

BOOK PRESENTATION

Cardinal Burke: "A true conscience does not justify sin"

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Introduction

In my presentation of the important and inspiring book of Cristiano Ceresani, I treat three fundamental aspects of our Christian state of life, our life in Christ in the

Church, His Mystical Body, as citizenship in heaven during the days of our pilgrimage on earth. I will treat in sequence the Sacred Liturgy, the crisis of contemporary culture, and conscience our infallible guide. My treatment, I trust, will indicate and illustrate the fundamentally important contribution which *Èschaton. Gesù e il futuro del mondo* offers to the sincere reader.

Sacred Liturgy and Citizenship in Heaven

The Sacred Liturgy, above all the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, uncovers the deepest reality of our lives. In the Sacred Liturgy, Christ, seated in glory at the right hand of the Father, descends to earth, in order to unite us to His Sacrifice on Calvary through the Eucharistic Sacrifice and to feed us with the incomparable fruit of the Sacrifice: His Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity.

The Sacred Liturgy for the last Sunday of the Church Year, the Solemnity of Christ the King, and the first Sunday of the Church Year, the First Sunday of Advent, directs our thoughts, in a powerful way, to the Last Day, to the day of Our Lord's return in glory to restore us and all creation definitively to God the Father. The texts from the Holy Scriptures remind us that each day of our life is an anticipation of the Last Day, when "all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory."^[1] On that day, there will no longer be light from the sun or moon or stars,^[2] for the light of the glorious Christ will illumine all creation, dispelling the darkness of all that is false, ugly and evil, and illuminating with eternal light all that is true, beautiful and good. In the words of the Gospel, "[f]or as the lightning comes from the east and shines as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of man."^[3]

During our days on earth, our faith in Christ leads us to view all things "under the aspect of eternity" ("*sub specie aeternitatis*"), under the aspect of the eternal salvation which Christ is always at work in His Church to accomplish on our behalf and which He will bring to its fullness on the Last Day. Only the perspective of eternity, of eternal salvation, uncovers for us the objective reality of the pilgrimage of our daily life which has its final destiny in the Kingdom of Heaven.

The return of Christ in glory will be, of necessity, a fearsome event, a cause of mourning, for those who have not prepared themselves to meet Christ by following Him faithfully on the daily Way of the Cross. Many, in fact, think and speak and act, as if there were no Last Day, and they seek to intimidate, silence and even persecute the faithful disciples of Our Lord who are daily striving to prepare Christ's Final Coming. Dom Prosper Guéranger, commenting on the Sacred Liturgy for the conclusion of the Church

Year, according to the More Ancient Form – *Usus Antiquior* – of the Roman Rite, declares:

O sweet Jesus, detach us every year more and more from this world, whose fashion passeth away, with its vain toils, its false glories, and its lying pleasures. It was Thine own foretelling, that, as in the days of Noe and Sodom, men will go on with their feasting, and business, and amusements, without giving any more thought to Thy approaching coming than their forefathers heeded the threat of the Deluge, or of the fire, which came upon them and destroyed them. Let these men go on with their merry-making, and their sending gifts one to the other, as Thine Apocalypse expresses it, because, so they will have it, Christ and His Church are then to be worn-out ideas! Whilst they are tyrannizing over Thy holy city in a thousand varied ways, and persecuting her as no past period had ever done, they little think that all this is an announcement of the eternal nuptials, which are nigh at hand. All these trials are the fresh jewels, which the bride is to have given her before her beauty is complete; and the blood of her last martyrs is to incarnadine her already splendid robes with all the richness of royal crimson.^[4]

As for us, the last days of the Church Year, as well as the Season of Advent, are the occasion to examine ourselves on how we may have abandoned Christ, Who is eternal life, to accommodate ourselves to the ephemeral and passing convenience of a culture without faith in God or obedience to His will.

But, for those who are striving to follow Christ, to accompany Him on the Way of the Cross and so prepare to meet Him at His Final coming, for His “elect,” the Last Day will be a final homecoming, the arrival finally at the destiny of their earthly pilgrimage.^[5] Dom Prosper Guéranger comments:

And when, after the irrevocable sentence has been passed, the wicked shall go to everlasting torments, and the just to life eternal, Thy apostle tells us that, having conquered Thine enemies and been proclaimed undisputed King, Thou wilt consign to Thy eternal Father this Thy kingdom won over death; it will be the perfect homage of Thee, the Head, and of all Thy faithful members. God will thus be all in all. It will be the perfect accomplishment of that sublime prayer Thou taughtest mankind to make, which they daily offer up to the Father who is in heaven, saying to Him: 'Hallowed be Thy name! Thy kingdom come! Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven!' O blissfully peaceful day, when blasphemy is to cease, and when this poor earth of ours, cleansed by fire from the filth of sin, shall be turned into a new paradise! Where, then, is the Christian, who would not thrill with emotion at the thought of that last of all the days of time, which is to usher in beautiful eternity? Who would not despise the agonies of his own last hour, when he reflects that those sufferings have really only one meaning in them, that the Son of Man, as the Gospel words it, is nigh even at the very doors!

[6]

We know that Christ, seated in glory at the right hand of the Father, continues His saving work in the Church by pouring forth from His glorious-pierced Heart the sevenfold gift of the Holy Spirit into the hearts of His humble and obedient disciples. He continues His saving work, accomplished on Calvary, even as He continues to love all men with unceasing and immeasurable love. We rejoice to share in His saving work, with the prayer and sacrifice which it necessarily requires, until it reaches its consummation on the Last Day.

Saint Paul prayed for the early Christians at Colossae, recalling the eternal inheritance of their daily Christian living. Hearing about their practice of the theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity, he declared:

And so, from the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, to lead a life worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God. May you be strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy, giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. [7]

Some verses later, Saint Paul reflects upon his own suffering in serving Christ and His Mystical Body, also in terms of their eternal significance:

Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I complete what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the Church, of which I became a minister according to the divine office which was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known, the mystery hidden for ages and generations but now made manifest to his saints. To

them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. Him we proclaim, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man mature in Christ. For this I toil, striving with all the energy which he mightily inspires within me.^[8]

With Saint Paul, the font of our joy and peace is following Our Lord on the Way of the Cross every day and each moment of every day. It is thus that we anticipate already on earth the fullness of joy and the lasting peace, which are our final destiny in Heaven. The certainty of Christ's Final Coming does not terrify us but rather inspires us to prepare it each day with joy.

The Crisis of Christian Culture

Pope Benedict XVI, in his 2010 Christmas Address to the College of Cardinals, the Roman Curia and the Governorate of Vatican City State, spoke clearly and strongly about the profoundly disordered moral state in which our culture finds itself. Reflecting on the grave evils which are destroying us as individuals and as a society, and which have generated a culture predominantly marked by violence and death, he reminded us that, if we, with the help of God's grace, are to overcome the grave evils of our time, "we must turn our attention to their ideological foundations."^[9] He then identified directly and unequivocally the ideology which fosters these evils: a perversion of *ethos*, of the moral norm, which has even entered into the thinking of some theologians in the Church.

Referring to one of the more shocking manifestations of the ideology, namely, the so-called moral position that the sexual abuse of children by adults is actually good for the children and for the adults, he declared:

It was maintained – even within the realm of Catholic theology – that there is no such thing as evil in itself or good in itself. There is only a "better than" and a "worse than". Nothing is good or bad in itself. Everything depends on the circumstances and on the end in view. Anything can be good or also bad, depending upon purposes and circumstances. Morality is replaced by a calculus of consequences, and in the process it ceases to exist.^[10]

Pope Benedict XVI described a moral relativism, called proportionalism or consequentialism in contemporary moral theology, which has generated profound confusion and outright error regarding the most fundamental truths of the moral law. ^[11] Here, too, the rupture in ecclesial life is manifested. It has led to a situation in which morality itself indeed "ceases to exist." If, therefore, the irreplaceable moral order, which is the way of our freedom and happiness, is to be restored, we must address with clarity and steadfastness the error of moral relativism, proportionalism and consequentialism,

which permeates our culture and, as Pope Benedict XVI reminded us, has also entered into the Church.

To confront the ideology, Pope Benedict XVI urged us to study anew the teaching of his predecessor, Pope Saint John Paul II, in his Encyclical Letter *Veritatis Splendor*, “Regarding Certain Fundamental Questions of the Church’s Moral Teaching.” In *Veritatis Splendor*, Pope John Paul II, in the words of Pope Benedict XVI, “indicated with prophetic force, in the great rational tradition of Christian *ethos*, the essential and permanent foundations of moral action.”^[12] Reminding us of the need to form our consciences, in accord with the moral teaching of the Church, Pope Benedict XVI also reminded us of “our responsibility to make these criteria [these moral foundations] audible and intelligible once more for people today as paths of true humanity, in the context of our paramount concern for mankind.”^[13]

Conscience, the Infallible Guide to Holiness of Life

If we are to seek holiness of life, to live on earth as true citizens of heaven, that is, to give our lives to Christ, without any reserve, our hearts must seek their wisdom and strength in the glorious-pierced Heart of Jesus; our conscience must be trained to listen to God’s voice alone and to reject what would weaken or compromise, in any way, our witness to the truth in which He alone instructs us through the Church. Through our daily prayer and devotion, through our knowledge of the saints with whom we have communion in the Church, and through our study of official Church teaching, our conscience is formed according to the will of God, according to His law which is life for us. The very goodness of our actions strengthens our conscience in its coherence with what is true, beautiful and good.

It is the conscience, the voice of God speaking to souls, which is, in the words of Saint John Henry Cardinal Newman, “the aboriginal Vicar of Christ.”^[14] As such, the conscience is ever attuned to Christ Himself Who instructs and informs it through His Vicar, the Roman Pontiff, and the Bishops in communion with the Roman Pontiff. Cardinal Newman observed that conscience “is a messenger of him, who, both in nature and in grace, speaks to us behind a veil, and teaches and rules us by his representatives.”^[15]

Today, we must be attentive to a false notion of conscience, which would actually use the conscience to justify sinful acts, the betrayal of our state as citizens of heaven on earth. In the earlier-mentioned 2010 Christmas Address, Pope Benedict reflected, at some length, on the notion of conscience in the writings of Cardinal Newman, contrasting it with a false notion of conscience, which is pervasive in our

culture.

He described the difference of the Church's understanding of conscience, as faithfully and brilliantly taught by Cardinal Newman, with these words:

In modern thinking, the word "conscience" signifies that for moral and religious questions, it is the subjective dimension, the individual, that constitutes the final authority for decision. The world is divided into the realms of the objective and the subjective. To the objective realm belong things that can be calculated and verified by experiment. Religion and morals fall outside the scope of these methods and are therefore considered to lie within the subjective realm. Here, it is said, there are in the final analysis no objective criteria. The ultimate instance that can decide here is therefore the subject alone, and precisely this is what the word "conscience" expresses: in this realm only the individual, with his intuitions and experiences, can decide. Newman's understanding of conscience is diametrically opposed to this. For him, "conscience" means man's capacity for truth: the capacity to recognize precisely in the decision-making areas of his life – religion and morals – a truth, the truth. At the same time, conscience – man's capacity to recognize truth – thereby imposes on him the obligation to set out along the path towards truth, to seek it and to submit to it wherever he finds it. Conscience is both capacity for truth and obedience to the truth which manifests itself to anyone who seeks it with an open heart.[16]

Conscience, therefore, does not set each of us apart as an arbiter of what is right and good, but unites us in the pursuit of the one truth, ultimately Our Lord Jesus Christ Who is the only arbiter of the right and good, so that our thoughts, words, and actions put that truth into practice.

In his address to the German Parliament in September of 2011, Pope Benedict XVI, referring to a text of Saint Paul's Letter to the Romans[17] regarding the natural moral law and its primary witness, the conscience, declared: "Here we see the two fundamental concepts of nature and conscience, where conscience is nothing other than Solomon's listening heart, reason that is open to the language of being." [18] Further illustrating the sources of law in nature and reason by making reference to the popular interest in ecology as a means of respecting nature, he observed:

Yet I would like to underline a point that seems to me to be neglected, today as in the past: there is also an ecology of man. Man too has a nature that he must respect and that he cannot manipulate at will. Man is not merely self-creating freedom. Man does not create himself. He is intellect and will, but he is also nature, and his will is rightly ordered if he respects nature, listens to it and accepts himself for who he is, as one who did not create himself. In this way, and in no other, is true human freedom fulfilled.^[19]

Reflecting upon European culture which developed “from the encounter between Jerusalem, Athens and Rome – from Israel’s faith in God, the philosophical reason of the Greeks and Roman legal thought,”^[20] he concluded: “In the awareness of man’s responsibility before God and in the acknowledgment of the inviolable dignity of every single human person, it [European culture] has established criteria of law: it is these criteria that we are called to defend at this moment in our history.”^[21] While Pope Benedict XVI’s reflection is inspired by a concern for the state of law in the European culture, his conclusions regarding the foundations of law and, therefore, of order in society are clearly universal in application.

Conclusion: Holiness of Life and Martyrdom for the Faith

The witness of holiness of life is, in fact, martyrdom, in one form or another. In the words of the Holy Scriptures, it is dying to self, in order to live for Christ.^[22] It is what the Servant of God Father John A. Hardon, S.J., called “the palpable fact of every true follower of Christ.”^[23] When we hear the word, martyrdom, we tend to think exclusively of those who have given their lifeblood out of faithful love of Christ, who have been killed because of hatred of Christ and of the Christian faith. Red martyrs or martyrs of blood give the highest form of witness and are our models in giving daily witness to our love of Christ, even though we may not be asked to pour out our lifeblood, as they were asked to do and did. We are all called to the white martyrdom of heroic witness to the Catholic faith. Red martyrs also win for us many graces for our daily living as true witnesses of Christ in the world. In the words of the Servant of God Father Hardon, “[t]hrough their sufferings we are all made richer, as through their merits the whole Church becomes more holy.”^[24]

The hostility and the even more pervasive indifference to the beliefs we hold most dearly tempts us to discouragement and even to avoid the more public witness to our faith. But the martyrdom to which we are called and for which we are consecrated and fortified by the Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation, requires us to offer tirelessly our witness, confident that God will bring forth the good fruit.

Reflecting, at length, on the critical state of the Christian culture and our response

, in accord with the call to holiness of life and martyrdom for the faith, for the sake of our own salvation and the salvation of the world, we recognize that it is Christ Himself who makes it possible for us to pursue holiness, to be true martyrs. At the same time, Christ is with us always,[25] as He promised, sustaining us by His grace, by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit from His glorious pierced Heart into our hearts. He accompanies us in our ordinary daily life and sustains us in faithful and total witness, bringing us safely home to the Father. Cristiano Ceresani, in *Èschaton. Gesù di Nazareth e il futuro del mondo*, gives powerful witness to the truth that, even in the confusion, error, and division of our times – both in the Church and in the world – , Christ continues to be, as He himself promises us, “the way, and the truth, and the life.”[26]

The Blessed Virgin Mary is both our model and our great intercessor in giving faithful and generous witness to Christ. She is one of us, she shares fully our human nature, but, by God’s favor, she was preserved from any stain of sin from the moment of her conception. She was from the first moment of her life and remains always totally for Christ. Pope John Paul II, in his Encyclical Letter *Veritatis Splendor*, reminds us of our Blessed Mother’s irreplaceable help to us in giving the witness which is martyrdom:

Mary shares our human condition, but in complete openness to the grace of God. Not having known sin, she is able to have compassion on every kind of weakness. She understands sinful man and loves him with a Mother’s love. Precisely for this reason she is on the side of truth and shares the Church’s burden in recalling always and to everyone the demands of morality. Nor does she permit sinful man to be deceived by those who claim to love him by justifying his sin, for she knows that the sacrifice of Christ her Son would thus be emptied of its power. No absolution offered by beguiling doctrines, even in the areas of philosophy and theology, can make man truly happy: only the Cross and the glory of the Risen Christ can grant peace to his conscience and salvation to his life.[27]

May the Blessed Virgin Mary intercede for us, that we will always be true and faithful witnesses to Christ alive within each of us and in the whole Church. May we turn to her in prayer, so that she may bring us to her Son with her maternal counsel, first given to the wine stewards at the Wedding Feast of Cana: “Do whatever He tells you.”[28] So may He transform our lives and our world. So may he confirm us in our vocation and mission to be citizens of heaven, while dwelling on earth, that is, to safeguard and foster a Christian culture in our homes, in our communities, and in our nation.

[1] Mt 24, 30.

[2] Cf. Mt 24, 29.

[3] Mt 24, 27.

[4] "O Jésus, détachez-nous toujours plus de ce monde dont la figure passe avec ses vains travaux, ses gloires contrefaites et ses faux plaisirs. Ainsi que vous nous l'aviez annoncé, comme aux jours de Noé, comme à Sodome, les hommes continuent de manger et de boire, de s'absorber dans le trafic et la jouissance ; sans plus songer à la proximité de votre avènement que leurs devanciers ne se préoccupèrent du feu du ciel et du déluge, jusqu'à l'instant qui les perdit tous. Laissons-les se réjouir et s'envoyer des présents, comme le dit votre Apocalypse, à la pensée que c'en est fait du Christ e de son Église. Tandis qu'ils oppriment en mille manières votre cité sainte, et lui imposent des épreuves qu'elle n'avait point connues, ils ne se doutent pas que ce sont les noces de l'éternité qu'ils avancent ; il ne manquait plus à l'Épouse que les bijoux de ces épreuves nouvelles, et la pourpre éclatante dont l'orneront ses derniers martyrs." Prosper Guéranger, *L'année liturgique, Le temps après la Pentecôte*, Tome II, 15ème éd. (Tours : Maison Alfred Mame et Fils, 1926), pp. 562-563. [Guéranger]. English translation: Prosper Guéranger, *The Liturgical Year, Time after Pentecost*, Book II, tr. Laurence Shepherd (Fitzwilliam, NH: Loreto Publications, 2000), p. 493. [GuérangerEng].

[5] Cf. Mt 24, 31.

[6] "Et lorsque, la redoutable sentence une fois prononcée, les réprouvés iront au supplice éternel et les justes à la vie sans fin, votre Apôtre nous apprend que, pleinement vainqueur de vos ennemis, roi sans conteste, vous remettrez au Père souverain ce royaume conquis sur la mort, comme l'hommage parfait du Chef et des membres. Dieu sera tout en tous. Ce sera l'accomplissement de la prière sublime que vous apprîtes aux hommes, et qui s'élève plus fervent chaque jour du cœur de vos fidèles, lorsque s'adressant à leur Père qui est aux cieux, ils lui demandent sans se lasser, au milieu de la défection générale, *que son Nom soit sanctifié, que son règne arrive, que sa volonté soit faite sur la terre comme au ciel*. Incomparable sérénité de ce jour où cessera le blasphème ; où, purifiée par le feu de la fange du péché, la terre sera un nouveau paradis ! Quel chrétien donc ne tressaillirait, dans l'attente de ce dernier des jours qui ouvrira l'éternité ? qui ne compterait pour bien peu les angoisses de la

dernière heure, à la pensée que ces souffrances ne signifient rien outre chose sinon, comme le dit l'Évangile, *que le Fils de l'homme est tout près et à la porte ?*" Guéranger, p. 562. English translation: GuérangerEng, pp. 492-493.

[7] Col 1, 9-12.

[8] Col 1, 24-29.

[9] "... dobbiamo gettare uno sguardo sui loro fondamenti ideologici." Benedictus PP. XVI, Allocutio, "Omina Nativitatis novique Anni Curiae Romanae significantur", 20 Decembris 2010, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 103 (2011), 36. [Hereafter, Greeting2010]. English translation: Pope Benedict XVI, "Benedict XVI's Christmas greeting to the College of Cardinals, the Roman Curia and the Governorate: Resolved in faith and in doing good," *L'Osservatore Romano*, Weekly Edition in English, 22-29 December 2010, p. 13. [Hereafter, Greeting2010Eng].

[10] "Si asseriva – persino nell'ambito della teologia cattolica – che non esisterebbero né il male in sé, né il bene in sé. Esisterebbe soltanto un «meglio di» e un «peggio di». Niente sarebbe in se stesso bene o male. Tutto dipenderebbe dalle circostanze e dal fine inteso. A seconda degli scope e delle circostanze, tutto potrebbe essere bene o anche male. La morale viene sostituita da un calcolo delle conseguenze e con ciò cessa di esistere." Greeting2010, 36-37. English translation: Greeting2010Eng, p. 13.

[11] Cf. Ioannes Paulus PP. II, Litterae Encyclicae *Veritatis Splendor*, "De quibusdam quaestionibus fundamentalibus doctrinae moralis Ecclesiae," 6 Augusti 1993, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 85 (1993), 1193-1194, n. 75 [VS]. English translation: Pope John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Veritatis Splendor*, "Regarding Certain Fundamental Questions of the Church's Moral Teaching," 6 August 1993, London: Catholic Truth Society, 1993, pp. 79-81, no. 75. [VSEng].

[12] "... indicò con forza profetica nella grande tradizione razionale *dell'ethos* cristiano le basi essenziali e permanenti dell'agire morale." Greeting2010, 37. English translation: Greeting2010Eng, p. 13.

[13] "... nostra responsabilità rendere nuovamente udibili e comprensibili tra gli uomini questi criteri come vie della vera umanità, nel contesto della preoccupazione per l'uomo, nella quale siamo immersi." Greeting 2010, 37. English translation: Greeting2010Eng, p.

13.

[14] John Henry Cardinal Newman, "Letter to the Duke of Norfolk," V, in *Certain Difficulties felt by Anglicans in Catholic Teaching* II, (London: Longmans Green, 1885), p. 248 [LetterDN].

[15] LetterDN, p. 248.

[16] "Nel pensiero moderno, la parola «coscienza» significa che in materia di morale e di religione, la dimensione soggettiva, l'individuo, costituisce l'ultima istanza della decisione. Il mondo viene diviso negli ambiti dell'oggettivo e del soggettivo. All'oggettivo appartengono le cose che si possono calcolare e verificare mediante l'esperimento. La religione e la morale sono sottratte a questi metodi e perciò sono considerate come ambito del soggettivo. Qui non esisterebbero, in ultima analisi, dei criteri oggettivi. L'ultima istanza che qui può decidere sarebbe pertanto solo il soggetto, e con la parola «coscienza» si esprime, appunto, questo: in questo ambito può decidere solo il singolo, l'individuo con le sue intuizioni ed esperienze. La concezione che Newman ha della coscienza è diametralmente opposta. Per lui «coscienza» significa la capacità di verità dell'uomo: la capacità di riconoscere proprio negli ambiti decisivi della sua esistenza – religione e morale – una verità, *la* verità. La coscienza, la capacità dell'uomo di riconoscere la verità, gli impone con ciò, al tempo stesso, il dovere di incamminarsi verso la verità, di cercarla e di sottomettersi ad essa laddove la incontra. Coscienza è capacità di verità e obbedienza nei confronti della verità, che si mostra all'uomo che cerca col cuore aperto." Greeting2010, 39-40. English translation: Greeting2010Eng, p. 14.

[17] Cf. Rom 2, 14-16.

[18] "Hier erscheinen die beide Grundbegriffe Natur und Gewissen, wobei Gewissen nichts anderes ist als das hörende Herz Salomons, als die der Sprache des Seins geöffnete Vernunft." Benedictus PP. XVI, Allocutio "Iter apostolicum in Germaniam: ad Berolinensem foederatum coetum oratorum," 22 Septembris 2011, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 103 (2011), 666. [Bundestag]. English translation: Pope Benedict XVI, "Address to Federal Parliament in the Reichstag: Politics at the service of justice and law," *L'Osservatore Romano Weekly Edition in English*, 28 September 2011, p. 6. [BundestagEng].

[19] "Ich möchte aber nachdrücklich einen Punkt ansprechen, der nach wie vor – wie mir scheint – ausgeklammert wird: es gibt auch eine Ökologie des Menschen. Auch der

Mensch hat eine Natur, die er achten muß und die er nicht beliebig manipulieren kann. Der Mensch ist nicht nur sich selbst machende Freiheit. Der Mensch macht sich nicht selbst. Er ist Geist und Wille, aber er ist auch Natur, und sein Wille ist dann recht, wenn er auf die Natur achtet, sie hört und sich annimmt also der, der er ist und der sich nicht selbst gemacht hat. Gerade so und nur so vollzieht sich wahre menschliche Freiheit." Bundestag, 668. English translation: BundestagEng, p. 7.

[20] "...aus der Begegnung von Jerusalem, Athen und Rom – aus der Begegnung zwischen dem Gottesglauben Israels, der philosophischen Vernunft der Griechen und dem Rechtsdenken Roms." Bundestag, 669. English translation: BundestagEng, p. 8 (corrected by the author).

[21] "Sie hat im Bewußtsein der Verantwortung des Menschen vor Gott und in der Anerkennung der unantastbaren Würde des Menschen, eines jeden Menschen, Maßstäbe des Rechts gesetzt, die zu verteidigen uns in unserer historischen Stunde aufgegeben ist." Bundestag, 669. English translation: BundestagEng, p. 8.

[22] Cf. 2 Cor 5, 15; and 1 Pet 2, 24.

[23] John A. Hardon, S.J., *Holiness in the Church*, Bardstow: Eternal Life, 2000, p. 31 [*Holiness in the Church*].

[24] *Holiness in the Church*, p. 33.

[25] Cf. Mt 28, 20.

[26] Jn 14, 6.

[27] "Maria particeps quidem est humanae condicionis nostrae, sed in plena perspicuitate gratiae Dei. Cum nullum admiserit peccatum, omnem debilitatem excusare potest. Amore Matris ipsa peccatorem comprehendit ac diligit. Ob id ipsum, veritatem sequitur et cum Ecclesia communicat pondus omnes homines semper admonendi de moralibus necessitatibus. Eademque de causa non patitur peccatorem ab eo decipi, qui eum amare praesumat illius peccatum probando; nam probe scit ita inane reddi sacrificium Christi, Filii sui. Nulla absolutio, quae ex indulgentibus doctrinis etiam philosophicis vel theologicis provenit, hominem vere felicem facere potest: una

Crux gloriaque Christi ab inferis excitati, pacem eius conscientiae eiusque vitae salutem donare possunt." VS, 1227, n. 120. VSEng, p. 123, no. 120.

[28] Jn 2, 5.

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