

Philosophical Anthropology and *Evangelium Vitae*

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The purpose of this presentation is to articulate the philosophical anthropology underlying the teaching of Pope John Paul II in his encyclical *Evangelium vitae* and to contrast this understanding of the human person with the philosophical anthropology underlying the “culture of death.”

I will begin by considering the anthropology at the heart of the culture of death, continue by offering a critique of this utterly false and dualistic understanding of the human person and setting forth the key elements central to the realistic and integral anthropology at the heart of the teaching found in *Evangelium vitae*.

1. The Anthropology Underlying the Culture of Death

John Paul II explicitly and accurately identifies this anthropology in the first chapter of *Evangelium vitae*, a chapter entitled *Present-Day Threats to Human Life*. In identifying this anthropology he likewise sketches the authentic anthropology of his encyclical. The Pope goes to the root causes of these threats, declaring that the culture of death has its roots in «the mentality which carries the concept of subjectivity to an extreme and even distorts it, and recognizes as a subject of rights only the person who enjoys full or at least incipient autonomy and who emerges from a state of total dependence on others» (no. 19). It is a mentality «which tends to equate personal dignity with the capacity for verbal and explicit, or at least perceptible, communication» (no. 19). It is likewise rooted in a «notion of freedom which exalts the individual in an absolute way, and gives no

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place to solidarity, to openness to others and service of them» (no. 19), a misunderstanding of freedom which «*leads to a serious distortion of life in society*» (no. 20). This mentality—and the philosophical anthropology on which it is based—«no longer considers life as a splendid gift from God, something ‘sacred,’ entrusted to man’s responsibility, and thus also to his loving care and ‘veneration’». (no. 22). Finally, on this mentality, this anthropology, «the body is no longer perceived as a properly personal reality, a sign and place of relations with others, with God, and with the world. It is reduced to pure materiality: it is simply a complex of organs, functions, and energies to be used according to the sole criteria of pleasure and efficiency.

Consequently, *sexuality* too is depersonalized and exploited: from being the sign, place, and language of love, that is, of the gift of self and acceptance of another, in all the other’s richness as a person, it increasingly becomes the occasion and instrument for self-assertion and the selfish satisfaction of personal desires and instincts... *Procreation* then becomes the ‘enemy’, to be avoided in sexual activity; if it is welcomed, this is only because it expresses a desire, or intention, to have a child ‘at all costs’ and not because it signifies the complete acceptance of the other and therefore an openness to the richness of life which the child represents» (no. 23).

The anthropology at the heart of the culture of death is *dualistic* inasmuch as it sharply distinguishes between the *person*, the consciously experiencing and autonomous subject, and the living human body. It is an anthropology clearly operative, as I will now briefly illustrate, in major arguments used to justify abortion, euthanasia, and contraception.

2. Abortion

Many people who champion abortion readily grant that a human being, in the sense of a living member of the human species, is in existence from the time of conception/fertilization or at any rate very early thereafter. But they claim that membership in the human species is not a sufficient criterion for personhood because only some members of the human species acquire the property or set of properties necessary if an entity is to be regarded as a “person” and the bearer of rights. All members of the human species are obviously *biologically alive*, but they cannot be considered to be persons because membership in the human species has no *moral* significance. In fact, some advocates of this position, for instance the philosophers Michael Tooley and Peter Singer, frankly assert that those who believe that membership in the human species is of great moral significance are guilty of a form of unjust discrimination, *speciesism*, a prejudice similar to such immoral prejudices as racism and sexism. Singer, the champion of “animal rights,” contends that it is far more immoral to torture a kitten than to kill an unborn child or a young infant with a debilitating condition such as Down

Syndrome¹, and in his new set of commandments, intended to replace those given to Moses at Sinai, we find the injunction, «Do Not Discriminate on the Basis of Species»². Since those members of the human species who do not meet the criteria for personhood are obviously not persons, killing them is similar to killing other non-personal objects and is obviously justified if killing them enhances the dignity and well-being of those entities who are to be regarded as persons because they possess the appropriate autonomy and exercisable cognitive capacities³.

3. Euthanasia

A common apologia given to justify *voluntary euthanasia*, that is, the mercy killing of those who freely choose and indeed demand to be killed, is based on the claim that the “dignity” of persons gives them the right to die and to choose to be killed if, in their judgment, continued biological life is no longer of any value to them. Champions of this view, for example, Marvin Kohl, contend that the most important dignity proper to persons, i.e., proper to autonomous agents consciously aware of themselves and capable of relating to other selves, consists in their ability to *control* their own lives. If debilitating disease or other factors threaten persons with the loss of such control, if the continuation of merely biological existence imperils this dignity, then persons can rightly demand to be killed⁴. As one writer puts it, «the most important aspect of having a right to life is that one can choose whether or not to invoke it. We value the protection given by the right to life only when we want to go on living. No-one can fear being killed at his or her own persistent and informed and autonomous request»⁵.

With respect to *nonvoluntary euthanasia*, i.e., the mercy killing of individuals who are not capable of giving free and informed consent to being killed in this way, a common rationale used for its justification is that the individuals being killed are no longer persons; personal life has been extinguished in them because they no longer possess meaningful cognitive capacities, they are no longer conscious subjects aware of themselves as selves and capable of relating to other selves. Their existence is merely biological; indeed, they can be regarded as living vegetables. Thus continued existence is no longer of any value to them, and ending it is not to do an injustice to a person but rather to bring an end to a life that no longer has any meaning.

¹ P. SINGER, *Rethinking Life and Death: The Collapse of Our Traditional Ethics* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994) p. 173.

² *Ibidem*, pp. 202-206.

³ See also M. TOOLEY, *Abortion and Infanticide* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983).

⁴ M. KOHL, *Voluntary Beneficent Euthanasia*, in *Beneficent Euthanasia* (Buffalo: Prometheus Press, 1974).

⁵ P. SINGER, *Rethinking Life and Death*, pp. 218-219.

4. Contraception and Human Sexuality

It is instructive to note that many champions of this anthropology, used to justify abortion and euthanasia, explicitly compare the right of persons, i.e., consciously experiencing subjects, to control birth by the use of contraceptives with the right to choose death for themselves. Representative here is the following passage from a leading advocate of abortion, euthanasia, and contraception, Daniel Maguire:

«Birth control was for a very long time impeded by the physicalistic ethic that left mortal man at the mercy of his biology. He had no choice but to conform to the rhythms of his physical nature and to accept its determinations obediently. Only gradually did technological man discover that he was morally free to intervene creatively and to achieve birth control by choice. The question now arising is whether, in certain circumstances, we may intervene creatively to achieve death by choice or whether mortal man must in all cases await the good pleasure of biological and organic factors and allow them to determine the time and manner of his demise.... Could there be circumstances when it would be acutely reasonable (and therefore moral...) to terminate life through either positive action or calculated benign neglect rather than to await in awe the disposition of organic tissue?»⁶.

The answer to this rhetorical question is, of course, «Yes, mortal man can indeed intervene creatively to achieve death by choice, i.e., to choose to be killed for reasons of dignity when mere biological life is no longer of any value to him».

Even more illuminating is a text from Joseph Fletcher in which he justifies contraception, sterilization, artificial insemination, abortion, and euthanasia on the grounds that the human person, the consciously experiencing subject, has dominion over the merely biological and physical. In this remarkable passage, which well expresses the anthropology underlying the culture of death, Fletcher writes as follows:

«The right of spiritual beings [=consciously experiencing subjects] to use intelligent control over physical nature rather than submit beastlike to its blind workings, is at the heart of many crucial questions. Birth control, artificial insemination, sterilization, and abortion are medically discovered ways of fulfilling and protecting human values [=personal values, i.e., consciously experienced values] in spite of nature's failures and foolishness. Death control, like birth control, is a matter of human dignity. Without it persons are like puppets»⁷.

⁶ D. MAGUIRE, *The Freedom to Die*, «New Theology», 10 (1973), Martin Marty and Dean Peerman (New York: Macmillan, 1973), pp. 188-189.

⁷ J. FLETCHER, *Moral Responsibility: Situation Ethics at Work* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1967), p. 151.

The common apologia given to justify contraception is that our power to generate human life is something we share with other animals who, like us, reproduce. This power, in and of itself, is part of the subpersonal world of nature over which the person, i.e., the conscious subject, has been given dominion. It *becomes* personal and human if we freely choose to exercise it, but of itself it is a mere biological given. What is really human and personal about our sexuality is its *relational* character, its ability to enable us to break out of our prison of loneliness and enter into intimate union with another consciously experiencing subject. And if the continued flourishing of our biological power to generate interferes with or inhibits our desire to enter into kindly fellowship with another person through genital sex, then it is our right to suppress this biological given by contracepting⁸.

It is important to note, I believe, that the same anthropology is operative in the reasoning employed by the authors of the celebrated “Majority Papers” prepared by the Papal Commission on Population, the Family, and Natality⁹. A key idea in the defense of contraception mounted by the “Majority” is that man’s dominion over physical nature, willed by God, justifies the use of contraception by married couples to prevent pregnancies that would be irresponsible. In *The Question Is Not Closed* they note that, «in the matter at hand», namely, contraception:

«there is a certain change in the mind of contemporary man. He feels that he is more conformed to his rational nature, created by God with liberty and responsibility, when he uses his skill to intervene in the biological processes of nature so that he can achieve the ends of the institution of matrimony in the conditions of actual life, than if he would abandon himself to chance»¹⁰.

In *On Responsible Parenthood* they write as follows:

«It is proper to man, created to the image of God, to use what is given in physical nature in a way that he may develop it to its full significance with a view to the good of the whole person»¹¹.

⁸ On this see, among many sources, the following: A. MONTAGU, *Sex, Man, and Society* (New York: G.P. Putnam’s, 1969), chapter one, *The Pill, the Sexual Revolution, and the Schools*; H. KATCHADOURIAN, *Human Sexuality* (New York: Harper, 1985³).

⁹ The papers, both “Minority” and “Majority,” prepared by this Commission can be found, among other places, in *The Birth-Control Debate*, Robert Hoyt (Kansas City, MO: National Catholic Reporter, 1969). The “Majority” member of the Commission prepared three papers: (1) *Documentum Syntheticum* or “Rebuttal” of the paper prepared by the “Minority,” translated as *The Question Is Not Closed* in the Hoyt edited volume; (2) *Schema Documenti de Responsabili Paternitate* or Majority “Report,” translated as *On Responsible Parenthood: The Final Report*, in Hoyt; and (3) a French text, *Indications pastorales*, translated as *Pastoral Approaches* in Hoyt.

¹⁰ *The Question Is Not Closed*, in Hoyt, p. 69.

¹¹ *Responsible Parenthood*, in Hoyt, p. 87.

According to this idea, the *biological fertility* of human persons and the *biological processes* involved in the generation of human life are physical or biological “givens,” and as such need to be «assumed into the human sphere and be regulated within it»¹².

The person, on this view, is not to be the slave of his biology (moral rightness does not consist in conformity to biological or physical laws), to have his choices determined by the rules and conditions set in physiology. To the contrary, the biological givens confronting the person are to be controlled and regulated by the person’s intelligence and freedom. And this leads to the justification of the use of contraceptives.

This line of reasoning clearly presupposes a dualistic understanding of the human person. According to it, the body becomes an instrument of the person. The procreative dimension of human sexuality (biological fertility, the biological processes of human generation, etc.), according to this view, is *of itself* subpersonal and becomes personal, as the authors of *The Question Is Not Closed* explicitly assert, only when «assumed into the human sphere and regulated within it»¹³. Obviously, these authors do not regard our biological fertility as in itself human and personal, for if it were, it would have no need to «be assumed into the human sphere»¹⁴.

5. Summing Up

In my opinion a brilliant summary of this dualistic anthropology at the heart of the culture of death has been provided by the philosopher/theologian Germain Grisez, who himself repudiates as utterly false this dualistic understanding of the human person. Grisez describes this dualistic anthropology underlying the culture of death as follows:

¹² *The Question Is Not Closed*, in Hoyt, p. 70.

¹³ *Ibidem*.

¹⁴ In *Familiaris consortio*, n. 32, John Paul II perceptively notes: «The difference, both anthropological and moral, between contraception and recourse to the rhythm of the cycle, is much wider and deeper than is usually thought. It is a difference which, in final analysis, is based on irreconcilable concepts of the human person and of human sexuality». Contraception, as the argument of the “Majority” and the passages from Maguire and Fletcher clearly show, is rooted on the dualistic anthropology at the heart of the culture of death. On this matter see my essay, *Contraception and the Culture of Death*, in *Marriage and the Common Good: Proceedings of the 22nd Annual Convention of the Fellowship of Catholic Scholars*, Kenneth Whitehead (South Bend, IN: St. Augustine’s Press, 2001), pp. 173-203. See also, P. DELADURANTAYE, ‘Irreconcilable Concepts of the Human Person’ and the Moral Issue of Contraception: An Examination of the Personalism of Louis Janssens and the Personalism of Pope John Paul II, «Anthropotes: Rivista di Studi sulla Persona e la Famiglia», 13.2 (1997) pp. 433-456.

«This dualism, which pervades modern philosophy, is the basis of contemporary evaluations... of human actions and attitudes regarding organic human life and sexuality. If the person really is not his body, then the destruction of the life of the body is not directly and in itself an attack on a value intrinsic to the human person. The lives of the unborn, the lives of those not fully in possession of themselves—the hopelessly insane and the “vegetating” senile—and the lives of those who no longer can engage in praxis or in problem-solving become lives no longer meaningful, no longer valuable, no longer inviolable. If the person really is not his or her own body, then the use of the sexual organs in a manner which does not respect their proper biological teleology is not directly and in itself the perversion of the good of the human person.... Sexuality can be liberated from regulation by mere biological laws—as advocates of the new morality regard them—so that it can be employed for “interpersonal communication...”»¹⁵.

6. A Dualistic Anthropology vs. an Adequate, Integral Anthropology

6.1. Critique of Dualism; Defense of Man as a Unity of Body/Soul

As we have seen, the dualistic anthropology at the heart of the culture of death claims that only those members of the human species with incipient autonomy and at least minimal exercisable cognitive capacities can be properly regarded as persons. But as many philosophers have pointed out, among them Karol Wojtyła, Patrick Lee, John Finnis, and Germain Grisez, the reasoning behind this claim is fallacious. It fails to distinguish between a *radical* capacity or ability and a *developed* capacity or ability. A radical capacity can be called an *active*, as distinct from a merely *passive*, potentiality. An unborn baby and a newborn child, precisely by reason of his or her membership in the human species, has the *radical capacity* or *active potentiality* to discriminate between true and false propositions, to make choices, and to communicate rationally with others. But in order for the unborn or newborn child to *exercise* this capacity or set of capacities, his radical capacity or active potentiality for engaging in these activities—predictable kinds of behavior characteristic of members of the human species—must be allowed to develop. But it could never be developed if it were not present, rooted within the *being* of the human unborn or newborn child, to begin with. Similarly, adult members of the human species may, because of accidents, no longer be capable of actually exercising their capacity or ability to engage in these activities. But this does not mean that they do not have the natural or radical capacity, rooted in their *being* the *kind* of beings they are, for such activities. They are simply inhibited by reason of disease

¹⁵ G. GRISEZ, *Dualism and the New Morality*, in *L'Agire Morale*, Vol. 5 of «Atti del Congresso Internazionale nel Settimo Centenario di San Tommaso d'Aquino» (Naples: Edizioni Domenicane, 1977), p. 325.

or accident from exercising this capacity. Because of their membership in the human species, because of their *personhood*, the potentiality or capacity to engage in typically human activities is rooted in their being. Similarly members of the species “bald eagle” have the *radical capacity* or *active potentiality* to engage in behaviors predictable of members of the “bald eagle” species, e.g., the activity of soaring through the air on their wings. But for baby eaglets to *exercise* this capacity it must first be developed, and adult eagles may be inhibited from exercising this capacity because of accident, e.g., if their wings are broken, but the fact that this capacity is not now exercisable does not mean that it is not a radical capacity or active potentiality rooted in the being of all members of the species, bald eagle¹⁶.

An unborn human child, in the earliest stages of its development as an embryo, has the *active potentiality* or *radical capacity* to develop, *from within its own resources*, all it needs to exercise the property or set of properties characteristic of adult members of the human species. One can truly say, as the philosopher Robert Joyce has said, that a human embryo is a human person *with potential*; he or she is *not merely a potential person*¹⁷. People like Tooley, Singer, Fletcher and others, who require that an entity have *exercisable* cognitive capacities if it is to be considered a person, recognize that the unborn (and the old and senile) have the *potentiality* to engage in cognitive activities. But they regard this as a merely *passive* potentiality and fail to acknowledge the crucially significant difference between an *active* potentiality and a merely *passive* one. In his excellent development of the significance of this difference, Patrick Lee makes two very important points. The first concerns the *moral* significance of the difference between an active and a passive potentiality. An active potentiality means «that the same entity which possesses it is the same entity as will later exercise that active potentiality. With a passive potentiality this is not so, that is, the actualization of a passive potentiality often produces a completely different thing or substance [e.g., oxygen has the passive potentiality to become water when appropriately combined with hydrogen, but water is a different thing from oxygen]». Lee’s second key point answers the question, «why should higher mental functions or the capacity or active potentiality for such functions be a trait conferring value on those who have it?» The proper answer is that such functions and the capacity for them are «of ethical significance not because [these functions] are the only intrinsically valuable entities but because entities which have such potentialities are intrinsically valuable. And, *if the entity itself is intrinsically valuable, then it must be intrinsically valuable from the moment that it exists*»¹⁸.

¹⁶ The reasoning expressed in this paragraph has been extensively developed by many. See in particular, P. LEE, *Abortion and the Unborn Child* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1996), pp. 26-27; G. GRISEZ, *When Do People Begin?* Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Convention (1987), pp. 31-32. See also my *Catholic Bioethics and the Gift of Human Life* (Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, 2000), chapter 5.

¹⁷ R. JOYCE, *Let Me Be Born* (Collegeville, MN: St. John’s University Press, 1974).

¹⁸ P. LEE, *Abortion and the Unborn Child*, pp. 58-62.

Moreover, the claim that not all human beings are persons but only those with at least incipient exercisable cognitive abilities are to be so regarded, is marked by debates among its own advocates over precisely which ability or set of abilities must be exercised if an entity is to be called a “person.” This claim inescapably leads to arbitrary and unjust criteria for personhood. A devastating critique of this arbitrariness has been given by a group of British philosophers, among them Luke Gormally and John Finnis, who declared:

«The rational abilities necessary to these [cognitive] abilities are various, and come in varying degrees in human beings. If actual possession of such abilities is a necessary condition of the claim to be treated justly, questions will have to be faced precisely *which* abilities must be possessed, and how developed they must be before one enjoys this claim to be treated justly. And these questions can be answered only by *choosing* which to count as the relevant abilities and precisely how developed they must be to count. But any such line-drawing exercise is necessarily arbitrary.... Arbitrary choices may be reasonable and unavoidable in determining some entitlements.... But if one’s understanding of human worth and dignity commits one to being arbitrary about who are to be treated justly (i.e., about who are the very *subjects* of justice), it is clear that one lacks what is recognisable as a framework of justice. For it is incompatible with our fundamental intuitions about justice that we should determine who are the subjects of justice by arbitrary choice. The need for a non-arbitrary understanding of who are the subjects of justice requires us to assume that *just treatment is owing to all human beings in virtue of their humanity*. This indispensable assumption is also intrinsically reasonable. It is true that the distinctive dignity and value of human life are *manifested* in those specific exercises of developed rational abilities in which we achieve some share in such human goods as truth, beauty, justice, friendship, and integrity. But the necessary rational abilities are acquired in virtue of an underlying or radical capacity, *given with our nature as human beings*, for developing precisely those abilities»¹⁹.

The “only-those-with-exercisable-cognitive-abilities-are-persons” claim is utterly dualistic in that it considers the “person,” the subject with exercisable cognitive abilities, as one thing and the living human body as another. It is, of course, true that human beings can do things—think, make free choices, etc.—which show that they are *more* than their bodies and that they are also (or can be) consciously experiencing subjects having cognitive abilities. But, as one philosopher rightly notes, «persons can be more than their bodies without being realities other than their bodies, since a whole can be more than one of its parts without being a

¹⁹ Working Group of the Linacre Centre for Health Care Ethics, *Euthanasia, Clinical Practice, and the Law*, Luke Gormally (London: The Linacre Centre for Health Care Ethics, 1997), pp. 123-124.

reality other than that part»²⁰. There is not one being who breathes, eats, sleeps, feels bodily pain etc. and another being who thinks, chooses, and is aware of his interests and rights, etc. The same subject, the same human being, *is* the living human body *and* the subject of cognitive abilities²¹.

6.2. Human sexuality in an integral anthropology

As we have seen, the dualistic anthropology at the heart of the culture of death regards the procreative aspect of human sexuality as something in itself subhuman and subpersonal, and claims that the *personal* aspect of human sexuality consists in its *relational character* and ability to enable one conscious subject to break out of its prison of loneliness and enter into intimacy with another conscious subject. It moreover regards male-female differences as merely biological and anatomical, a factual given, part of the world of nature that human persons are free to change if they so desire.

This dualistic view of human sexuality is utterly false. The procreative aspect of *human* sexuality is far more than a merely biological power human persons share with other animals. Other animals reproduce; human persons procreate. The being generated by other animals is, like them, a subhuman, subpersonal being, an individual of a species. The children begotten by human parents are, like their mothers and fathers, *irreplaceable and nonsubstitutable persons*, equal in personal dignity to their parents. Moreover, human sexuality is both procreative and more than “relational,” as dualists would have it. Human sexuality is both procreative and *unitive*, and these two aspects of human sexuality are intimately and inherently interrelated, meant to go together. For the act that makes a man and a woman literally “one flesh” is an act open both to the gift of new human life and to the communication of a self-giving love. It is an act proper to men and women who have, by their own free and irrevocable choice, given themselves the identity of husbands and wives, as *spouses*. They have made each other *irreplaceable and nonsubstitutable* in their lives, and their act of bodily union, the marital act, truly *unites* them as irreplaceable, nonsubstitutable, nondisposable spouses, whereas the genital union of the non-married merely *joins* two individuals who remain in principle *replaceable, substitutable, disposable*. Moreover, by choosing to give themselves irrevocably to one another in marriage, husbands and wives, unlike non-married individuals, have *capacitated themselves* to welcome new human life lovingly, to nourish it humanely, and to educate it in the service of God and neighbor²².

²⁰ G. GRISEZ, *When Do People Begin?*, pp. 30-31.

²¹ See P. LEE, *Abortion and the Unborn Child*, pp. 32-37.

²² I have developed the ideas briefly sketched in this paragraph in chapter 1, *Marriage: A Person-Affirming, Love-Enabling, Life-Giving, and Sanctifying Reality*, of my book

In addition, the sexual differentiation of human persons into male and female is more than merely biological and anatomical. The human body reveals the human person, and a male body reveals a male person, a female body a female person. The male body is the outward sign that the male person is meant as a “gift” for the female person and the female body is the outward sign that the female person is meant as a “gift” for the male person. This meaning of the human body is what John Paul II calls the “nuptial meaning” of the body.

Males and females are sexually complementary, and men and women are two different but complementary ways of “imaging” the one true God. Human sexuality is both a giving and a receiving, and both men and women, in exercising their sexuality, are to give and receive, but they do so asymmetrically: the male person puts emphasis on giving in a receiving sort of way, while the female person emphasizes receiving in a giving sort of way. This is illustrated in the marital act, in which the male person, because he is male, can personally enter into the body-person of his wife and in doing so give himself to her in a receiving sort of way; whereas his wife is uniquely able to receive him bodily into herself and in doing so to receive him in a giving sort of way. The God who made man male and female is, as the poet Henry Van Dyke says, «the wellspring of the joy of living and the ocean depth of happy rest». Men and women, who are his living images, are also meant to be wellsprings of the joy of living and the ocean depth of happy rest, but the male person is more emphatically the wellspring of the joy of living and the female person is more emphatically the ocean depth of happy rest, as the life of persons in a happy home discloses. All this goes to show that human sexuality is far more than anatomical and biological, but is rooted in the very being of man and woman, whose sexual differences are complementary and necessary for the well being of human persons²³.

7. Summary: The Dualistic Anthropology Underlying the Culture of Death vs. the Integral Anthropology of *Evangelium vitae*

The understanding of the human person at the heart of the “culture of death” denies that all living members of the human species are persons. It claims that to count as a “person” one must have at least minimal exercisable cognitive capaci-

Marriage: The Rock on Which the Family Is Built (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1995). These ideas are also, of course, central to *Karol Wojtyła's Love and Responsibility* (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1980) and to Pope John Paul II's Wednesday audiences on the theme *The Theology of the Body* (Boston: Pauline Books and Media, 1998) and to his 1981 *Apostolic Exhortation on the Role of the Family in the Modern World (Familiaris consortio)*.

²³ On this question see Chapter Two, *Marriage and the Complementarity of Man and Woman*, in my book *Marriage: The Rock on Which the Family Is Built*. See also R. JOYCE, *Human Sexual Ecology: A Philosophy of Man and Woman* (Washington, D.C.: University Publications of America, 1982).

ties, and that only those entities having such capacities are the bearers of rights that are to be recognized by others. This understanding of the human person is *dualistic*. It regards the human person as a conscious subject, aware of itself as a self and capable of relating to other selves, and sharply distinguishes between the consciously experiencing subject and his or her body. On this understanding of the human person the body and bodily life are goods *for* the person, not goods *of* the person. That is, the body and bodily life are not of themselves truly *personal* goods. They are rather *instrumental* goods necessary if the person is to experience the truly personal goods, which depend on *consciousness* for their existence. On this view, moreover, the sexual differentiation of human persons into male and female is merely biological and anatomical, a factually given datum, and if the person who exists in a male or female bodily structure experiences himself or herself as female or male despite that structure, the person is at liberty to change his or her *bodily* sexuality as he or she sees fit.

The understanding of the human person at the heart of John Paul II's encyclical is utterly different. On this view, all living members of the human species are persons, i.e., beings of incomparable worth, the bearers of rights that must be recognized by others and protected by society. In addition, human persons, unlike angelic or divine persons, are *bodily beings*. Although human persons are *more than their bodies*, they are nonetheless bodily beings, and their bodies and bodily life are not merely goods *for* the person but goods *of* the person, and as long as there is in our midst a living, human body there is in our midst a living human person. On this understanding of human personhood, moreover, human beings are inescapably either male or female, and their sexual differences are more than skin deep, more than merely biological and anatomical, but are rather rooted in their *being* as males and females.