transmission of life according to revelation and the fostering of married love.<sup>216</sup>

As pope, John Paul II asked schools to provide youth a complete education in sexuality that discusses the origin of human life scientifically but also from a spiritual perspective, so that young people experience their sexual life as an act of love and not as merely an avenue to physical pleasure. The encyclical *Evangelium vitae* states that “there is a duty to offer adolescents and young adults an authentic education in sexuality and in love; this involves training in chastity as virtue and learning respect for the ‘spousal’ meaning of the body.”<sup>217</sup>

John Paul remarked in the apostolic exhortation *Familiaris consortio* that one of the aims of marriage is the procreation and the education of children. The pope asserted that procreation is a fruit of parents’ love; thus, children are symbols of unity between a father

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<sup>213</sup> Wojtyla, *Love & Responsibility*, 55.

<sup>214</sup> Ibid, 63.

<sup>215</sup> Ibid, 63.

<sup>216</sup> Wojtyla, *Sources of Renewal*, 295.

<sup>217</sup> John Paul II, *Evangelium vitae*, no. 97.

and a mother.<sup>218</sup> The Holy Father taught that children are a gift given by God to parents, which means they must be considered as a responsibility for parents in terms of gratitude to God, who shares his love with the human couple. Thus, every married person embodies the love of God in his/her life.<sup>219</sup> In another place, the Holy Father emphasized that procreation is the proper end of masculinity and femininity according to Genesis 1: 28.<sup>220</sup>

The Congregation for Catholic education challenges the Catholic school to form students in the virtue of chastity as an “essential virtue” that develops a person’s authentic maturity and makes that person capable of promoting and respecting the personal significance of the body.<sup>221</sup>

John Paul II’s concern about sex education is also shared by many local Churches and many authors who consider that this topic is an important matter for youth and a challenge for Catholic education, in order to educate them in right human love and sexuality and promote the virtue of chastity.<sup>222</sup> For example, the Nicaraguan Episcopal Conference a decade ago warned youth to be careful because ambiguous slogans concerning “safe sex” or “reproductive health” concealed plans for abortion, sexual promiscuity, and a casual approach to sex.<sup>223</sup> In addition to this, the Nicaraguan bishops

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<sup>218</sup> John Paul II, *Familiaris consortio*, no. 14.

<sup>219</sup> Ibid,

<sup>220</sup> John Paul II, *The Theology of the Body*, (General audience of January 9, 1980), pg. 62.

<sup>221</sup> Congregation for Catholic Education, *Orientamenti Educative sull’amore umano, Educational Guidance in Human Love. Outlines for Sex Education* (Washington D.C.: United States Catholic Conference, 1983), no. 18, EV 9 (1983): 417-456.

<sup>222</sup> John Paul II, *Evangelium vitae*, no. 97.

<sup>223</sup> Conferencia Episcopal de Nicaragua, “Algunos temas de Importancia de la Pastoral Familiar. August 15, 1996,” *L’Osservatore Romano* (Spanish edition) 38 [1996]: 10.

deplored a widespread ideology which maintains that masculinity and femininity are not determined by the physical body but by cultural circumstances.<sup>224</sup>

The Nicaraguan Episcopal Conference in communion with the pope also emphasizes procreation as “the most excellent gift” in marriage and a contribution to the common good of the parents. The Nicaraguan bishops also teach about the responsibility of parents in transmitting life and educating children, as a true commitment to God and society, through pursuing a comprehensive formation of their children and encouraging their Christian commitment as believers.<sup>225</sup>

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<sup>224</sup> “Algunos acusan a la Iglesia de querer imponer sus ideas o valores confesionales sobre el matrimonio, pero hemos visto que lo que enseñamos está en la línea de la ley natural, elevada por la salvación traída por Jesucristo, nuestro Señor. Sin embargo, es al revés, pues han surgido algunos grupos que –importando teorías de escritores ajenos a nuestra cultura– están tratando de imponer la ‘ideología de género’ en nuestra sociedad, la cual es contraria a nuestros auténticos valores familiares y morales. Para explicar en pocas líneas en qué consiste la ‘ideología de género’ acudiremos a uno de los ya citados documentos del Consejo Pontificio para la familia (Familia, matrimonio y uniones de hecho), el cual expone que quienes defienden esta ideología afirman que ser hombre o mujer no estaría determinado fundamentalmente por el sexo, sino por la cultura.” Conferencia Episcopal de Nicaragua, “La Familia debe volver a su verdad auténtica para ser el fundamento de la sociedad Nicaragüense. August 19, 2003,” *L’Osservatore Romano* (Spanish edition) 29 [2003]: 10. “Some accuse the Church of wanting to impose its ideas and values concerning marriage, but we have seen that what we teach is in according with natural law and enhanced by the salvation brought by our saviour Jesus Christ. It is, however, actually the reverse because certain groups have arisen that have brought in theories foreign to our culture and are trying to impose a ‘gender ideology’ in our society, which is contrary to our authentic family and moral values. To briefly explain this ‘gender ideology’ we turn to the already cited documents of the Pontifical Council for the Family (*Family, Marriage and Common-Law Marriages*), which explains that those who defend this ideology affirm that being a man or woman is not fundamentally determined by sex but by culture” (personal translation).

<sup>225</sup> “La tradición Católica es constante en afirmar el papel primordial de los padres, no sólo en la transmisión de la vida, sino en la educación integral de los hijos. Los Padres ocupan primer lugar en esta tarea: ‘les corresponde a los padres un tal ambiente familiar, animado por el amor, por la piedad hacia Dios y hacia los hombres, que favorezca a la integra educación personal social de los hijos (*Gaudium et spes*, 7) y que capacite al futuro ciudadano para vivir de manera divina, es decir, para pensar y actuar según el evangelio, haciendo de las Bienaventuranzas la norma de vida. (La Escuela Católica, 34).” (Carta Pastoral de la CEN., sobre algunos aspectos de la catequesis Familiar, 30 de Mayo de 1989).” Conferencia Episcopal de Nicaragua, Exhortación Pastoral de la Conferencia Episcopal de Nicaragua ante la Situación que vive el País, 7 de Octubre de 1992 <http://www.tmx.com.ni/-cen/documentos/1992/Exhortacion>. 28/09/2007 “The Catholic tradition is constant in affirming the fundamental role of parents, not only in the transmission of life but in all aspects of the children’s education. Parents occupy first place in this task. The family environment is the task of the parents who are filled with love and compassion toward God and men, to contribute to all aspects of the personal and social education of the children (*Gaudium et spes* 7),

Among authors who comment on the teachings of the late pope in sexual matters, Theresa Farnan and William Thierfelder opine that sex education around the world becomes a difficult task for parents because contemporary culture defines love from a biological perspective. These authors attribute this definition to current materialism and to an individualistic mentality that are orienting human behaviors to pursue only self-gratification and corporal pleasures from relationships. Regarding the influence of modern philosophy in sex education, these authors affirm that “relativism and pragmatism reflect not so much what we think of sexuality, but rather what we think about the truth of sexuality.”<sup>226</sup> Another point cited by Farnan and Thierfelder is that supporters of moral relativism reject Catholic sexual morality because they hold that sexuality is a private matter, and that Jewish and Christian teaching about sexuality is irrational and discriminatory because it excludes feminism and homosexuality. These authors note that in facing such current thinking, educators have maintained a “defensive posture” as a reaction to a permissive culture. The negative impact of permissivism and pragmatism on Catholic doctrine about sexuality is undeniable, as these authors affirm, but the challenge lies in the way that Catholic moral teaching must face this reality.

Farnan and Thierfelder suggest a change of methodology to deal with the issue: to move the theme from a “defensive” manner to an evangelizing one. This is valid, but whatever

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and to form future citizens to live in a Godly way, that is, to think, love and act according to the gospel, making the Beatitudes their rule of life” (personal translation).

<sup>226</sup> These authors explain thus the distinction between relativism and pragmatism: “A relativist denies that is possible to know and assert the truth about human sexuality, especially regarding the actions of others. A pragmatist, on the other hand, does not worry about the truth of sexuality, especially regarding is own actions.” Theresa Farnan and William Thierfelder, “Raising Catholic Children in a Secular Culture. The importance of a Sound Vision of the Person in a Sexuality Permissive Culture,” *The Church, Marriage & Family*, edited by Kenneth Whitehead (South Bend: St. Augustine’s Press, 2007), 224-238. The citation is from pg, 225.

method that the Church adopts it will appear confrontational with regard to pragmatism and relativism.<sup>227</sup>

Like the Holy Father, Farnan and Thierfelder suggest a formation in Christian chastity from a Christian anthropology and training students in virtue. These authors consider that the curriculum must be based on the theology of creation, emphasizing the person as image of God, human dignity, person as relation, and the person as gift. Farnan and Thierfelder also assert that reason is able to know the truth and seek the good by educating people about the truth and practicing what is right, and they conclude that “at each stage of formation, the child should learn that virtues make it easier to do what is right, and learn which virtues will help him with different actions.”<sup>228</sup> The concept of procreation as supported by Christians and supporters of human life, but attacked by legislation in countries such as Nicaragua, has become an important topic for discussion. A related issue is the idea that children’s issues are separate from the issue of procreation. The focus on responsibility in this study includes this relationship between procreation and children. Obviously this subject goes beyond the scope of this dissertation, but among the authors who deserve brief mention is Annemie Dillen, who asserts that for centuries procreation in Christian tradition has been the primary end of marriage since the sexual act was legitimated only if it was open to procreation, and it only could be within matrimony, according to Catholic teaching. Dillen states that the theme of procreation as

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<sup>227</sup> Ibid, 226.

<sup>228</sup> Ibid, 228.



one of the ends of marriage continues to be an essential part of teaching in Catholic morality.<sup>229</sup>

Dillen enriches Catholic teachings about responsibility in regard to the defense and protection of marriage and family. Dillen states that the concept of responsibility is a “key” for parents and society in dealing with children: “The idea of ‘responsibility’ can take the concrete form of supporting ‘marriage’ for the sake of the care for children.”<sup>230</sup> Dillen affirms that “responsibility transcends marriage, in the case of divorce, teenage parenthood, cohabitation, and so on, responsibility should be stressed.”<sup>231</sup> This author expresses the view that ‘responsible parenthood,’ according to traditional teaching regarding sexual and marital ethics, is not exclusively for planning of the children’s births, since procreation implies responsibility for parents. Dillen adds that “responsibility precedes the ethical choice and the concrete form of any relationship... Responsibility refers to the ethical appeal of the other, especially the future generations or the child.”<sup>232</sup>

Responsibility in procreation and educating children also appears in the Nicaraguan textbook titled *Guía de la Educación del Afecto y de la Sexualidad* (Guidance for

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<sup>229</sup> Annemie Dillen, “Responsibility in the Family. The Complementarity of Ethics and Marriage,” *Responsibility, God and Society. Theological Ethics in Dialogue*, 233-255. The citation is from pg. 233.

<sup>230</sup> Ibid, 248.

<sup>231</sup> Ibid, 248.

<sup>232</sup> Ibid, 248. Dillen concludes her theory about responsibility in procreation, families, and marriage thus: “Responsibility is a core concept in thinking about families, marriage and children that transcends experience, wisdom and scientific data. The responsible care of a father for his son, or of a wife for her husband, do not follow first of all from any external motivation of a reward or from theoretical reflections about negative consequences for behaving otherwise. Responsibility as an ethical concept precedes all other consequentialist or teleological thinking. The way in which responsibility is taken of course needs reflection on consequences and aims, since otherwise we would built a ‘closed system’ of unchangeable deontological norms.” Dillen, 250.

Educating Emotional Life and Sexuality) used by Nicaraguan public, private, and Catholic schools. The book is edited by the *Ministerio de Educación en Nicaragua* (Nicaraguan Education Ministry). This text, used by teenagers in secondary schools, states that responsibility in procreation begins in deciding if the couple wishes to have children and then, after implementing this decision, educating the children in different stages of their lives. This text states that responsibility in the procreative act means guaranteeing medical care and attention to basic needs prior to birth, then health, love and comprehensive education during the child's development.<sup>233</sup> In addition, this document describes Nicaraguan culture regarding the raising of children, which in general has been the responsibility of the mother particularly in the case of single mothers.<sup>234</sup>

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<sup>233</sup> "La responsabilidad de procrear comienza con la decisión de tener hijos/as y se concreta durante el embarazo, a través del proceso de crianza y de la educación familiar en las distintas etapas de la vida. Se es padre y madre para siempre, por lo cual debe tenerse en cuenta que: concebir un hijo o hija es responsabilidad tanto del padre como de la madre y brindarle el sostén económico, la protección, la educación y los afectos, también debe ser una experiencia compartida. Los hijos/as tienen el derecho a nacer y desarrollarse en el seno de una familia estable. La planificación familiar permite a la pareja regular su fecundidad y asumir la paternidad y maternidad en forma libre y responsable." República de Nicaragua. Ministerio de Educación. *Guía de Educación del Afecto y de la Sexualidad. Documento Guía para Docentes Serie Educación para la Vida. Documento Borrador* (Managua: Ministerio de Educación Cultura y Deportes Press, 2006) 57. "Procreative responsibility begins with the decision to have children and is made real during pregnancy, through the process of raising children and family education during the various stages of life. One is a father or mother forever, for which reason one should be aware that conceiving a child is the responsibility of both the father and the mother to provide economic support, protection, education, affection, and it should be a shared experience. Children have the right to be born and develop in the bosom of a stable family. Family planning allows the couple to control fertility and to take on fatherhood and motherhood in a free and responsible manner" (personal translation).

<sup>234</sup> "En nuestra sociedad, un alto porcentaje de mujeres que son madres deben encargarse del proceso de crianza y educación de sus hijos, y hacerse responsables simultáneamente por el sostén de la familia. Los desafíos que enfrentan las madres solas se han visto agravados por el desempleo que, además de estimular el abandono y la irresponsabilidad paterna, impacta negativamente en sus familias porque ellas tampoco consiguen trabajo o deben realizar múltiples actividades informales para obtener un ingreso mínimo." Ibid. 58. "In our society a high percentage of women who are mothers have to take responsibility for the process of raising and educating their children and simultaneously be responsible for the support of the family. The challenges that single mothers face have been exacerbated by unemployment which, in addition to promoting irresponsibility and abandonment by fathers, impacts negatively on their families because the mothers are also unable to find work or have to take on multiple informal jobs to obtain a minimum income" personal translation

The biology class occupies an important place to focus on procreation by informing students about the biological process of human life from conception until natural death. In addition to this, teachers of secondary schools should provide statistics about artificial birth control in the country and the political conditions imposed by national and international organizations, mentioned in the first chapter of this dissertation, so that students can integrate moral judgments about the human person with scientific criteria. This integration is crucial to understanding programs of international organizations that help poor countries but condition financial aid on anti-natalist policies, as is the case with Nicaragua. Moreover, Catholic schools should work with national and international NGOs dedicated to defend human life from conception according to Catholic moral teaching. The Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace states that “in its ‘objective’ truth, marriage is ordered to the procreation and education of children.”<sup>235</sup> This Vatican document clarifies, however, that procreation is not the only end of marriage and recommends that couples adopt children as an “act of generosity.”<sup>236</sup>

A final mention of the issue of procreation in the Nicaraguan mentality and in Catholic morality in general concerns the understanding of sexuality in the encyclical *Humanae vitae* and the need to present more fully the *Theology of the Body* developed by John Paul II in Catholic schools.

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<sup>235</sup> Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, no. 217.

<sup>236</sup> Ibid.

## Family

Regarding the issue of family as the subject moral responsibility, Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II demonstrated a deep interest in this topic in his writings before becoming pope and later as successor of Peter. For Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II, the present and future of the world depends on families which demand special attention by society as well as by civil and ecclesiastical authorities. Like John Paul, local churches around the world have assumed a family-oriented pastoral task in responding to their current problems such as “increasing divorce, free-unions, single mothers, abortions, sterilizations, and birth control polices.”<sup>237</sup> In accordance with the Holy Father and the Catholic Church in other countries, for the Nicaraguan Catholic church the family has become a priority in her ministry. As the local bishops say: “Our duties as pastors, and according to what the Vicar of Christ teaches us, is to deal with current specific problems that Nicaraguan families are experiencing, such as increasing divorce, disrespect for life and the abominable crime of abortion.”<sup>238</sup>

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<sup>237</sup> John Paul II, *Familiaris consortio*, no. 6. Daniel Hauser opines that there are several causes of the contemporary crisis in the family. One of them described by Hauser lies in the idea of cultural evolution promoted by scientists who maintain that the moral order and social structures are simply human customs created as a reaction to the environment. This theory, according to Hauser, has influenced the institutions of family and marriage, which are thus considered merely as products of the environment. Consequently the institutions of family and marriage tend to be rearranged, or to be substituted for by other social structures. The author states that premarital sex, homosexuality, artificial contraception, and adultery find legitimacy through this theory. Another cause that has affected the institution of family pointed out by Hauser regards the philosophical opinions that affirm that the traditional doctrine of marriage and sexuality are mistaken and oppressive because ancient morality regarding sexuality, and particularly female sexuality, was too strict. Thus, seeking liberation from traditional morality, this manner of thinking proposes a ‘new sexual morality.’ Hauser, *Marriage and Christian Life. A Theology of Christian Marriage* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, Inc. 2005), 3.

<sup>238</sup> Conferencia Episcopal de Nicaragua, “Mensaje a los Fieles Católicos y Personas de Buena Voluntad acerca de algunos temas de importancia de la Pastoral Familiar. August 15, 1996,” *L’Osservatore Romano* (Spanish edition) 38 [1996]: 10.

Facing these realities, Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II provided a theology of family and marriage, which could be divided into two parts: the family as “domestic Church,” and its rights and obligations. The family should be protected by the state, the church and all of society as a fundamental social unit so that the family can fulfill its obligations towards its children and society by providing education, health, housing, and so on. Among the foundations for a theology of family, marriage, and sexuality are his works *Love & Responsibility* and *Sources of Renewal*, which Wojtyla wrote before becoming pope and whose substantive teaching would appear in his pontificate, particularly in the Apostolic exhortation *Familiaris consortio* and in other documents.

In the exhortation *Familiaris consortio* John Paul II summarized in four points the role of the Christian family as a community of persons open to life and love: The first regards the communion between the couple and the members of the family, which includes children, brothers and sisters, and relatives and members of the household. The pope emphasized that love among all members is essential for family so that it finds its true meaning and grows as a community of persons.<sup>239</sup>

The second role concerns serving life; the Holy Father reminded couples to be open to procreation to protect human life. For John Paul II, procreation is not only a “fundamental task of the family,” but a participation in loving God as Creator and Father and a free and responsible act of cooperation with God in transmitting human life.<sup>240</sup> The Holy Father emphasized that procreation includes also educating children as an act of responsibility. Such education is a “right” and “duty” that emerges from marriage and as

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<sup>239</sup> John Paul II, *Familiaris consortio*, no. 18.

<sup>240</sup> Ibid, no. 28.

a collaboration with God's creative activity. This education must promote the enrichment of the "values of kindness, constancy, goodness, service, disinterestedness and self-sacrifice that are the most precious fruit of love."<sup>241</sup>

The third task of the Christian family regards social commitment; families are to contribute to social justice and the common good. The Holy Father affirmed that the family's role cannot be reduced merely to the procreation and education of children but it must also help people in need and assist with needs that governments cannot meet. Among these social commitments, John Paul included hospitality in all its forms, housing for families, protecting the natural environment, and participation in political life in order to defend in a positive way the rights and duties of the family.<sup>242</sup>

The fourth new orientation regarding the role of family stated by the Holy Father is the involvement of the Christian family in the mission of the Church in evangelization. The pope explained the link between the Church and the Christian family as "a domestic Church." He said that this union between Church and family means an educational task for the Christian family in terms of participation in Christ's mission, by celebrating the sacraments and proclaiming the new commandment of love.<sup>243</sup> Analyzing Wojtyla/John Paul II, Joseph Atkinson says that the Holy Father began his theology of the family before becoming pope when he wrote his book *Love and Responsibility*, in which he defined family as "an educational institution within the framework of which the personality of a new human being is formed," but it was only after the Council that

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<sup>241</sup> Ibid, no. 36.

<sup>242</sup> Ibid, no. 44.

<sup>243</sup> Ibid, no. 49.

Wojtyla was committed to research in depth the topic of family, marriage and sexuality.<sup>244</sup>

Atkinson also broadly analyzes the evolution of the significance of family as “domestic church” mentioned by the Holy Father in the exhortation *Familiaris consortio*. (The term “domestic church” appears in the constitution *Lumen gentium* no. 11, which served the late pope to explain the institution of family). Atkinson comments that the theological teaching about the domestic Church was essential for the pope to elaborate a theology of the family, in which the pontiff demonstrated a “profound mystery of the family -- its ecclesial and Christological nature.”<sup>245</sup>

## Marriage

Before becoming pope Wojtyla provided foundations for a theology of marriage. Among his works are *Love & Responsibility* and *Sources of Renewal*. In his book *Love & Responsibility*, Wojtyla reminded us of the principle of monogamy and the indissolubility of the marriage. The former archbishop of Krakow supported the Christian doctrine about

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<sup>244</sup> Joseph C. Atkinson, “Family As Domestic Church: Developmental Trajectory, Legitimacy, and Problems of Appropriation,” *The Church, Marriage & Family* (South Bend: St. Augustine’s Press, 2007), 379.

<sup>245</sup> Atkinson affirms that the term “domestic church” has had three stages in recent Catholic thought: the first took place during the Vatican Council II, which interpreted the term by analogy as a relationship between the family and the Church; the second period was immediately after the Council when theologians broadly developed the term. In this phase, says Atkinson, theologians applied fundamental categories of Vatican II (Christocentrism, personalism, and universal holiness) and latter these keys became a “hermeneutical catalyst by which the nature of family could be fruitfully examined and articulated. The third phase occurred with the publication of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1992), in which the term “domestic church” shifted “from analogous position to an ontological relationship with the Church.” Atkinson, “Family As Domestic Church, pg. 384.

matrimony from the personalistic norm and from the gospel.<sup>246</sup> He understood marriage as sign of respect and fidelity to another person, in which the couple enjoys sexual pleasure by means of which they are united. After arguing that polygamy in the Old Testament was degrading for women, Wojtyla affirmed that the commandment of love “is more than the personalistic norm, it also embodies the basic law of the whole supernatural order, of the supernatural relationship between God and man.”<sup>247</sup> Regarding family, Wojtyla envisioned it as an institution grounded in marriage and affirmed that each family “has the structure of a society, in which the father, and the mother too -- each in his or her own particular way -- both exercise authority, while the children are subject to that authority.”<sup>248</sup>

In his book *Sources of Renewal* Karol Wojtyla reinforced his doctrine on marriage and family as a current and urgent task demanded by the Vatican Council II, which considered promoting the dignity and vocation of marriage and family as one of the most important Christian responsibilities. Wojtyla repeated the conciliar teaching about the place of family in the divine plan of salvation, the ends of marriage, and the duty of spouses to be open to procreation and education of children. The Polish pastor explained that with respect to “the relation between conjugal love and procreation, the Council

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<sup>246</sup> The concept of personalistic norm in Karol Wojtyla has enormous significance for any understanding of human sexuality and of issue to do with the end and the earliest beginning of life in order to ascertain how I should treat others and how society as a whole should treat others. The commandment to Love assumes that relations between individuals will be fair and just. In his book *Love & Responsibility* Wojtyla states: “the personalistic norm in the form of the commandment to love assumes that this relation, this attitude, will be not only fair but just,” 42. In essence, the value of the person demands a response of love, not using one as object of pleasure, or merely by convenience.

<sup>247</sup> Wojtyla, *Love & Responsibility*, 213.

<sup>248</sup> Ibid, 217.



points out that ‘there can be no conflict between the divine laws governing the transmission of life and the fostering of married love (GS 51).’”<sup>249</sup>

As pope, John Paul II emphasized that Christian marriage and Christian family are committed to construct the Church by participating in the redemption of Christ since the Christian family becomes a privileged place to live and practice baptism and to educate children in the faith. Thus for the pope, the Christian family has a secular and ecclesial role in society. In addition to this, the successor of Peter reminded us that procreation is one of the aims of family and matrimony, according to biblical revelation, and that in the procreative act the spouses will be able to understand “whole truth and full realization of marriage by collaborating in procreation”<sup>250</sup>

As mentioned in the first chapter of this dissertation, the family, marriage and procreation have been a priority for the Nicaraguan Church for the three last decades because the institution of the family is considered to be of great importance by both the state and the Church. The support for Nicaraguan families is a permanent responsibility and an ecclesiastical ministry by Catholics teaching about the topic and organizing specific family groups in each parish and in Catholic schools. The Nicaraguan Episcopal Conference exhorts Catholics to promote the dignity of matrimony and the family, to practice reconciliation between the couple, to commit to the common good, and to

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<sup>249</sup> Wojtyla, *Sources of Renewal*, 295.

<sup>250</sup> John Paul II, *Familiaris consortio*, no. 15.

provide a responsible education for children that allows families to witness to their common bond as Christian families in society and in the Church.<sup>251</sup>

Catholic education should permanently include the themes of procreation, marriage, and family as a priority in the curriculum, especially for young people who attend secondary school and who are involved in dating. The curriculum should focus on personal relationships of students while dating because during this time they show each other their virtues and vices as persons which is of vital importance in making decisions about marriage and family. In Nicaragua Catholic schools have the opportunity to take advantage of the political constitution and civil laws that in theory protect and defend human life, marriage, and families. Students should study their rights and obligations as citizens and the obligation of the state to protect and defend the rights of Nicaraguan families as clearly defined in certain articles of the Constitution.<sup>252</sup>

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<sup>251</sup> “Deseamos exhortar a todos los católicos de Nicaragua promover la dignidad del matrimonio y de la familia comprometiéndose a conservar la unidad en sus propios hogares el vínculo de la paz (Ef. 4, 3-4) y comportándose cada uno en el hogar con humildad, sin egoísmo y buscando siempre y en todo el bienestar de los demás (Fil. 2,3-4; Col. 3, 5-21). Hacemos un llamado especial a los padres de familia para que dediquen tiempo a sus hijos y vigilen tanto sus compañías como los programas de televisión que ven y las revistas o periódicos que lean.” Conferencia Episcopal de Nicaragua, “Carta Pastoral para Avivar la Esperanza del Pueblo Cristiano, 1º. Mayo 1994,” *L’Osservatore Romano* (Spanish edition) 23 (1994): 9. “We wish to exhort all the Catholics of Nicaragua to promote the dignity of marriage and family, committing themselves to maintain the unity of each of their homes through the bond of peace (Ephesians 4: 3-4), with each person living in the home with humility, without selfishness and always searching in all things for the well-being of the others (Philippians 2: 3-4; Colossians 3: 5-21). We call especially on fathers to dedicate time to their children and keep watch over both their companions as well as the television programs they watch and the magazines and newspapers that they read” (personal translation).

<sup>252</sup> “Arto.70. La familia es el núcleo fundamental de la sociedad y tiene derecho a la protección de ésta y del Estado. Arto. 71. Es derecho de los nicaragüenses constituir una familia. Se garantiza el patrimonio familiar, que es inembargable y exento de toda carga pública. La Ley regulará y protegerá estos derechos. Arto. 72. El matrimonio y la unión de hecho estable están protegidos por el Estado; descansan en el acuerdo voluntario del hombre y la mujer y podrán disolverse por mutuo consentimiento o por la voluntad de una de las partes. La ley regulará esta materia. Arto. 73. Las relaciones familiares descansan en el respeto, solidaridad e igualdad absoluta de derechos y responsabilidades entre el hombre y la mujer. Los padres deben atender el mantenimiento del hogar y la formación integral de los hijos mediante el esfuerzo común, con iguales derechos y responsabilidades. Los hijos a su vez, están obligados a respetar y ayudar a

Another important factor to form students in a right human love and sexuality is a total immersion of students' parents in the life of the school through parents' associations. These groups supervise the contents of the school curricula concerning family and marriage and analyze global policies opposed to the family and marriage as institutions, as when the Nicaraguan Church recently rejected in a pastoral letter the legitimating of common-law marriages promoted by *The United Nations Population Fund* (UNFPA) and the local governmental institution *Procuraduría de la Niñez y la Adolescencia* (Nicaraguan Legal Office for Children and Adolescents) because of what it deemed their anti-family and marriage policies.<sup>253</sup> Therefore, in order to reinforce family

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sus padres. Estos deberes y derechos se cumplirán de acuerdo con la legislación en la materia. Arto.74. El Estado otorga protección especial al proceso de reproducción humana. La mujer tendrá protección especial durante el embarazo y gozará de licencia con remuneración salarial y prestaciones adecuadas de seguridad social. Nadie podrá negar empleo a las mujeres aduciendo razones de embarazo ni despedirlas durante éste o en el período post-natal; todo de conformidad con la ley. Arto. 75. Todos los hijos tienen iguales derechos. No se utilizarán designaciones discriminatorias en materia de filiación. En la legislación común, no tiene ningún valor las disposiciones o clasificaciones que disminuyan o nieguen la igualdad de los hijos.” República de Nicaragua, *Constitución Política*, p.21

“Article 70. The family is the fundamental nucleus of society and has a right to protection by society and the government. Article 71. Nicaraguans have a right to establish families. Family inheritance is guaranteed, cannot be confiscated and is exempt from taxation. Article 72. Marriage and stable common-law marriage are protected by the government; they rest on the voluntary agreement of a man and a woman and can be dissolved by mutual consent or by the will of one of the parties. These relations will be based on law. Article 73. Family relations rest on respect, caring and the absolute equality of rights and responsibilities between man and woman. Parents should take care of maintaining the home and all aspects of rearing children through common efforts, with equal rights and responsibilities. For their part children are obliged in accordance with the corresponding legislation. Article 74. The government grants special protection to the process of human reproduction. Women will receive special protection during pregnancy and have a right to paid leave and adequate social security benefits. No one can deny employment to women for reasons of pregnancy or fire them during this or the post-natal period; all must be in accordance with law. Article 75. All children have equal rights. Discriminatory terms concerning relations will not be used. In generally-applicable legislation any provisions or terminology that diminish or deny the equality of children shall have no validity” (personal translation).

<sup>253</sup> “Nuestro país [Nicaragua] no está exento de esta problemática [uniones de hecho]. Por ejemplo, el folleto de ‘Derechos sexuales y reproductivos: Un enfoque para adolescentes’ que el Fondo de Población de las Naciones Unidas (FNUAP) y la Procuraduría para la defensa de los derechos ciudadanos (junto con la Procuraduría especial de la niñez y de la adolescencia) han difundido para los adolescentes nicaragüenses, afirma que ellos tiene el derecho a ‘elegir el estado civil: casado, soltera, unión de hecho estable’ (p. 15). Esta enseñanza implica una verdadera discriminación de la familia matrimonial puesto que

and marriage, the curriculum of the Catholic school has to cohere with universal Catholic teaching about the purpose and role of the Christian family.

To accomplish their goals for the Christian family in school and society, Catholic schools should present the theme of family as a single topic in the curriculum. It should be taught in elementary and secondary school by carefully selected couples whose experience guarantees their authority to teach the subject. These couples would serve students as sources of ideas about the role of family in society and in the Church for students. This class should include the study of all national and international laws in Catholic secondary schools to defend and protect marriage and family, as well as ecclesiastical documents, including those mentioned in this dissertation. To reach this aim, the Catholic school should train teachers or experts in this matter since it demands a broad scientific, legal, and doctrinal knowledge about family as a natural and divine institution, and the ends of its role in society working for the common good. These experts should understand the promotion of laws that defend stability of marriage, the conjugal union between a man and a woman, and the creation of institutions that provide families with their basic needs, such as health, education, and housing. All of these

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la considera a un nivel semejante al de cualquier otra convivencia, sin importar para nada que exista o no un compromiso público de fidelidad recíproca y de generación-educación de los hijos (cf. Consejo Pontificio para la Familia: Familia, matrimonio y uniones de hecho. No. 10).” Conferencia Episcopal de Nicaragua. “La familia debe volver a su verdad auténtica para ser el fundamento de la sociedad Nicaragüense. 19 de marzo 2003,” *L’Osservatore Romano* (Spanish edition) 29 (2003): 10. “Our country (Nicaragua) is not immune to this problem (common-law-marriages). For example, the brochure on “Sexual and Reproductive Rights: An Approach for Teenagers” distributed for teenagers by the United Nations Population Fund (UNPF) and the Office for the Defense of Citizens’ Rights (along with the Special Office for Children and Adolescents) asserts that they have the right to “choose their marital status: married, single, common-law-marriage” (p. 15). This teaching implies a real discrimination against marriage and family because it considers any other arrangement to be on the same level, without taking into account whether there is or not a public commitment of mutual faithfulness and to the procreation and education of children (cf. Pontifical Council for the Family: Family, Marriage and Common-Law-Unions, No. 10. (personal translation)

measures strengthen the ministry of the family within the Church as a privileged place of evangelization.

The association of parents in the Catholic school is another important factor in the implementation of an educational program about the family in Catholic education. The Church insists on the implementation of parents associations according to Catholic principles.<sup>254</sup> John Paul II considered the Catholic school as an important means to respond to the educational challenges of secularism, moral relativism, and religious indifference that concern many Christian parents. Furthermore, Catholic education is an appropriate option to form the human person, to collaborate in pursuing the common good, and to protect religious freedom.<sup>255</sup>

The Nicaraguan Episcopal Conference reaffirms John Paul II's teaching about parents' involvement in Catholic schools. According to the Nicaraguan pastors, parents are responsible to form children in Christian principles, to provide religious formation in those schools where Christian education does not exist, and to supervise educational programs, such as classes on ethics, education in faith, and natural sciences, specifically anatomy and biology. This effort should include both public and Catholic schools, in

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<sup>254</sup> The Second Vatican Council defended the rights of parents to supervise the education of their children. *Gravissimum educationis* no. 3. The *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* states: "Parents have the right to choose the formative tools that respond to their convictions and to seek those means that will help them best to fulfill their duty as educators, in the spiritual and religious sphere also. Public authorities have the duty to guarantee this right and to ensure the concrete conditions necessary for it to be exercised. In this context, cooperation between the family and scholastic institutions takes on primary importance." no. 240.

<sup>255</sup> "There is a continual need for the Church to be involved in the education of young people and children, giving a pastoral response to their educational requirements. She does so through her option for man and her desire to collaborate in the school with families and society, advocating comprehensive formation and defending the right of parents to give their children a religious and moral upbringing in accordance with their own beliefs." John Paul II, "Church must continue to be involved in educating youth," *L'Osservatore Romano* (English edition) 10 (1998): 5.

order that such programs respect Nicaraguan Catholic beliefs. They should also evaluate philosophies used in the curriculum and encourage parents to establish associations to defend Christian formation.<sup>256</sup>

### 3.3.4 Responsibility and Justice

After discussing the topics of sexuality, marriage and family in the previous section as aspect of responsibility pointed out by Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II and the Nicaraguan Episcopal Conference and as important subjects in Catholic education, this section deals with the subject of justice, which the former Polish archbishop and pope discussed as a moral topic.

Before becoming pope, Wojtyla linked justice to culture. He argued that the education of man must include an integration of justice and culture.<sup>257</sup> Wojtyla, according to

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<sup>256</sup> “A los padres de familia les toca asumir con seriedad y convicción cristiana la responsabilidad que tienen en la educación de sus hijos. Tienen el deber de formarlos cristianamente en el hogar. Si sus hijos asisten a un Centro de Estudios donde no se recibe formación cristiana, deben velar para que no se queden sin ella, buscando el camino más adecuado. Si estuvieran en un Centro Católico, no piensen que su responsabilidad en la formación cristiana de sus hijos se agota sólo con asegurar para ellos un Centro de estudios religioso. Además, es deber de los padres, velar para que el contenido de los programas y calidad de los maestros sean tales que no perjudiquen la fe y la moral de sus hijos. Cuando éstos se eduquen en centros oficiales, tienen el derecho de exigir que la instrucción sea respetuosa de la fe y la moral. Tienen el deber de conocer a fondo la filosofía de la educación nacional, dar su opinión sobre la misma y exigir en caso contrario, en forma organizada, que se respeten sus derechos. Para que su voz pueda ser oída, tienen que integrarse a las Asociaciones de Padres de Familia y hacerse presentes en las reuniones que se celebran en los centros de estudio.” Conferencia Episcopal de Nicaragua, “Carta Pastoral sobre la Educación Católica, 8 de diciembre de 1982.” *Documentos seleccionados*, pg. 49.

“Parents of families should take on the responsibility for the education of their children with seriousness and Christian conviction. They have the responsibility to educate them in a Christian manner in the home. If their children attend a school where they do not receive Christian training, they should see to it that the school does not remain without such, through seeking the most appropriate solution. If they are in a Catholic school, they should not think that their responsibility for the Christian education of their children is taken care of by just ensuring that they go to a religious school. It is the further responsibility of parents to see to it that the content of the classes and the quality of the teachers do not harm the faith and morals of their children. When the children go to public schools, parents have the right to insist that instruction respect the faith and morals of their children. Parents have the responsibility to study in depth the philosophy of the national education system, to express their opinions about it, and if their rights are not respected, to insist in an organized way that they be respected. In order that their voice be heard they should join the Association of Parents of Families and attend the meetings that are held in the schools” (personal translation).

Catholic social teaching, defined justice as a “duty of social morality,” and the defense of mankind against threats to human dignity.<sup>258</sup> Further, the Polish archbishop remarked that the Church is called to be involved in the cause of justice and peace and that education must create a commitment to the world and its international organizations in this effort.<sup>259</sup> Later as pope, he applied the concept of justice to different institutions such as state, democracy, civil laws, and human rights.

Since the encyclical *Rerum novarum* in the last century, Catholic social teaching has maintained critical attitudes toward different political systems by pointing out the positive and negative aspects of their implementation of justice. In recent decades, the Holy Father and the universal Church have played a forceful role in confronting current political systems. For instance, John Paul II traced the fall of the Marxist system to its promotion of class hatred and negation of God, which denied people, especially young people, their spiritual transcendence. The pope said: “The main cause of this collapse was the reaction of the younger generations to the spiritual void brought by atheism.”<sup>260</sup>

Furthermore, the Holy Father criticized the capitalist system, since like communism it promotes a materialistic ideology by imposing consumerism and considering man as a machine of production, reducing the human person to a “thing,” and ignoring its ontological reality.<sup>261</sup> Also, the Holy Father judged that current democratic systems have rightly recognized the basic human right to personal freedom but have also allowed

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<sup>257</sup> Wojtyla, *Sources of Renewal*, 300.

<sup>258</sup> Ibid, p. 285.

<sup>259</sup> Ibid, 307.

<sup>260</sup> John Paul II, *Centessimus annus*, no. 24.

<sup>261</sup> Ibid, no. 35.

abuses in the name of freedom. On the one hand democracy theoretically respects individual liberty, but on the other hand it allows the abuse of freedom. The idolatry of freedom, said the pope, has meant the violation of human rights, such as disrespect for life and the rights of family.<sup>262</sup>

John Paul II reminded us that justice is a virtue that is fundamental to morality.<sup>263</sup> Justice as a virtue emerges in society itself, in which the relationship between individuals needs to be ordered by reason and civil laws oriented to the common good. When society is educated in the virtues, there are criteria of judgment concerning political institutions and parties that preserve the good of all. As Michael Novak asserts, in evaluating democratic and capitalist systems, the virtue of justice enables citizens to criticize evils and cure social deficiencies.<sup>264</sup> Students in Catholic schools must be enlightened about the virtue of justice by practicing solidarity among themselves through sharing their academic knowledge, experiencing small communities of solidarity, and criticizing both positively and negatively institutions and laws dedicated to administer justice in order to defend human rights and preserve social peace.

John Paul II emphasized that the evils of human structures and political systems exceed the merely human and need divine intervention to reach out for peace and reconciliation among individuals. The pope pointed out that the root of injustices, cruelty, hatred and divisions among people and nations lies in the absence of mercy in the world.

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<sup>262</sup> Ibid, no. 47.

<sup>263</sup> John Paul II, *Dives in misericordia*, no. 4.

<sup>264</sup> Michael Novak, "Liberty and Social Justice: Rescuing a Virtue," *Catholic Social Thought and the New World Order*, edited by Oliver F. Williams and John W. Houck (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1993), 273.



These realities are considered by the pope to be “structures of sin,” and some of them are specifically mentioned in his writings. For instance in the encyclical *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, the pontiff called the division of world into two blocs (capitalism and communism), and the division among individuals a “structure of sin.”<sup>265</sup> In *Centesimus annus* the Holy Father calls the conditions enabling the destruction of the environment a “structure of sin.”<sup>266</sup>

But a broad explanation of the concept of “structures of sin” is found in the exhortation *Reconcilatio et paenitentia*. There the pope reaffirmed that sin always is personal, but the human person cannot escape from external factors that influence moral behavior; thus one transmits personal sin and it becomes social sin. John Paul II identified three aspects of social sin. The first relates to the undeniable human solidarity in which all human beings are linked, including the Communion of Saints; thus from a religious perspective social sin is also a “communion in sin.” The second aspect of social sin is a direct attack on one’s neighbor, which in Christian language means to act against a brother or sister. The pope stated that under this premise a social sin acts against the dignity and honor of one’s neighbor and against the common good. The last category of social sin regards the relationship among the various human communities, many of which are opposed with the plan of God. In this context the pontiff mentioned “confrontation

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<sup>265</sup> John Paul II, *Sollicitudo rei sociales*, no. 36.

<sup>266</sup> John Paul II, *Centesimus annus*, no. 38.

between blocs of nations, between one nation and another, between different groups within the same nation – all this too is a social evil.”<sup>267</sup>

Timothy McCarthy asserts that the subject and terminology of “social sin” is not mentioned by Vatican Council II. He maintains that such teaching originated in the Latin America Episcopal Conference held in Medellin in 1968, in order to analyze social injustices in Latin America countries which demand a liberation of the whole person, both spiritual and social. At that time, this Episcopal Conference developed a theology of sin which taught about the power and effects of personal sin, whose consequences are evident in political, social and economic institutions.<sup>268</sup>

There are several speeches and documents in which the pope treated “structures of sin” as a moral matter for believers. Among the most relevant writings are the encyclicals *Dives in misericordia*, *Laborem exercens*, *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, and *Centesimus annus*. For instance in the encyclical *Dives in misericordia*, the Holy Father deplored “the crisis in human relations, the loss of the sense of the common good, the ease with which this good is alienated, and a ‘desacralization’ that turns into ‘dehumanization’ of the individual and society.”<sup>269</sup>

In the encyclical *Laborem exercens* the pope condemned unjust global structures which treat human beings only “as a mere means of production.”<sup>270</sup> In the encyclical *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, John Paul II reaffirmed his apostolic exhortation *Reconciliatio et*

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<sup>267</sup> John Paul II, *Reconciliatio et paenitentia, Reconciliation and Penance*, edited by Michael Miller (Huntington: Our Sunday Visitor Publishing Division, 1998), no. 16, AAS 77 (1985): 185-275.

<sup>268</sup> Timothy McCarthy, *Christianity and Humanism. From Their Biblical Foundations into the Third Millennium*, 244.

<sup>269</sup> John Paul II, *Dives in misericordia*, no. 12.

<sup>270</sup> John Paul II, *Laborem exercens*, no. 7.

*paenitentia*, in which he noted that global division into blocs has caused “selfishness, shortsightedness, mistaken political decisions and imprudent economic decisions.”<sup>271</sup> Finally, the encyclical *Centesimus annus*, reminded the state of its role in guaranteeing personal freedom, ensuring stability in currency, and providing efficient public services. The document also denounced the fact that “the lack of stability, corruption, improper ways of growing rich, and speculation hinder development and social order.”<sup>272</sup>

John Paul II further contributed to Christian morality by discussing justice as linked to mercy. After having identified the virtue of justice in the Old Testament, the pope affirmed that before philosophical justice there is love; thus love is stronger than justice. He said: “love conditions justice, justice serves love, a priority that is revealed precisely in mercy.”<sup>273</sup>

In the encyclical *Dives in misericordia* the late pope pointed out that justice has become an important issue around the world, which explains why Catholic social teaching has developed an important doctrine about it to form consciences and encourage lay people to promote justice.<sup>274</sup> Despite the fact that justice is an undeniable goal, John Paul II deplored that programs in the name of justice, “sometimes suffer from distortions such as spite, hatred, and even cruelty, contrasting with the essence of justice which by its nature tends to establish equality and harmony.”<sup>275</sup>

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<sup>271</sup> John Paul II, *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, no. 36.

<sup>272</sup> John Paul II, *Centesimus annus*, no. 48.

<sup>273</sup> John Paul II, *Dives in misericordia*, no. 4.

<sup>274</sup> *Ibid*, no. 12.

<sup>275</sup> *Ibid*,

Another important explanation of justice in the encyclical *Dives in misericordia* is to treat mercy and justice as integral parts of the Christian vocation. For John Paul II, the Christian vocation is a vocation of loving, and while he accepted the importance of justice, the late pope insisted that mercy is better than justice because mercy “is capable of restoring human persons.”<sup>276</sup> The pope stated: “Mercy is an indispensable element for shaping relationships between people. Justice must so to speak be corrected by the ‘patient and kind’ love so characteristic of the Gospel and Christianity.”<sup>277</sup>

For the Latin American Church, social justice lies at the center of her pastoral task. From Medellin until the present day, the goal of changing social evils such as extreme poverty and the violation of human rights in order to humanize society signifies a permanent challenge for evangelization.<sup>278</sup> For instance the Third Latin American Episcopal Conference treated justice in terms of freedom, poverty and human rights. The bishops deplored the fact that the topic of justice has produced tensions within the Church itself because some wanted a Church dedicated only to spiritual concerns, without material consequences, while others argued for a Church dedicated to material issues while abandoning the spiritual.<sup>279</sup>

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<sup>276</sup> Ibid, no. 14.

<sup>277</sup> Ibid,

<sup>278</sup> The term “social justice,” was introduced by the encyclical *Quadragesimo anno* no. 7, and it has been of great significance for Latin American theologians, many of them known as theologians of the Liberation theology. This term means to bring justice to the poor and oppressed, and building a new social order.

<sup>279</sup> “The situation of injustice described in the previous section forces us to reflect on the great challenge our pastoral work faces in trying to help human beings to move from less human to more human conditions. The deep-rooted social differences, the extreme poverty, and the violation of human rights found in many areas pose challenges to evangelization. Our mission to bring God to human beings, and human beings to God, also entails the task of fashioning a more fraternal society here. And the unjust social situation has not failed to produce tensions within the Church itself. On the one hand they are provoked by groups that stress the “spiritual” side of the Church’s mission and resent active efforts at societal improvement. On the other hand they are provoked by people who want to make the Church’s mission

Like the Holy Father and the Latin American Episcopal Conference, for the Nicaraguan Episcopal Conference the teaching of social justice for the last three decades has been a key topic in terms of moral responsibility. The Conference has defended the human rights of the Nicaraguan people, such as religious freedom and the freedom of thought and organization which were attacked by Sandinista government, and it has demanded democratic governments and justice for the poor in the light of Vatican Council II and the Second Latin America Episcopal Conference, as discussed in the first chapter of this dissertation.<sup>280</sup> Early in the decade of the 1970s, the Nicaraguan bishops denounced the fact that the current government and political structures did not respond to the needs of Nicaraguan society. They demanded that Christians and other citizens provide a serious analysis of Nicaraguan reality and proposed social changes based on the model of the Church's social teaching.<sup>281</sup>

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nothing more than an effort at human betterment." Consejo Episcopal Latinoamericano, *Puebla and Beyond. Documentation and Commentary*, no. 90.

<sup>280</sup> Among relevant documents addressed by the Nicaraguan Episcopal Conference are Conferencia Episcopal de Nicaragua, "Carta Pastoral: Compromiso Cristiano para una Nicaragua Nueva. 17 de Noviembre de 1979," *Boletín Informativo de la Arquidiócesis de Managua*, 83 (1979): 23-27; Conferencia Episcopal de Nicaragua, "Exhortación Pastoral ante la Situación que vive el País. October 7, 1992," <http://www.tmx.com.ni/documentos/1992/Exhortacion>, accessed September 28, 2008; Conferencia Episcopal de Nicaragua, "Carta Pastoral para Avivar la Esperanza del Pueblo de Dios. 1º. De Mayo 1994," *L'Osservatore Romano* (Spanish edition) 23 (1994): 9; and Conferencia Episcopal de Nicaragua, "Mensaje sobre la Justicia y la Paz. 3 de septiembre de 1998," *L'Osservatore Romano* (Spanish edition) 40 (1998): 11.

<sup>281</sup> "Nicaragua es un país con todas las características y dificultades de las naciones en vías de desarrollo. Por el momento, son muchos más los problemas que es preciso resolver que los recursos para hacerles frente. Es por eso de capital importancia la orientación del sistema político del país, que ha de encauzar los recursos espirituales, humanos y materiales de que disponemos. Si examinamos nuestra realidad y el proceso histórico de nuestra patria, tenemos que admitir que sus estructuras políticas no responden a los reclamos de nuestro tiempo. En los grupos y partidos políticos pareciera que late esta preocupación. Pero se impone un análisis desapasionado y a fondo de la orientación y forma en la reestructuración de nuestro sistema político." Conferencia Episcopal de Nicaragua, "Carta Pastoral sobre los principios que rigen la actividad política de toda la iglesia como tal," *L'Osservatore Romano* (Spanish edition) 22 (1972): 7. "Nicaragua is a county with all the characteristics and difficulties of developing countries. At the moment there are many problems and it is necessary to decide on the resources to confront them. Hence the capital

The state and the church are the institutions called to promote, protect and defend justice. The Catholic Church serves the state by being a critic of political actions by the state, drawing on ethical principles that shed light on the exercise of power, and by collaborating in pursuing the common good that benefits all citizens. Even though the social doctrine of the Catholic Church influences some countries such as Nicaragua because the majority of the population is Catholic, political leaders do not necessarily implement social policies according to the social teaching of the Church. The Church cannot attempt to construct a theocratic state since her mission is oriented to eternal life and she transcends human structures. A collaboration between the Church and state in common causes, such as education, health, and housing, must be interpreted by Christian morality as a fulfillment of the command of love and not merely as a political duty, since the state is responsible for a just distribution of wealth and support for the basic needs of citizens.

The state is an important agent of education in any nation through shaping a virtuous life by enacting just laws and requiring them to be obeyed. The Nicaraguan Episcopal Conference states that justice in the nation demands that morality be expressed in concrete actions that demonstrate the good will of rulers in accepting their errors and repairing the damages caused by their injustices. For instance, the local bishops demand that private property usurped by the government must be returned to its owners. In

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importance of the political system of the country, which needs to channel the spiritual, human and material resources that we have available. If we reflect on our reality and the historical process of our country, we have to admit that the political structures are not adequate for what this period calls for. In the political parties and groupings it would seem that there is a latent worry about this. But what is needed is a dispassionate and deep analysis concerning the direction and form of restructuring our political system” (personal translation).

addition, the state and its officials have to return money gained illicitly. Furthermore, the Nicaraguan bishops encourage citizens to act with mercy, thinking about the poorest among them and practicing social justice in the light of Christian principles which teach that forgiveness and reparation of faults are inherent to an upright moral life.<sup>282</sup>

In analyzing the link between governments and democratic systems, the Holy Father examined moral permissiveness in democratic systems. In the encyclical *Centesimus annus* John Paul II described an authentic democracy as that which occurs when the state respects laws and when there is responsible participation of all.<sup>283</sup> In addition to this, the pope defended democracy if it protects elemental human rights, such as respect for human life, the family, education, and employment, but he noted that these are not always achieved since sometimes “democracy” is used only for political propaganda.<sup>284</sup>

In the encyclical *Evangelium vitae* the pontiff expressed his concern about moral relativism and democracy. He rejected the theory that moral practices should be pursued according to what the majority population decides in moral matters. The pope emphasized that moral responsibility and the moral order are intrinsically linked. “Democracy cannot substitute for morality or be a panacea for immorality. Democracy is a ‘system,’ a means and not an end,” said the pontiff.<sup>285</sup>

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<sup>282</sup> Conferencia Episcopal de Nicaragua, “Mensaje con motivo de la Solemnidad de Pentecostés. May 17, 1997,” *L’Osservatore Romano* (Spanish edition) 29 [1997]: 6-8.

<sup>283</sup> John Paul II, *Centesimus annus*, no. 46.

<sup>284</sup> Ibid, no. 47.

<sup>285</sup> John Paul II, *Evangelium vitae*, no. 70.

John Paul II asked us to educate and prepare students for democracy.<sup>286</sup> This requirement from the Holy Father merits attention by the Catholic school, which forms the “whole man” and prepares students for political and social life.<sup>287</sup> The term and practice of democracy dates from ancient Greek philosophers and its definition has multiple interpretations. The understanding of democracy as a political system, in terms of its convergence with or divergence from Catholic social morality, varies greatly. For instance, A. John Simmons avers that the most common meaning of democracy regards participation of the population, rather than the aristocracy in political power. Simmons also links the morality of freedom to democracy because if the democratic system is conceived of as better than other political systems, its people should be the best in respecting the values of autonomy and promoting a virtuous life as citizens.<sup>288</sup>

Paul Sigmund relates the history of Catholicism and liberal democracy from the origins of the Church until our time. After noting documents of the Church through twenty centuries that demonstrate the Catholic Church’s rejection of democracy, Sigmund concludes that there has been a reconciliation between the Church and democracy at the present time, yet conflicts persist between Catholic doctrine and the freedom inherent to democracy. One of these difficulties regards the area of sexuality and family because part of Western democracies support tolerance and individual choice, while Catholicism opposes abortion, contraception, divorce, homosexual activity, and pornography. Another tension concerns education since some democratic countries opine

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<sup>286</sup> John Paul II, *Centesimus annus*, no. 46.

<sup>287</sup> Congregation for Catholic education, *The Catholic school*, no. 35.

<sup>288</sup> A. John Simmons, *Political Philosophy* (Oxford: University Press, 2008), 108.



that the civil government should not financially support Catholic schools. Finally, another Catholic tension with democratic systems pointed out by Sigmund is the opposition between the capitalist mentality and Catholic social teaching: while the former promotes individualism, the Catholic Church teaches the good of creation belongs to all.<sup>289</sup>

The Catholic secondary school should discuss democracy from historical, anthropological, and sociological perspectives to pursue a complete academic perspective and a critical attitude toward global and local procedures of democracy and its different interpretations. For instance, in the case of Nicaragua, Katherine Hoyt states that the Sandinista revolution in the decade of the 1980s spoke of democracy despite being of Marxist inspiration. At that time Sandinista ideology theoretically interpreted democracy in a good sense as equal opportunities for all, better living conditions, and participation of the masses of people in the public life of the nation, but in practice such promises never were accomplished.<sup>290</sup> The concept of democracy was used by Sandinista ideology only as manipulation for Nicaraguan society and as exportation to the international organisms, but in practice, benefits were only for those affiliated to this political party and there was repression against ideologies and political leaders opposed to Nicaraguan government at that time.

In addition to teaching about democracy, especially at the secondary level, another goal of Catholic education is to promote virtues in democratic systems. Amitai Etzioni argues that virtues are necessities in democracy as a way of ordering individual rights

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<sup>289</sup> Paul Sigmund, "Catholicism and Liberal Democracy," *Catholic Social Thought and the New World Order*, edited by Oliver Williams and John Houck (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 1993), 51.

<sup>290</sup> Katherine Hoyt, *The Many Faces of Sandinista Democracy* (Ohio: Ohio University, 1997), 22.

within society. Etzioni admits that there are difficulties in applying democratic values because of doubts by many about the efficacy of virtue in concrete democratic realities in terms of respecting the plurality of ideas such as to truly respect the rights of citizens to participate in decisions for the common good. Another concern pointed out by this author is the tension between the pluralism of a democratic system and virtues since pluralism minimizes responsibility and furnishes no moral foundations for society.<sup>291</sup>

But democracy does not exhaust the social issues relevant to Nicaragua and other countries. There are other topics that concern Catholic social teaching, such as human rights, global warming, and social peace which must be included in school curricula in order to provide criteria of discernment for students.

Connected to the previous analysis of justice is politics, which also is mentioned by Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II as a moral responsibility in terms of participation in public life, in which lay people play an important role working for a more just and transparent society and struggling against idolatries of power and political corruption.<sup>292</sup> However, justice is a topic of study in Catholic education. In his book *Sources of Renewal*, Karol Wojtyla insisted that “politics is another field in which responsibility is exercised.”<sup>293</sup> His open criticisms of the political systems of Marxism, capitalism, democratic political systems, and the fall of communism in Eastern Europe were examples given by the late pope of Christian political duty.<sup>294</sup>

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<sup>291</sup> Amitai Etzioni, “Virtues in a Democracy,” *Catholic Social Thought and the New World Order*, 298.

<sup>292</sup> John Paul II, *Christifideles laici*, no. 42.

<sup>293</sup> Wojtyla, *Sources of Renewal*, 304.

<sup>294</sup> John Paul II, *Centesimus annus*, no. 41.

In the encyclical *Laborem exercens* John Paul II recognized as positive the socialist concern about “the question of the worker” or the “question of the proletariat.” He saw this issue as reflecting a concern for solidarity, and he recognized that Marxism had emerged as a reaction against capitalist exploitation.<sup>295</sup> On the other hand, Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II criticized Marxism for its failures concerning the planned economy and its violation of human rights. In this context, the late pope defended the basic right of the human person to economic possessions, since material goods are a gift of God.<sup>296</sup> Regarding the capitalist system, John Paul II evaluated the free market and private property as positive freedoms for human beings, but he rejected a capitalist system without juridical and ethical rules that protect human dignity.<sup>297</sup>

The issue of politics as a moral duty has been relevant to the Nicaraguan Catholic church. The first and second pastoral letters written by the Nicaraguan bishops immediately after Vatican Council II describe the moral value of politics and the moral obligation of Catholics to participate conscientiously in politics, since a baptized person has to accomplish a prophetic mission on earth by changing unjust social structures that exist in his or her country and by humanizing current social structures. In the first letter, the bishops outline their pastoral agenda by encouraging Christians to assume a political commitment as a “responsibility and sacred mission” to transform creation. The episcopal

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<sup>295</sup> John Paul II, *Laborem exercens*, no. 8.

<sup>296</sup> John Paul II, *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, no. 29.

<sup>297</sup> John Pual II, *Centesimus annus*, no. 41.

document states: “Every Christian must act in politics with freedom of spirit, ethical vision, and with a Christian motivation.”<sup>298</sup>

Another pastoral letter of the Nicaraguan bishops in the early post-Vatican II period defines and founds the mission of the Church in political work. The teaching of this local Catholic Church defines politics in different ways. The pastoral document states that the term “politics” means the right of the community to search for the common good and the comprehensive development of human beings. The document also notes that politics is understood as participation in a political party, and in a broad sense politics should promote the rights of citizens to participate in the social, economic and political transformation of Nicaraguan society. It affirms the right of the Catholic Church to be involved in this social responsibility by enlightening believers with the social Catholic doctrine and forming human and Christian consciences.<sup>299</sup> From this perspective, the bishops conclude that Catholics must participate in politics as a moral responsibility, and the refusal of this responsibility constitutes the sin of selfishness since it ignores the commandment of love.<sup>300</sup>

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<sup>298</sup> Conferencia Episcopal de Nicaragua, “Deber del Testimonio y Acción Cristiana en el mundo Político. June 29, 1971,” *L’Osservatore Romano* (Spanish edition) 38 [1971]: 7.

<sup>299</sup> Conferencia Episcopal de Nicaragua, “Carta Pastoral sobre los Principios que rigen la Actividad Política de toda la Iglesia como tal,” *L’Osservatore Romano* (Spanish edition) 22 (1972): 7.

<sup>300</sup> “Los ciudadanos todos deben meditar seriamente que, a estos derechos que los asisten, corresponde una obligación y responsabilidad pareja de intervenir en el proceso político del país. La apatía, el ‘yoquepiedo’ o el miedo de arrear posiciones o privilegios constituye en las circunstancias de hoy una seria falla ciudadana, o dicho en términos cristianos, un serio pecado de egoísmo que infringe, por omisión al menos, el mandamiento supremo de amar prácticamente a nuestro hermano. En cuanto mayor capacidad tenga un ciudadano de actuar, mayor es su responsabilidad y mayor por consiguiente su falta, si no actúa.” Ibid, 8. “All citizens should seriously consider the fact that along with rights come an equal obligation and responsibility to involve themselves in the political process of the country. Apathy, unconcern or fear of intensifying positions or privileges constitutes in today’s circumstances a serious failing in citizenship, or put in Christian terms, a serious sin of selfishness that contravenes, by omission at least, the supreme

There are other numerous references in Nicaraguan Catholic teaching to political duty in the last three decades that are in continuity with those mentioned above. For instance, in the decade of the 1980s, the Nicaraguan Episcopal Conference reminded Catholics to review their political practices in terms of confronting national corruption and the bureaucratic inefficiency that was accepted by the Sandinista government itself.<sup>301</sup> In the decade of the 1990s, the Nicaraguan church deplored the “disdain” for politics and the lack of political participation to serve the common good by believers in local communities, and underscored the need to implement a true democracy in the country and the imperative of promoting an authentic sense of solidarity and freedom in Nicaraguan society.<sup>302</sup>

The Latin American Catholic church has contributed to the Universal Church in the last decades by providing philosophical and theological foundations for an ethical

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commandment to love our neighbor in a practical way. The more capacity the citizen has to act, the greater the responsibility and consequently the greater his failing if he does not act” (personal translation).

<sup>301</sup> “Los Obispos Nicaragüenses constatamos por una parte la desilusión de quienes pusieron sus esperanzas y apostaron su vida misma a un determinado proyecto político y que ahora se sienten defraudados por sus líderes y por otra parte, la corrupción y el burocratismo administrativos generalizados, admitidos y criticados por el mismo Gobierno.” Conferencia Episcopal de Nicaragua, “Carta Pastoral con Motivo de la Solemnidad Litúrgica de los Santos Apóstoles Pedro y Pablo. June 29, 1998,” *Documentos Seleccionados*, pg. 137. “We Nicaraguan bishops confirm on the one hand the disappointment of those who place their hopes and bet their very lives on a particular project and now feel betrayed by their leaders, and on the other hand the widespread corruption and bureaucracy that is acknowledged and criticized by the government itself” (personal translation).

<sup>302</sup> “El excesivo proteccionismo del Estado y el mal ejemplo que, durante años, han dado muchos dirigentes políticos del país, dieron como resultado la casi desaparición de la iniciativa privada y la pasividad de muchísimas personas, de tal manera que, actualmente, nos encontramos en Nicaragua con un pueblo que, en su mayoría rehuye el compromiso y la responsabilidad personal así como también el esfuerzo para servir al bien común.” Conferencia Episcopal de Nicaragua, “Carta Pastoral para Avivar la Esperanza del Pueblo de Dios. May 1st. 1994,” *L’Osservatore Romano* (Spanish edition) 23 (1994): 9. “The excessive protectionism by the government and the bad example given for years by many political leaders in the country has almost resulted in the disappearance of private initiative, and has caused the passivity of many people, to such an extent that currently what we find in Nicaragua is a people who largely avoid commitment and personal responsibility as well as any effort to serve the common good” (personal translation).

politics. After basing politics on human nature and common rules for mankind, the bishops teach that the involvement of the Church in the political arena is based on Christian faith, since the gospel concerns the whole person. The pastors distinguish the definition of politics in a broad sense as that which pursues the national and international common good, from a narrower sense, as that in which politics is composed of actions engaged in by individuals and groups, such as participation in political parties in order to improve economic and social realities.<sup>303</sup>

The political commitment of believers has an eschatological meaning since it is a way to establish the Kingdom of God on earth, in terms of political structures, the environment, and the economy. Even though these specific categories do not literally appear in revelation itself, Catholic social teaching has the task of applying hermeneutically those biblical texts that support goals in keeping with the Kingdom of God to evangelize believers about this social and evangelical responsibility. John Paul II asserted that only by “personal involvement” can believers contribute to economic and political decisions.<sup>304</sup> But the pope warned that “no political society should be confused with the Kingdom of God.”<sup>305</sup> The Nicaraguan Episcopal Conference, in discussing the task of the laity in political participation, emphasizes the people’s moral responsibility for political systems since it is they people who choose their leaders.<sup>306</sup>

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<sup>303</sup> Consejo Episcopal Latinoamericano, *Puebla and Beyond. Documentation and Commentary*, no. 523.

<sup>304</sup> John Paul II, *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, no. 47.

<sup>305</sup> John Paul II, *Centesimus annus*, no. 25.

<sup>306</sup> “No se trata pues de ‘politizar’ a la Iglesia, sino de ‘politizar’ a la ciudadanía. Son los ciudadanos los que hacen y determinan el valor y la justeza de los sistemas. Son ellos los que eligen a sus gobernantes. Todo sistema y todo gobierno existe por y para la ciudadanía.” Conferencia Episcopal de Nicaragua, “Testimonio y Acción Cristiana en el Mundo Político. 29 de Junio, 1971,” *L’Osservatore Romano* (Spanish edition) 22 [1971]: 7. “It is not about ‘politicizing’ the Church but ‘politicizing’ the citizens. The citizens create and

An analysis of the authoritative teaching by the pope and the Nicaraguan Episcopal Conference reveals an appeal to live a virtuous life by rejecting egoism and practicing solidarity toward others, which finds its foundation in the command of love taught by Jesus. Christian life means an individual and social experience since there is a relation between giver and receiver and a liberation from personal selfishness. Students in Catholic secondary schools must be educated for political commitment to motivate them to participate in political parties and civil responsibilities. The Catholic school curriculum has to explain from a philosophical and theological viewpoint the political responsibility of believers to consider political commitment as a moral duty.

### 3.3.5. Responsibility and Solidarity

Solidarity is the last issue that I will discuss in this chapter. Solidarity is a virtue among people or groups that have a common interest in any subject. Solidarity also means joining an effort or endeavor led by others. As part of the ethics of responsibility, solidarity is another significant educational goal of the Catholic school. As stated in the second chapter, Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II was clear about the virtue of solidarity and its importance in Catholic education. Regarding the Catholic school, John Paul II encouraged students to practice solidarity by considering others as brothers and sisters, children of the same Father, and by extending solidarity in concrete situations such as

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assess the value and justice of systems; it is they who elect those govern them. All systems and governments exist by and for the citizens” (personal translation).

helping immigrants. The pope asserted that “the other is our brother, our sister. It is important therefore to consider him as such.”<sup>307</sup>

Before becoming pope, Karol Wojtyla taught that solidarity means “a constant readiness to accept and to realize one’s share in the community because of one’s membership within that particular community.”<sup>308</sup> In the light of Vatican Council II, Wojtyla asserted that solidarity is a human attitude “with men and mankind in the various situations of life.”<sup>309</sup> The former archbishop of Krakow was aware of the significance of solidarity in our time because it was identified by the Council as one of “the signs of our times.”<sup>310</sup>

As pope, John Paul II broadly treated solidarity versus individualism. For the late pope, solidarity implies interdependence of mankind since “the goods of creation are meant for all.”<sup>311</sup> In analyzing individualism opposed to solidarity, the pontiff affirmed that individual conscience never can be separated from morality; moral norms must come first. He deplored the fact that that because of subjectivism and individualism, the links between freedom and moral law, human nature and conscience, and the norms for the evaluation of human acts are all questioned nowadays.<sup>312</sup> Another consequence of

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“What is indispensable is personal conversion; that is, a change of attitude and a tireless search for all means that could lead to peace. This will be a reality when we have eliminated from our lives, our homes and our society the causes of injustices. This will be the beginning of the structural renewal that would permit Nicaraguans to live in peace and harmony.” (personal translation).

<sup>307</sup> John Paul II, “Preserve distinctive character of true Catholic teaching,” *L'Osservatore Romano* 21 (English edition) (1985): 2

<sup>308</sup> Wojtyla, *The Acting Person*, 285.

<sup>309</sup> Wojtyla, *Sources of Renewal*, 282.

<sup>310</sup> Vatican Council II, *Apostolicam actuositatem*, no. 14.

<sup>311</sup> John Paul II, *Sollicitudo rei socialis* no. 39.

<sup>312</sup> John Paul II, *Veritatis splendor*, no. 34.



individualism is the lack of solidarity towards others, which matches the sin of Cain, who closed his heart to his brother.<sup>313</sup>

John Paul II strongly criticized the individualistic mentality since it impedes the economic and social development of nations, which is thus against the Gospel teaching that commands love for others (cf. Jn: 13: 34), and Catholic teaching concerning charity and solidarity. To engage social realities, the pontiff praised volunteerism as a way to confront current individualistic thought.<sup>314</sup> In the Apostolic exhortation *Salvifici doloris* the pope interpreted the Good Samaritan as a symbol of openness to others and human solidarity. The pope found in this biblical text certain moral values which confront indifference, violence, and cruelty. The Holy Father stated that the parable of the Good Samaritan has become “one of the essential elements of moral culture and universally human civilization.”<sup>315</sup>

There are different ways to educate about solidarity in Catholic schools. The first expression of solidarity lies in the school in itself. For instance instruction in itself, from teachers to pupils, is an act of solidarity in terms of sharing scientific knowledge, abilities, and experiences, as individuals and as members of a family. Another way for students to practice solidarity involves social service in hospitals, nursing homes, literacy programs, protecting the environment and promoting good citizenship through educational programs that defend life, social justice, and human rights.

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<sup>313</sup> John Paul II, *Evangelium vitae*, no. 19.

<sup>314</sup> John Paul II, *Centesimus annus*, no. 49.

<sup>315</sup> John Paul II, *Salvifici doloris*, *On the Christian Meaning of Human Suffering* (Boston: Pauline Books & Media, 1984), no. 30, AAS 76 (1984): 201-250.

The Nicaraguan Episcopal Conference suggests an adequate distribution of financial resources by the government to benefit health and education as one of the best ways to practice solidarity and to avoid hardships for people in need, so that the state meets its obligation as the most important agent for solidarity.<sup>316</sup>

The curriculum of the Catholic school should include Catholic social doctrine to promote the understanding of this virtue and to confront national realities from a Catholic perspective. The *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* explains solidarity in terms of the common good, equality among men and peoples, the universal destination of goods, and the establishment peace on the planet.<sup>317</sup> The Vatican document adds that “the principle of solidarity requires that men and women of our day cultivate a greater awareness that they are debtors of the society of which they have become part.”<sup>318</sup>

The Catholic school would contribute to solidarity with victims of unjust social realities by criticizing national institutions for social services, such as health, education, housing and other services that benefit society, especially for people in need. Another goal of the Catholic school is to include in its sociology classes the study of laws and decrees enacted by local government that promote solidarity in the nation, as well as consideration of charitable social service organizations that serve people in need and which would welcome student volunteers. Finally, the Catholic school should promote

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<sup>316</sup> “Que los bienes y presupuesto del gobierno sean priorizados en las áreas más sensibles para nuestra sociedad, tal como la salud y la educación y no se recargue a la población con lo que es obligación del estado.” Conferencia Episcopal de Nicaragua, “Mensaje en Ocasión de la Pascua de resurrección, 3 de mayo de 1995,” <http://www.tmx.com.ni/-cen/documentos/9/26/2007>.

“The resources and budget of the government should be prioritized with respect to the most vulnerable areas of our society, such that the responsibility for health and education, which is the responsibility of the government, not fall on the people” (personal translation).

<sup>317</sup> *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, no. 194.

<sup>318</sup> *Ibid*, no. 195.

solidarity by literacy work, by helping the sick, elderly and handicapped, by confronting individualism by forming social consciousness, and by sharing its cultural patrimony in science and technology.

## Conclusion

After analyzing significant aspects of Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II's thinking on Catholic education, one discovers a coherence between his scholarly and pontifical works in regard to the truth of man, God and the Church, which the Holy Father emphasized as elements of the Catholic curriculum. The pope insisted that a Catholic school is authentic if the education is faithful to these truths in theory and in practice. The lasting contribution of the Polish thinker and pontiff to Catholic education is a profound anthropology and a Christocentrism that ideally should shape the entire school community, and particularly those students who hope for a Catholic education that guarantees ethical formation, high academic standards, and a true Catholic identity from Catholic educational institutions such as Catholic schools and universities. Catholic education should educate in morality and promotes values, and support parents for a comprehensive formation of their children as persons, Christians and citizens.

Another conclusion of this third chapter concerns how the teachings of Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II about Catholic education have permeated Catholic education in Nicaragua, where some Catholic schools have included in their educational projects some moral values which find harmony in part with the late pope's doctrine. Even though in

Nicaragua there is not yet a significant body of research about the papal legacy in education, the Nicaraguan Episcopal Conference has based its teaching on education on the Second Vatican Council II and the most relevant pontifical documents of John Paul II, such as *Catechesis tradendae* and *Familiaris consortio*, in which the Nicaraguan Episcopal Conference grounded two pastoral letters: *Carta Pastoral sobre la Educación Católica* (Pastoral Letter About Catholic Education), on December 8, 1982; and *Carta Pastoral sobre Algunos aspectos de la Catequesis Familiar* (Pastoral Letter On Some Aspects Of Family Catechesis), on May 3, 1989.

Finally, the virtues of responsibility, justice, and solidarity discussed throughout this dissertation and in this chapter are a concern not only for the Holy Father but for the whole Catholic Church. Catholic schools cannot be indifferent to these concerns. The suggestions mentioned in this chapter do not exhaust the topic but encourage religious congregations, teachers, parents, and students concerning values that should be implemented in an educational program ever better able to confront current realities experienced by humankind, such the defense of human dignity and human rights, clarifying doubts about the truth of God, and reinforcing the mission of the Church and the importance of Catholic schools in society.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **GENERAL CONCLUSION**

This dissertation has shown that the themes of moral responsibility in the defense of life, the protection of the family, the defense of human dignity, and the promotion of justice and solidarity are a permanent concern to the Catholic Church, civil governments, and society in general. The current basis for this concern is generated, among other factors, by new concepts of family, such as considering the institution of the family to be a simple social group, which can be interpreted as the union of two people, without distinction of sex. This point of view is opposed to the traditional concept that describes family as a union between a man and a woman that is open to procreation, which is in harmony with the Catholic teaching. Another factor that has caused changes in families is moral permissivism. This ethical stance rejects moral norms that promote a single correct understanding of human sexuality, the defense of life, and the dignity of persons since family is an institution created by God. It is also important to point out efforts by many civil laws that attempt to establish family morality according to secular concepts that are divorced from the natural law and divine revelation. The world is experiencing a disintegration of the family, increasing numbers of single mothers, abortion, divorce, disdain for the sacrament of marriage, and abandoned children.

Regarding other social concerns such as justice and solidarity, Nicaraguan society like the world in general experiences conflicts between the desire for justice and the reality of a lack of solidarity with the poorest, political and economical corruption,

investment in the military instead of the provision of food, education and essential public services such as electricity and clean drinking water to the general population. In addition to this, justice and solidarity are affected because of the shortage of political leaders who aspire to be president or serve in government ministries in order to serve the common good, rather than promote the interests of particular individuals.

The Catholic Church has systematically elaborated her social doctrine since the encyclical *Rerum novarum*, written by Leo XIII, about the issues mentioned above and other topics. In the last century the pontiffs have influenced thought about these social issues. Very recently, Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II's thinking permeated the Catholic Church bringing a global pastoral renewal of theology, especially concerning the theme of the moral responsibility of Christian family as a school to form children in moral values and foster a commitment to the common good.

It is also relevant to point out that John Paul II made it a priority in his pontificate, as he frequently stated in his documents, to apply the teachings of Vatican Council II, such as *Redemptor hominis*. The pope considered Vatican II as “an inheritance” of deep roots for the consciousness of the Church.”<sup>1</sup> In this same encyclical John Paul II presented his pastoral ministry in the light of the Council, by treating the problems of man as redeemed by Christ. The teaching of the Council about Christ as the new man became one of the most important ideas in his documents.<sup>2</sup> There are other specific topics tackled by Vatican Council II which were seen by the late pope as key issues for his pontificate,

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<sup>1</sup> John Paul II, *Redemptor hominis*, no. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, no. 8.

such atheism, political and social systems, and “spiritual values” that concern humankind, to which Catholicism cannot be indifferent.<sup>3</sup>

The issues mentioned above are very important in John Paul II’s thought because he participated as delegate of the Polish bishops in this Council. Wojtyla’s participation in the Council enabled him to discover theological trends, such as the “nouvelle theology” mentioned in this dissertation, whose influence promoted a renewed theology of the Incarnation through a rethinking of moral theology. Wojtyla responded to these new trends by reaffirming the authority of the Church in moral matters and the need for theologians to expound moral theology according to the teachings of the Catholic Church in communion with the successor of Peter since the Church is the custodian of the deposit of faith and Catholic bishops are custodians of tradition as successors to the apostles.

The analysis of the social issues of justice and solidarity treated in this work also demonstrated that Nicaragua, like other countries in the world, suffers from poverty and a lack of fair administration of justice for all citizens because of political corruption. Despite the fact that theoretically in Nicaragua there are laws to promote justice, the problem often concerns those who implement these laws. Most judges seem not to understand that it is their duty to administer justice impartially. Another problem is that many Nicaraguan judges are subservient to the political leaders who appointed them.

Although people in various cultures think differently and each nation faces particular problems in family issues, social life, economic development and the implementation of justice, this dissertation has mentioned that some problems treated here regarding responsibility, justice, and solidarity are general challenges faced by all

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid, no. 11.

mankind seeking to observe moral norms and achieve right human conduct. John Paul II reinforced Catholic social doctrine in the face of these realities. Regarding the family issues and social responsibilities mentioned above, John Paul II contributed to Catholic morality by providing ideas to strengthen the moral doctrine of the Church through anthropological and theological views grounded in human dignity and the incarnation of Christ. Throughout his writings the late pope emphasized that all human beings are a divine creation. But man, as *imago Dei*, only can be understood in the light of revelation. (cf. *Gaudium et spes*, no.22). John Paul II insisted that man was injured by original sin and needs to be healed from this sin, and reestablished in his truth and integrity as a human person and son of God. But no one is able to be healed by himself, and for this reason the former pope taught that man needs Christ, who is the only one able to liberate man from original sin, because Christ assumed human nature in his incarnation.

John Paul II placed man at the center of his anthropology since God created and loves him. From this perspective, the late pope developed a solid Christian anthropology in which moral theology must deepen the understanding of morality. Thus, in the Incarnation of Christ, man can discover the truth about his humanity. From the mystery of redemption, each person must feel loved by God and should base his human acts. Therefore, the human person becomes a “new man” by participating in divine life assisted by the grace of God. But the former pope also explained that despite being a son of God, man still experiences evils and this can only be healed through union with Christ.

Another insistence in John Paul II’s moral teaching was that there is a “crisis of truth” in modern culture. The late pontiff insisted that conscience cannot be the only source for



judging human acts, but rather such acts must fit within the moral law. He saw this crisis as also leading to the denial of the concept of human nature. The pontiff emphasized the reality of human nature, the necessary link between freedom and truth and the need for conscience to submit to objective truth.

The moral thought of John Paul II in the encyclical *Veritatis splendor* outlines the great keys in moral theology to be applied in all pastoral spheres of Catholicism. This dissertation seeks to contribute to Christian morality by its study of the anthropological and theological ideas through which the late pope strengthened his moral theology and which could be useful to Catholic schools everywhere, including Nicaragua, where I have undertaken this study.

The pope saw Catholic schools as key agents of moral education according to the teachings of the Vatican Council II. The Council called for respect for the moral conscience, described by the Council as “a law inscribed by God in man’s heart” (cf. *GS* no.16). Another teaching of the Vatican Council II is the importance of confronting current individualistic morality by collaborating for the common good and cultivating the virtues of justice and love (*GS* no.30). It is important to mention the specific concerns tackled by the constitution *Gaudium et spes* about family, marriage, justice, peace, and solidarity, some of which were discussed in this dissertation. In the document *Ad gentes divinitus*, the Council states that religious and moral teachings of the church must seek “to enhance the dignity of men and promote fraternal unity” (*AG* no.12). This role would enable them to confront new challenges in the contemporary world. There is no doubt that the doctrine of the late pope on moral theology is an important resource for

catechesis, preaching, and research. However, his specific moral teachings are not yet a common part of the curriculum in Nicaragua or other countries.

It is clear that there is a common ground between the teaching of the Nicaraguan bishops and the magisterium of John Paul II in specific moral issues of youth, family, marriage, sexuality, justice, and solidarity. In fact, after comparing the themes treated by the Nicaraguan bishops with John Paul II's thinking, one realizes that the themes tackled in this dissertation could apply widely to the moral dilemmas of many countries since these realities pertain to human nature in general and no one society can escape the influence of mass media, which have shaped new models of behaviors and mentality and have promoted a morality opposed to Christian doctrine. The challenge for Christians is how to deal with these forces and how to spread their moral teachings among human beings, especially those believers who experience a conflict between their principles and moral theories that promote divorce, adultery, abortion, and so forth.

The virtues of responsibility, justice, and solidarity treated in this dissertation involve circumstances inherent to human experience that are shaped by societal and cultural influences. Therefore, the specific realities of family, sexual activity, marriage, and the practices of justice and solidarity are universal issues faced by men and women who act according to their family and cultural traditions. This academic work has noted, lamentably, that the influence of parents on their children's behavior seems to be growing weaker in the contemporary epoch. The influence of the increasingly globalized mass media on the way in which the current generation thinks about marriage and family seems to have transformed the mentality of many contemporary young people. It seems

that many youth have distanced themselves from certain traditional teachings of the Catholic Church and family traditions as they become increasingly critical of Christian religious duties, the practice of sacraments, and moral guidance concerning sexuality, human love, and the defense of human life, and marriage.

Catholic social teaching had a great significance for Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II, who reinvigorated the magisterium by holding up the human person as the center of his doctrine and the main subject of history in his country and then his pastoral experience as pope. In addition, the late Polish thinker and pope motivated the Catholic Church to take again the doctrine of the Incarnation of Christ as the essential basis for meditating on the mystery of man and the defense of human dignity. There is no doubt that the personal experience of the Slavic bishop and pope with repressive Marxist on the one hand and the excesses of the capitalist system on the other were decisive for the late pontiff's proclamation of the superiority of man to ideologies and material acquisitions.

As he confronted Marxist ideologies that viewed religion as a form of "alienation," and capitalist systems that alienated man by reducing him to an object of "consumerism," Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II stated that Christians are called to live as "spiritual beings," with an emphasis on "being" rather than "having." From this point of view, the former Polish thinker and pope deplored the fact that the current consumerism and permissive mentality treated the human person as an object and not as a subject. The pontiff encouraged Catholics to defend the "truth" of man as a human person and proclaim the triumph of the "spiritual being," over "carnal man." Thus, emphasizing the human person

as a creation of God, the late pope rejected any intention and act against human dignity since this entails an offense against God himself.

The doctrinal legacy of Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II as thinker and pope is quite broad. His doctrine became a crucial resource for moral theology and Catholic education. This dissertation proposes his thinking as a significant contribution to educational institutions such as the Catholic secondary school, which is a privileged space to form young persons, educate in faith, shape Christian thought, and motivate Christians to promote social changes through their Christian commitment in society. This study provides sources and doctrine drawn from the teaching of the late pope to reinforce the moral education of students from an anthropological and theological viewpoint, as this dissertation has tried to demonstrate in the last chapter.

. Since his early priesthood and later as pope, the pontiff expanded his doctrine on moral theology by teaching students at Lublin University and encouraging youth to live a right moral life with the goal of reinforcing Christian identity. The Polish pastor undertook a relevant apostolate with young people calling them to practice their faith and to renew Christianity. This calling included shaping personality, encouraging holiness, promoting eagerness to face current challenges in science and technology, and renewing a commitment to the Catholic Church by giving testimony as Christians by loving God and doing good to their neighbors, as Christ demands of believers.

This dissertation has demonstrated that the thought of the late pope on moral values is similar to what is taught in some Nicaraguan Catholic secondary schools, as in the case of topics of justice and solidarity, which are the most important values in the approach of

the three educational projects examined by this dissertation. In fact, after analyzing the broad significance of the values of responsibility, and social moral issues, one concludes that John Paul II's teachings on moral education apply far beyond just Nicaraguan Catholic secondary schools. This similarity developed by the late pope and these Nicaraguan Catholic schools is evidenced in their forming students as whole persons, being sensitive toward the poorest, promoting good citizenship, and assuming as Christian a role in society struggling for a "new man" and "a new society." Like the late pope, these Nicaraguan Catholic schools seek to humanize society by reinforcing a Christian humanism, in which the Catholic school can play an important role in society.

After analyzing Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II's key thoughts on Catholic education, one finds a broad anthropological and theological teaching that could reinforce the curriculum of the three educational projects treated in this dissertation as well as in other Catholic schools. Despite the fact that most congregational schools try to update and implement their founder's charismas according to the signs of the times, the fact is that such schools are immersed in different times and cultures, even though they all share the patrimony of the Catholic Church. The contributions of the late pope to Catholic education could, therefore, give all of these schools a seal of universality and would be a desirable reference to standardize their curricula.

The intellectual and personal contribution of the late Holy Father goes far beyond just Catholic education. His moral teachings have become the subject of theological debates and his doctrine are still the foundation and reference for documents of the Catholic Church, as is the case of the Nicaraguan Episcopal Conference, which frequently cites the

magisterium of the late pope in her pastoral letters. His important contributions to moral theology from an anthropological vision and his firm position to remain faithful to the tradition of the Church have encouraged many moral theologians to enrich morality class with a solid anthropology.

This dissertation has contributed to philosophical and theological thinking by analyzing the key values of responsibility (as applied to family, sexuality and marriage), justice and solidarity. From a merely ethical view, responsibility is the cause of a particular kind of reaction -- praise, blame, or something akin to these. A person is responsible for his acts if he has acted according his will, freedom, and understanding. The term “responsibility” tends to have more a philosophical sense than a theological meaning, as was mentioned in this dissertation. Further works in moral theology should discuss responsibility more in terms of theology. John Paul II applied the theological aspects of responsibility to human sexuality, the human body, and the importance of family.

This dissertation only discussed part of Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II’s moral doctrine. Each topic here mentioned –responsibility (as applied to family, sexuality, and marriage), justice, and solidarity-- deserves a specific study in its own right. There are sufficient sources to continue with these topics in the rest of the encyclicals, apostolic exhortations, homilies, and other documents produced by the former pontiff. The summaries of these topics developed in this dissertation only attempted to contribute to the work of Catholic teachers, so that they would have ideas to implement the systematic moral formation of students according to the former pope’s thinking. It is most probable that learning about

the doctrine of the late pope will involve a process of discovery for many Nicaraguan teachers, who have a special affection for him because he visited the country, but do not know his doctrine in any depth. Thus, this process will be for many Catholic educators an exciting one of theological discovery.

This dissertation demonstrated that Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II maintained continuity with the Catholic social thought that began with Pope Leo XIII. The late pontiff argued that problems dealt with by the previous pontiffs continue in the world. Despite different ongoing problems and changing political systems and economic models, Catholic social teaching retains its validity for any society. The social teaching of the Church is a theological reflection on the problems of human beings. It analyzes the roots of these situations, illuminates such circumstances in the light of the gospel and human dignity, and encourages leaders, governments, and society to respond compassionately to such situations. Catholic social teaching does not attempt to resolve concrete issues of economic and political situations, since these spheres of activity belong to political leaders and those domestic and international institutions, such as the United Nations, the OAS, various international development banks, etc., that support the common good.

Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II went beyond typical social situations faced by any society such as those posed by the economy or political challenges. He also included as essential social concerns the themes of family, marriage, and sexuality, which have been studied more from a theological viewpoint than as social topics. For the former Polish thinker and pope, these subjects also are part of the social doctrine of the Church since the family

is the basis of society and the most important school of values. One of John Paul II's most pressing concerns stemmed from the attempt by many democratic systems to legitimate a morality of the family opposed to revelation and Catholic doctrine, by promoting abortion, imposing birth control, and the acceptance of homosexuality as a right behavior for human beings.

John Paul II pointed out the importance for the Catholic Church of civil laws concerning the human person, the family, and marriage. For the late pope, the Catholic Church cannot be indifferent before these laws since the Church must defend the ends of marriage and the family according to the natural law, biblical revelation, and the teaching of the Catholic Church. For instance, this dissertation mentioned some laws and decrees enacted in Nicaragua that require vigilance from the Catholic Church since they could be either positive or negative. They are positive if they protect children, couples, and other family members by protecting the ends of matrimony, and if Nicaraguan government provides for basic needs in housing, health, and education. On the other hand, they are negative if the intentions of the state are to promote promiscuity and common-law-marriages.

The specific Nicaraguan civil laws discussed in this dissertation regarding human life, procreation, education, family, and marriage, were not broadly treated because since the aims of this work were to point out the existence of this legislation and note the urgency for the Nicaraguan Catholic Church and Catholic educators to consider such civil issues. Lawyers and experts in civil laws are needed to research whether these laws are consistent and reasonable and in accord with Christian principles. Regarding the specific



case of Nicaragua, it seems that legislation, codes, and decrees about family, marriage, and sexuality have been enacted to demonstrate that Nicaragua is a country ruled by laws that respect human rights and promote institutions which support the family, but it does not necessarily mean that such laws will be fully implemented. Some laws for family and marriage have been promulgated due to social pressure by non-governmental organizations that demand legal protection for human rights. Such laws were enacted, however, without the means to implement them. For instance, it is positive that the state theoretically protects children by providing health services or providing for their education, or that it protects single mothers by supplying their basic needs, but in practice, the state does not have the economic means to implement what the laws stipulate.

Regarding Catholic education, it should be noted that the three educational programs were chosen in this work because they represent some religious congregations specifically dedicated to education. These programs offer highly-respected and serious formation in moral values in an academically-structured context. There are, however, other schools in the country whose educational projects share in different ways the same ideals and values formulated by the Jesuits, the Piarists, and De La Salle Christian Brothers. The proposals made in this academic work will also serve small, under-funded parish schools, even though their curricula and resources cannot match the long traditions and expertise of the three mentioned above. Thus, the theme and contents developed in this dissertation will serve a wide variety of Nicaraguan Catholic schools, most of which lack a clear educational focus and a solid curricular basis for their Catholic education.

Regarding sources used in this dissertation, it is unfortunate that this work suffers from a lack of local information and sources for many subjects when discussing Nicaraguan issues, as was noted in the introduction. It might seem that Nicaraguan libraries would provide enough information about local topics, but they do not.<sup>4</sup>

Even though there is no doubt about the integrity and value of the pastoral task undertaken by Nicaraguan bishops and most Catholics in all spheres of the Catholic life, including catechesis, sacraments, education in faith, and moral formation, the absence of statistics, pastoral plans, and earlier research carried out by the Catholic Church create difficulties for any objective study of Catholic life and education in Nicaragua.

John Paul II encouraged the Catholic Church to continue a renewal in moral theology by implementing the Second Vatican Council from a solid anthropological vision. Despite the fact that the magisterium of the late pope continues to be well-regarded by theologians, the Church should encourage theologians and philosophers to research this anthropological legacy in greater depth. In terms of Catholic schools, it is in particular the humanities classes that should integrate the Council's ideas and this anthropological vision to propound the truth of man and defend his human dignity

Facing social issues of family, marriage, sexuality, and the need for adequate education concerning the human person and sexual morality, the Nicaraguan Catholic Church should establish a ministry to families in the light of John Paul II's doctrine, so that the Church can guide disintegrated families and married couples in conflict who are at risk of divorce, counsel young couples before marriage, and warn about abortion. This

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<sup>4</sup> Another finding is that many bibliographic sources that could serve as citations lack the name of the publisher, the city and the date of printing, as is academically established and necessary for scholarly work.

task cannot be limited to pastoral exhortation of families regarding their morality or the implementation of concrete pastoral plans by individual dioceses; rather, what is needed is a new ecclesiastical structure to advocate for the rights of family with the government and society.

Bishops and priests should reinforce Catholic education in their pastoral plans by preparing lay people leaders as experts in education. Parents and teachers should be trained to consider Catholic education as an integral part of the evangelization carried out by the Catholic Church, by elaborating curricula on religious matter deal with amorality and religious indifference. More research is needed concerning the importance and role of moral formation to deal with the topics of human love, sexual education, the value of family, marriage, the virtue of chastity, and commitment for the common good. In this context, Catholic education cannot be understood just in terms of universities and schools, but Catholic education also covers catechesis in the parish and using mass media since their influence has become dominant and has shaped a new mentality in contemporary generations. Thus, experts on education should develop a curriculum for students and parishioners in moral matters that takes into consideration the key moral ideas discussed in this dissertation.

To implement the Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II's thinking on Catholic education, a specialized institute should be established to carry out research on the thought of Karol Wojtyla/John Paul and the current pope, and other future pontiffs, whose legacy involves a contribution to research about human beings, Catholic education, and morality, as was attempted by the late pope. At this institute those interested in this thinking could be

further trained in the analysis of his work its concrete applications to Nicaraguan schools and society in general.

The Nicaraguan Catholic bishops should develop a national pastoral plan for Catholic schools. Some contents of this plan have been discussed in this dissertation. The virtues of responsibility, justice, and solidarity concern all people and provide conceptual bases to confront the widespread relativistic morality that has permeated the contemporary mentality, especially among young people. There is a necessary link between the Catholic school and the Catholic Church. The Catholic school not only in Nicaragua, but anywhere in the world makes no sense if it is separated from a comprehensive pastoral plan according to the universal teachings of the pontiffs.

It is right to recognize that one of his significant contributions of Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II was his strengthening of moral theology with anthropology, which will be a future subject of research for theologians and ethicists. It is very probable that in the future some texts in morals for seminarians and teachers and students will be grounded specifically in the thought of the late pope.

It should also be pointed out that the John Paul II's charisma made him very attractive especially to young people, which will undoubtedly stimulate future research about his personality and his teachings. This study will lead to deeper analysis of his moral theology, which the pontiff tried so hard to explain in an accessible way to young people so they could conform their lives to the right use of freedom according to the gospel. In his efforts to reach the minds of Catholics, especially young people, the pontiff

based in part the question of morality on the situation of the rich young man, as it appears in the encyclical *Veritatis splendor* and his letter to young people *Dilecte amici*.

I hope that this dissertation will be of value for my country, Nicaragua, and especially for the numerous Catholic schools in need of a strengthened curriculum for the moral education that they provide to students. To take advantage of Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II's teaching on morality in this way could be a way of expressing gratitude to the former pope, whom the Nicaraguan people remember with gratitude. His two pastoral visits supported the local Church when she suffered political persecution from Sandinista government, reinforced the unity of the Church, and encouraged people to remain faithful to it. Nicaraguan Catholics, especially youth, found in John Paul II's teachings a solid motivation for giving testimony about their faith. Evident fruits of his visits to Nicaragua were several vocations for religious life and the priesthood, as well as an increase in lay people serving as pastoral agents and teaching catechesis.

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