

## PHILOSOPHY, SCIENCE, FAITH

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### *A Philosophical Prologue for Every Human Being*

There can be no doubt that for every human being philosophy is a primary pathway of the spirit. During the course of history, through philosophical reflection, men and women have acquired knowledge about the absolute quality of their being. This quality has emerged, and emerges, through perceiving, and becoming aware of, the *differences* between being and not being, between what is true and what is false, between what is good and what is evil, and between what is just and what is unjust, which give rise to the diversities of the principal human praxes, which refer back to the theoretical, ethical and political sciences. This philosophy demonstrates the space of the encounter of man with the world and society, and sheds light on the tension between life and death, between dreaming and being awake, between normality and abnormality, between male and female, between youth, adulthood and old age, between the individual and society, and between the virtual and the real. It is through the dialectical approach that philosophy demonstrates such differences and contrasts, that a free decision is made possible and that commitment to action in both the theoretical and practical fields is stimulated. Indeed, there is a sphere of being that man finds in himself from the maternal womb onwards and outside himself from birth onwards, as a gift from the Creator which opens up to him the pathway of an adventure in time. This is a freely-given gift which forms the foundation of the capacity of the human being to become himself in relation to the world of nature and society, and above all else in relation to God. This is a gift, therefore, that constitutes the human being in his own capacity to act, even *capax* of God, *capax Dei*. The world and society make up the space and time in which every human being finds himself from birth onwards, and where the possibilities of choice arise and present them-

selves, the differences of life projects or kinds of life are perceived, the various human praxes are held up, through contrasts, and the various possible vocations are indicated. To be in the world for a human being is the being and the becoming of the self, or of oneself, in tension, to become oneself with others or oneself as another; in transparency 'before God', who is man's First Principle.

At a practical level, therefore, apprehension of the 'world', or of the presence of nature and society, is the first atmosphere of life in which the human being finds himself 'thrown' (Heidegger) or rather, and to express the point better, in which he finds that he is a gift of God and can move forward with the light of intelligence and the guidance of revelation – if he accepts it – until his final goal.

A Christian knows that the point of departure is not amorphous chance or the whims of destiny or the work of a powerful deceiver (Descartes), as atheists, sceptics, relativists and sceptics of all ages and hues maintain. A Christian knows that he owes his origin to the First Principle, who by an act of love conferred on him a privileged position so that he could know God and love Him and then attain immortality.

This had already been envisaged by philosophers before Christianity to the point of seeing man as the 'progeny of God' and God as near to men, He who gives them life, movement and being. We also know this from the speech that St. Paul made to the philosophers of the Areopagus of Athens.<sup>1</sup>

#### *A Brief Scientific Prologue for Every Human Being*

In addition to philosophy, there can be no doubt that another theoretical path privileged by the human being is that of science, which has developed above all else during modernity and has offered man immense knowledge and advantages, as we can all observe. I believe that nobody would be prepared to return to certain pre-scientific conditions. Few people or nobody would like to forgo the achievements of science. Who, for example, does not appreciate its advances, which have made life expectancy longer and the quality of life greater?

The relativist, atheist and nihilist outcome of a part of modern philosophy, which Benedict XVI has strongly denounced, has been matched by the return of the ethical, metaphysical and theological appeal of con-

<sup>1</sup> Acts, 17:22 ff.

temporary science. Today, science is undergoing a stage of unforeseen and unforeseeable development. The success of the studies of particles, designed to analyse the structure of matter at its fundamental level, have been especially spectacular. And the pathway of science, which until less than a century ago seemed unimaginable, is in constant expansion. The recent developments in astrophysics have been particularly surprising and represent a further confirmation of that great unity of physics that is clearly expressed every time one manages to achieve a deeper level of comprehension of reality.

The 'wonder' that stimulated the first philosophical and scientific reflection on nature, far from diminishing with new discoveries, has constantly grown to be transformed, in the most profound spirits, into a kind of amazement of the creature that increases our awareness of the complexity of reality. The extreme nearness that seems to be created between the primary forces of the cosmos and the ultimate particles of matter indicates that by now man finds himself, as a body, a participant in the creation, of which he, too, in his earthly adventure, is an element and a moment – both in the complex structures of the laboratories of science and in the humble events of daily life. The spectacle of the heavens, which, as Aristotle observed, was the origin of science, is no less wonderful, like the flight at the rate of light years of galaxies that expand the universe beyond what it is possible for our imaginations to conceive. One may say that man, who has set foot on the moon and continues to explore the other planets, has just moved out of the confines of the globe and entered a kind of cosmic infinity.

The greatness and the complexity of contemporary science at the level of its knowledge about the nature of the elementary particles and the fundamental energies of physics, and the molecular structures of forms of life, has an immediate relevance for man. It is man himself who, immersing himself in the presence of the mystery of the infinite, can expand without limits the project of his being, as indeed was perceived by Heraclitus with the Logos and by Aristotle who saw the intellect as being 'able to become and to do everything'.<sup>2</sup>

One can thus understand why the luminaries of contemporary science halt in front of this 'new world' which is in constant expansion, with an aware wonder at being faced with the immensity of the unknown, which

<sup>2</sup> *De Anima* III, 5, 430 a 14-16.

seems to expand and grow deeper with each new discovery of new winners of the Nobel Prize. And they, too, experience the presence of God, as is borne witness to, for example, by Enrico Fermi, according to the testimony of the famous mathematician Luigi Fantappiè.<sup>3</sup>

Thus if we know how to read the signs of the times, just as Hellenic philosophy, which Pope Benedict XVI sees as a part of revelation,<sup>4</sup> leads us to the existence of God, so contemporary science today tells us that we are not the children of chaos.<sup>5</sup> This was the reading of the times of the Popes, and especially Pius XI and Pius XII, during the twentieth century. They asserted that science leads us to a kind of new realism that can open the horizon

<sup>3</sup> M. Micheli, 'Enrico Fermi e Luigi Fantappiè. Ricordi personali', *Responsabilità del Sapere*, XXXI (1979), vols. 131-132, pp. 21-23.

<sup>4</sup> *Address at Regensburg*, especially the part against de-Hellenisation.

<sup>5</sup> To demonstrate how the limitation of reason to what can be experienced and measured is not only full of negative consequences, but is also self-contradictory, J. Ratzinger – Benedict XVI concentrates his attention on the structure and the presuppositions of scientific knowledge, and in particular on the position that would like to make of evolutionary theory the universal explanation, at least potentially, of all reality. A fundamental characteristic of scientific understanding is, in fact, the synergy between mathematics and experience, or between mathematical hypotheses and their experimental verification: this synergy is the key to the enormous and constantly growing results obtained through the work and use of technologies in operating with nature and placing their immense energies at the service of man. But mathematics as such, at least in part, is a creation of our intelligence, a pure and 'abstract' result of our rationality. The correspondence that cannot but exist between mathematics and the real structures of the universe – because otherwise scientific forecasts and technology would not obtain these effective results – thus poses a great question: it implies that the universe itself is structured in a rational manner, such that there exists a profound correspondence between our subjective reasoning and the reason embodied in nature. It thus becomes inevitable to ask oneself under what conditions such a correspondence is possible, and concretely, if there must not exist a primordial intelligence that is the common source of nature and of our own rationality. Thus, precisely in reflecting upon the development of the sciences, we are brought back to the creating Logos, and there is a reversal of the tendency to accord primacy to the irrational, to an amorphous evolution, to chance and necessity, and the tendency to reduce to these even our own intelligence and freedom (cf. the addresses in Verona and Regensburg, in addition to *Faith, Truth, and Tolerance: Christianity and the Religions of the World*, published in Italian by Cantagalli, Siena, 2003, pp. 188-192). And furthermore, even on the philosophical level (and not only scientific) the creating Lógos is not the object of an apodictic demonstration, but remains 'the best hypothesis', an hypothesis that demands that man and his reasoning 'renounce a position of dominion and risk the position of humble listening' (for a detailed explanation of the thought of Pope Ratzinger see Cardinal Camillo Ruini, *Verità di Dio e verità dell'uomo*, Cantagalli, Siena, 2007, pp. 15-45).

of transcendence in a new way.<sup>6</sup> This perception lay behind the renewal of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences.<sup>7</sup>

A logic exists that underpins the universe. This logic is based on three groups of 'building blocks' called 'families' of elementary particles and four fundamental forces. Each family consist of two 'quarks' and two 'leptons'; the total number of building blocks is therefore 12. These 12 fundamental 'blocks' are to be imagined as 'spinning' with the smallest amount of 'spinning' motion. The interaction between these spinning objects is controlled by four fundamental forces which are the gravitational, the electromagnetic, the sub-nuclear 'weak' and the sub-nuclear 'strong' forces. The electromagnetic and the weak forces are mixed and therefore the number of fundamental forces of nature is often quoted as being three. These forces act all over space and time. But the most impressive component of the logic is the existence of the three fundamental constants of nature; they are identical in all regions of space and of time. For example, if one observes the light that is emitted by the most distant galaxy (electromagnetic radiation can also arrive in the form of radio waves), which has taken twelve milliard years to arrive here, it is exactly identical to our light. These fundamental constants are the minimum amount of 'action', called Planck's constant; the maximum speed with which we can send messages, the velocity of light in vacuum; and the Newton gravitational charge which establishes the strength at the origin of the formation of stars and galaxies. No one can ever change the smallest detail in this logic. The smallest change would not be compatible with the existence of the world where we live and of which we are an infinitesimal component. Despite being a very small part of the world, we are the only known form of living being which is able to discover the logical structure of nature. The existence of this logic is the most significant proof there is against chaos being our 'father'. Another important detail is that the most significant steps in discovering this logic have always been totally unexpected, thereby continuing the experience of wonder that was at the origin of science and philosophy. No one ever imagined the exis-

<sup>6</sup> Cf., for example, Pius XII, 'The Proofs for the Existence of God in the Light of Modern Natural Science', in *Papal Addresses to the Pontifical Academy of Sciences and to the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences* (The Pontifical Academy of Sciences, Scripta Varia 100, Vatican City, 2003), pp. 130-142.

<sup>7</sup> Cf., for example, Pius XI, *Motu Proprio*, which led to the refoundation of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences, in *Papal Addresses to the Pontifical Academy of Sciences and to the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences*, p. 19 f.

tence of this logic of nature, which has been discovered at different stages by science in all its fascinating rigorous details.<sup>8</sup> This is the great message of science in which all great scientists believe. The phrase of Einstein, 'God does not play dice with the universe', here immediately comes to mind.

The greatest project of modern science is the reduction of all physical phenomena to the same origin: a fundamental force. Perhaps one day this single force will be found from which this universe derives with all its peculiarities, which, indeed, cannot be altered.

However, this is not only the problem of the existence of a fundamental force of nature from which the whole world with its structures originates; the crucial problem is why there is something rather than nothing. This question, according to the mathematician and philosopher Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, is the fundamental question of philosophy, or, according to the philosopher Martin Heidegger, the 'wonder of wonders': 'Why lastly, being rather than nothing'.<sup>9</sup> This is the famous 'to be or not to be', the question of questions, in relation to which the scientist, who beyond the empirical horizon is no longer competent, can no longer provide an answer. Here we are not dealing with a God of the Gaps: this is not a 'lack' in the process or pathway but the absolute beginning. Here man comes up against the original secret of reality. This is the problem of an original relationship of the world as participated being with a primary cause as Being by essence. This is an original 'support' and an original task of the participated being which is presented not only to the scientist at the limits of science but to the philosopher as his task proper, and, rightly, to every man, in that he wishes to know about his dignity as a human being. I mean that 'accursed' (as Dostoevsky called it) question which appears at the extreme horizon of our spatial-temporal experience as a great question, at the beginning as at the end, but also in the middle of the pathway of our lives. This is the question that centres round that original principle of reality that the Greeks began to call God (θεός – Theós), and which Jews, Christians, Muslims, and the faithful of other religions still designate with the same – perhaps misunderstood – name of God.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. A. Zichichi, 'Totally Unexpected Discoveries: A Personal Experience', in *Paths of Discovery* (The Pontifical Academy of Sciences, Acta 18, Vatican City, 2006), p. 130-153; 'Scientific Culture and the Ten Statements of John Paul II', in *The Cultural Values of Science* (The Pontifical Academy of Sciences, Vatican City, 2003), pp. 288-324.

<sup>9</sup> M. Heidegger, *Was ist Metaphysic?* (Frankfurt M., 1975), pp. 42, 47.

*The Universality and Transcendence of the Sacred*

The statement that we find in St. John, 'No one has ever seen God',<sup>10</sup> clearly indicates to us the transcendence of the sacred as regards our capacity to reach it. Because of our intellective imperfection, divine realities, which are to the utmost intelligible in themselves, are not evident for us. Indeed, Aristotle says: 'as the eyes of the bat behave during daylight, thus also the intelligence that is in our souls behaves towards things that, by their very nature, are the most evident of all'.<sup>11</sup> Therefore, we are not immediately able, from the outset, to know the various levels of transcendence of the divine: we have to attain to what is most knowable and primary in itself through a process of phenomenological-metaphysical elevation in an ascending spiral, beginning with the beings that are most knowable for us but which in themselves are less consistent and evident.

'All men are convinced of the existence of the gods'<sup>12</sup> declared Aristotle, and this is also confirmed by the contemporary philosophy of religion, with the help of modern ethnology: 'There are no atheist peoples. There was no form of atheism at the beginning of history. Religion can be found always and everywhere'. Ludwig Feuerbach also noted in the first lines of his most important work, *The Essence of Christianity*, that 'animals have no religion'.<sup>13</sup> Anthropologists agree in recognising that human beings have practiced some form of religious activity ever since their first appearance on the horizon of history.<sup>14</sup> For this reason, African people, who claim that they were the forbears of humanity, celebrate their continent as being the cradle of religion as well. And this is the dimension what we may refer to as constituting the universality of the religious phenomenon.

<sup>10</sup> *Jn* 1:18.

<sup>11</sup> *Metaph.*, II, 1, 993 b 9-11.

<sup>12</sup> *De Coelo*, I, 3, 270 b 5.

<sup>13</sup> G. van der Leeuw, *Phänom. der Religion* (Leipzig, 1935), p. 570.

<sup>14</sup> Of relevance here is the recent declaration by C. Lévi-Strauss, one of the theorists of cultural differences. He states that the lesson that ethnology has derived from peoples that do not know how to write is that 'they are at one in making man a receiving subject and not a master of the creation'. Thus 'only this way of seeing man could gain the assent of all civilisations. Ours first of all because the concept that emerges from these people is that same as that of Roman consul-jurists, who bore many Stoic influences, who defined natural law as a set of general relations established by nature amongst all living beings for their common preservation; that of the other great Eastern civilisations, based on Hinduism and Buddhism' (*La Repubblica*, 15.VI.2005, p. 47).

However, today, after the journey of the philosophy of modernity and of the comparative history of religions, we may discern, next to this acknowledged and observed universality, from both the phenomenological and the metaphysical viewpoint three levels or spheres of transcendence of the divine which make themselves present in our awareness of the experience of the sacred. These spheres of transcendence define and characterise religions and correspond to the great stages of the history of humanity on its pathway towards the 'fullness of time':<sup>15</sup> the cosmic sacredness of the whole (whose symbol is the city of Benares); the religion of natural man (represented by Athens and pre-Colombian Mexico); and the historical reality of Judeo-Christian revelation (with Jerusalem and Rome as its centres).

We may thus observe that there are three spheres or forms of transcendence (and of consequent immanence) of the sacred, which coincide with God's path towards man or 'epochs of salvation', on the one hand, and, on the other, with the main stages of the suffered path that the human being has walked in order to rise to God.

The cosmic sacred of the whole is the spontaneous perception, accessible to everyone, of something immense and infinite which dominates the world and envelops everything in the mystery of being, causing in us amazement and admiration. This is the *Mysterium ultimum et ineffabile* that envelops our existence and the existence of the cosmos. This phrase is employed at the beginning of the declaration of the Second Vatican Council on the relationship between the Catholic Church and non-Christian religions (*Nostra Aetate*) and expresses the greatest question that poses itself to our religious consciousness. Perhaps this refers in particular to the sacred as it has been manifested in the East (and the Far East).

The religion of rational (natural) theology rose to a higher level with an explicit perception of God (the θεός – theós of Xenophanes, Heraclitus and Aristotle) as the first Intelligence and the first Love, the Cause of the world, of both material and spiritual beings, who attracts everything to Himself as an object of love (κινεῖ δὴ ὡς ἐρωμένον, κινούμενα δὲ τὰλλα κινεῖ),<sup>16</sup> and this requires from man an answer of friendship and justice, through his fellow (*Nicomachean Ethics*) as well.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>15</sup> *Gal* 4:4.

<sup>16</sup> *Metaph.*, XII, 7 1072 b 3 s. Cf. the important reflection of Benedict XVI on this question in *Deus Caritas Est*, n. 9.

<sup>17</sup> Aristotle, *Ethica Nicomachea*, books VIII and IX.

Lastly, Christian religion rose to the extreme definitive moment and presented God in His most complete truth, both eternal and historical, which He has communicated to us both through the initial revelation to Moses and the Prophets and by the much more complete revelation of Jesus Christ. This last drew upon God's intimate life which is expressed in the communication (relationships) of the three divine Persons – the Father, the Son (the Word) and the Holy Spirit – in the Incarnation of the Word which effected the reconciliation of man with God by making man enter into communion with His life. This constitutes the gift of grace as participation in the life itself of God (deification),<sup>18</sup> whose fulfilment is eternal life: this is where, therefore, in the sphere of the sacred, man makes a 'leap in quality', through faith as πίστις, the other theological virtues and the gifts of the Holy Spirit.<sup>19</sup>

### *Transcendence in Christian Religion*

St. Paul's speech at the Areopagus,<sup>20</sup> as observed in *Fides et Ratio*, marks the meeting point and also the clash between Greek thought and Biblical Revelation in relation to the decisive points in the story of salvation, and seeks to bring out the diversity of, and the continuity in, the divine plan during the centuries that preceded the conclusive manifestation of the Word made Flesh or the 'fullness of time'. This was an announcement of the definitive solution of the subject of God both in His cosmic horizon of Eastern religion and in His anthropological horizon of Greek religion.

In the prologue to his speech St. Paul greeted the assembly by calling it 'singularly religious', thus acknowledging that human reason has its own pathway in gaining knowledge about God. He also did this in his Letter to the Romans (1:19-20), which links up to the Book of Wisdom (13:1). The phrase 'unknown God' is singular but the Apostle makes it his starting point to breach their consciousness and to invite them to a full

<sup>18</sup> For a more detailed investigation see M. Sánchez Sorondo, *La gracia como participación de la naturaleza divina* (Buenos Aires, Letrán, Salamanca, 1979), esp. p. 125 ff.

<sup>19</sup> For a more detailed investigation see M. Sánchez Sorondo, 'The Various Transcendent Levels of the Sacred in History: The East, Natural Religion and Revealed Religion', in *The Sacred*, Doctor Communis, fasc. 1-2 (The Pontifical Academy of St. Thomas Aquinas, Vatican City, 2006), pp. 69-82.

<sup>20</sup> *Acts*, 17:22 ff.

knowledge of God the Saviour. This proclamation of his is akin to that of God to Moses on Mount Sinai in the Old Testament and that to be found in the Prologue to the Gospel of St. John in the New Testament: 'The unknown God you revere is the one I proclaim to you'.<sup>21</sup> And it is God pure spirit, one in Himself and good in Himself, the maker of the world and of man: 'The God who made the world and everything in it is himself Lord of heaven and earth, he does not make his home in shrines made by human hands. Nor is he in need of anything, that he should be served by human hands; on the contrary, it is he who gives everything – including life and breath – to everyone'.<sup>22</sup>

He is the unique, personal and creator God who envelops with His power the entire universe, has granted the human being a privileged position, and has given him a special presence of continuous providence: 'It is in him that we live, and move, and exist'.<sup>23</sup> This thought will not have displeased those thinkers to whom the Apostle gave, in homage, the gift of a quotation from a philosophical tradition that was well-known to them: 'as indeed some of your own writers have said: "We are all his children"'.<sup>24</sup> As is known, this text is attributed to the poet Haratus (310-240 BC), who, in his poem *Phenomena*, begins with an invocation to Zeus: 'We need Zeus in everything, all of us who are members of his progeny'.<sup>25</sup> To this same speculative tradition belongs the well-known *Hymn to Zeus* of the Stoic Cleanth, which celebrates the paternity and universal government of the first Principle in relation to the world and the lives of human beings. One could also say that this belongs to the 'seeds of the Word' to which Clement of Alexandria refers. Something similar can also be found in the philosopher-slave Epictetus who, in Christian times, but going back to Socrates, wrote: 'If what philosophers say about the family relationship between God and men is true...the most important and universal society is that formed by men and by God, since they alone by their nature participate in the divine communion, being tied to God through reason: why does man not say that he is a citizen of the universe? And why does he not say that he is a son of God?'<sup>26</sup>

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 17:23.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 17:24 ff.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 17:28.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 17:28.

<sup>25</sup> A. Wikenhauser, *Atti degli Apostoli* (Brescia, 1968), p. 272.

<sup>26</sup> *Diatribes*, I, 9, 6.

The existence of God, therefore, is demonstrated by the dependence that is shown by both material and immaterial creatures on an absolutely first, good, just, almighty etc. Principle who is presented by the Bible and natural philosophy. Indeed, corrupted by idolatrous imaginings, the human being was partly and with difficulty retrieved by philosophy which at its best moments, and as a result of the most representative geniuses, formulated the most basic statements on the existence and the Providence of God and the spirituality and the immortality of the soul, as demonstrated by St. Thomas Aquinas when discussing Plato and Aristotle.<sup>27</sup> This is what was termed, with a profound phrase, the *preparatio evangelica*, of which there are also some echoes in pagan literature (the *IV Eclogue* of Virgil, the references of the *Sybils*...).

However, the state of the search for God has not ceased to be and to remain arduous and complex in the reality of existence and has been (almost) insoluble without the contribution of Revelation and Faith. For Pope Benedict XVI as well, in concrete terms, especially within the contemporary cultural climate, man with his own forces alone is not able to make completely his own this passage of the affirmation of the existence of God or 'best hypothesis' of the existence of the Logos (as Benedict XVI calls it). For the Pope, contemporary man remains, in fact, a prisoner of a 'strange penumbra' and of the impulse to live according to his own interests, leaving God and ethics aside. Only revelation, the initiative of God who manifested Himself to man in Christ and calls him to draw near to him, makes us fully capable of overcoming this penumbra.<sup>28</sup>

### *The Need for Faith*

It is thus providential for divine clemency to come to our help on the pathway of reason and for faith at a certain point to intervene to facilitate the reflection of reason and thereby to enable 'everyone to participate easily in divine knowledge'<sup>29</sup> without falling into the doubts and the errors experienced by paganism. The recourse to faith is not therefore injurious or

<sup>27</sup> *De Substantis separatiis*, chap. 4.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. *L'Europa di Benedetto nella crisi delle culture* (Cantagalli, Siena, 2003), pp. 59-60, 115-124, and his address at Regensburg.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles*, book I, chap. 4.

illicit but indispensable and liberating with respect to a subject that is so important for spiritual life.<sup>30</sup>

As regards our knowledge about God, this is not a matter of having recourse to an immediate 'sense of the divine', as the 'philosophers of intuition' (Schleiermacher) claim. It has to be recognised that there is a close alliance between reason and faith which is not and should not be a passive mutual dependence: reason must carry out its own task and faith must do the same. Faith and reason thus encounter each other in a relationship of 'complementariness' and 'circularity', as *Fides et Ratio* well observes. Reason is autonomous in the order of nature, i.e. it is autonomous in order to know the existence and the natural attributes of God, and it is what we call natural religion. The independence of reason and faith in their respective fields, and the indispensable value or task of faith in its own specific sphere, were suggested by St. Paul, even though he was brought up in the Jewish religion. This independence between reason and faith lies in the distinction between their subjects: created reality or finite reality is the subject of reason and non-created reality or divine life is the subject of faith. The former (reason) underpins and guides natural life, which is the relationship of the self with the world; the latter (faith), with supernatural help, brings to fulfilment the aspiration to divine life and provides it with the means to achieve that life. These are means that are proposed and assured to us by the coming of Christ.

We should thus recognise that Christ, now, is for man the only teacher of the truth that leads to eternal life, which has become accessible to all of us and not the privilege of a fortunate few because we are endowed with higher intellectual powers.<sup>31</sup> Here we encounter the exis-

<sup>30</sup> *'Ad ea etiam quae de Deo ratione humana investigari possunt, necessarium fuit hominem instrui revelatione divina. Quia veritas de Deo, per rationem investigata, a paucis, et per longum tempus, et cum admixtione multorum errorum, homini proveniret, a cuius tamen veritatis cognitione dependet tota hominis salus, quae in Deo est'*, i.e. 'Even as regards those truths about God which human reason could have discovered, it was necessary that man should be taught by a divine revelation; because the truth about God such as reason could discover would only be known by a few, and that after a long time, and with the admixture of many errors. Whereas man's whole salvation, which is in God, depends upon the knowledge of this truth' (St. Thomas Aquinas, *S. Th.*, I, q. 1, a. 1).

<sup>31</sup> *'Nullus philosophorum ante adventum Christi cum toto conatu suo potuit tantum scire de Deo et de necessariis ad vitam aeternam, quantum post adventum Christi scit una vetula per fidem'* i.e. 'no philosopher before the advent of Christ with all his endeavour was able to know God and the means designed to achieve eternal life as much as an old woman through her faith' (St. Thomas Aquinas, *Expositio in Symbolum Apostolorum*, Prooemium).

tential paradox from which faith begins: it is accessible to all men but at the same time transcends all the natural capacities of man and angels.<sup>32</sup> Grace is a gift extended to the human person by God that makes us participate in divine life and thus, above all, enables us to know eternal truths.<sup>33</sup> The existential paradox of man consists in the fact that what in itself for natural reason is most difficult (faith) also becomes accessible to the simple and pure of heart.<sup>34</sup> Faith, according to Christian philosophy, becomes an indispensable help to man in drawing upon the divine life and thus the only means by which to accept and live the supernatural life of grace as children of God already here on the earth. And in addition faith itself is converted into a help for reason in knowledge about God and the human being in his most profound dimension. This is the famous statement of St. Thomas: 'The gifts of grace in this way are added to those of nature which take nothing away from them; indeed they complete them; thus the light of faith, which is infused into us gratuitously, does not annul the light of natural knowledge that is congenital to us; indeed it strengthens it'.<sup>35</sup>

### *The Circularity between Faith and Reason*

Thus faith, in the dynamism of philosophy open to revelation, transcends the sphere of natural reason by two means. First of all at the level of contents, in that it expands reason and makes it capable of under-

<sup>32</sup> *'Vita aeterna est quoddam bonum excedens proportionem naturae creatae, quia etiam excedit cognitionem et desiderium eius'* (St. Thomas Aquinas, *S. Th.*, I-II, q. 114, a. 2).

<sup>33</sup> Cf. M. Sánchez Sorondo, *La gracia como participación de la naturaleza divina*, p. 143 f.

<sup>34</sup> Atheism is more a moral phenomenon than a speculative one. St. Thomas alludes explicitly to this fact in his late comment on psalm 13 which begins with the statement of the impious: *'Dixit insipiens in corde suo non est Deus'* (v. 1). The denial of the existence of God depends on malice: 'that man does not have God in his heart is the principle of malice': *'Quod homo ergo non habeat Deum in corde, principium malitiae est'*. Human beings have a natural but imprecise knowledge of God: 'And this can also explain why simple and uneducated people can have knowledge and belief about the existence of God' (*In Psalmum XIII*, ed. Parm., tom. XIV, p. 183 b).

<sup>35</sup> *'Dona gratiarum hoc modo naturae adduntur quod eam non tollunt, sed magis perficiunt; unde et lumen fidei, quod nobis gratis infunditur, non destruit lumen naturalis rationis divinitus nobis inditum'* (*Super Boetium De Trinitate*, pars 1, q. 2 a. 3 co. 1). Also: *'Fides praesupponit cognitionem naturales, sicut gratia naturam et ut perfectio perfectibile'*, i.e., 'for faith presupposes natural knowledge, even as grace presupposes nature, and perfection supposes something that can be perfected' (*S. Th.*, I, q. 2, a. 2 ad 1).

standing the new truths that are communicated to man through the higher magisterium of divine revelation. Secondly, because faith confirms and illuminates reason itself in the acceptance of natural truths which otherwise in the non-specialist would remain enveloped in the fog of approximate and confused notions. In this way philosophy open to faith draws upon and participates in both worlds, that is to say the world of nature and the world of grace.

From human nature, faith pre-supposes first of all intelligence and its use, because adherence to faith itself takes place by an act of intelligence and postulates its employment, 'for if faith is not thought, it is nothing', as St. Augustine said energetically.<sup>36</sup> The act of faith, however, is not the fruit of a syllogism; nor is it the necessary consequence of a rational process. The whole of Biblical and Christian tradition, although emphasising the rational aspect of faith, attributes it to the interior touch of the Spirit of God (*instinctus Dei invitantis*)<sup>37</sup> which solicits the dynamism of the will. Then man, according to a statement of the Second Vatican Council to be found in the Constitution *Dei Verbum* on Divine Revelation, 'commits his whole self freely to God (*se totum libere Deo committit*), offering the full submission of intellect and will to God who reveals, and freely assenting to the truth revealed by Him'.<sup>38</sup>

From nature, philosophy open to faith then takes the questions and issues of ordinary life concerning birth and death and applies them analogically to supernatural life, as well as those questions that concern violence and freedom and above all good and evil, and truth and error; justice and injustice.

From faith, man draws enlightenment about the new value that these terms obtain in the personal relationship of God with the world and, as a consequence, of the personal relationship of man with God as a son of the Father, and of the relationship of 'I' with 'You', which gives resonance and splendour to the divine symphony of the psalms and sacred liturgy. In addition, the mysteries of faith, in particular the central mystery of the Holy Trinity in its unity and personal diversity, illuminate the life of man as an

<sup>36</sup> *De praedestinatione sanctorum*, II, 5.

<sup>37</sup> '*secundum quam (pietas) cultum et officium exhibemus Deo ut Patri per instinctum Spiritus Sancti*', i.e. 'since it belongs properly to piety to pay duty and worship to God as father as an instinct of the Holy Spirit' (St. Thomas Aquinas, *S. Th.*, II-II, q. 121, a. 1).

<sup>38</sup> Constitution *Dei Verbum*, n. 5.

individual and as a social being which has its roots in the sacrament of marriage, an image of the union of Christ with the Church and of the unity and diversity of the persons of the Trinity.<sup>39</sup>

### *The Proof of Philosophy Open to Faith*

Philosophy open to faith acts at the intersection between reason and faith and thus at the encounter between nature and grace, which is the sphere that comes to existing man thanks to Biblical revelation. They co-exist with reciprocal influences but they do not become mixed up. A specifically philosophical rational movement belongs to the nature of the human being as a movement that goes from the bottom up, from the evidence acquired by internal belief about the existence of the invisible. Differently from the particular physical sciences, each one of which is 'closed' within the specialisation of its own specific subject, philosophy has the task of opening and strengthening the horizon of transcendence, beginning with the two pillars of the existence of God and the immortality of the soul.<sup>40</sup> This order can be changed: one can move from the soul to God, and this is

<sup>39</sup> "There are two reasons why the knowledge of the divine persons was necessary for us. It was necessary for the right idea of creation. The fact of saying that God made all things by His Word excludes the error of those who say that God produced things by necessity. When we say that in Him there is a procession of love, we show that God produced creatures not because He needed them, nor because of any other extrinsic reason, but on account of the love of His own goodness. So Moses, when he had said, "In the beginning God created heaven and earth", subjoined, "God said, Let there be light", to manifest the divine Word; and then said, "God saw the light that it was good", to show proof of the divine love. The same is also found in the other works of creation. In another way, and chiefly, that we may think rightly concerning the salvation of the human race, accomplished by the Incarnate Son, and by the gift of the Holy Spirit'. (St. Thomas Aquinas, *S. Th.*, I, 32, 1 ad 3).

<sup>40</sup> "The approach of first philosophy about truth behaves in a way that is different from that of the other particular sciences. Whereas each of the particular sciences considers certain truths about specific kinds of beings..., but first philosophy considers the universal truth of beings. Thus it belongs to metaphysics to consider how man refers to the knowledge of truth': *'Aliter autem se habet consideratio philosophiae primae circa veritatem, et aliarum particularium scientiarum. Nam unaquaeque particularis scientia considerat quamdam particularem veritatem circa determinatum genus entium, ut geometria circa rerum magnitudines, arithmetica circa numeros. Sed philosophia prima considerat universalem veritatem entium. Et ideo ad hunc philosophum pertinet considerare, quomodo se habeat homo ad veritatem cognoscendam'* (St. Thomas Aquinas, *In II Metaphysicam*, lect. 1, n. 1).

the ascending process of an Aristotelian or modern kind, or from God to the soul to God, and this is the descending process of an Augustinian Biblical kind. 'Philosophy open to faith' follows its own synthetic method: it acts with the first natural principles of reason but moves them within the transcendent reality of God the Creator and of the soul as a spiritual free subject.<sup>41</sup> Thus experience and science are fused in their respective functions and consistencies and a 'breach' of movement is made towards the limit that always keeps the consciousness of a person alert and in movement.

This movement is present in the experience of anybody who reflects at the various objective levels of consciousness: for example, the sense experience of the quality of nature and the concrete experience of the facts of history, the great contribution (and approach) of science to human culture, the formal experience of the abstract processes of logic and mathematics. As I argue below, the ethical personal experience expresses the point of convergence of all these praxes because it proposes the path that leads to the ultimate end and constitutes the specific task of the existential approach of the person. Indeed, the 'quality' of the person, as a moral subject, depends on his approach towards the two pillars of transcendence which St. Augustine proposed, namely 'God and the soul', which had already been announced in the Gospel, where it is stated that 'No one has seen God'.<sup>42</sup> However, the Word made Flesh presented them to us. Thus the soul, too, lies hidden in the innermost part of every person, but it attests to its presence through acting, of which the self is the beginning and the end.

<sup>41</sup> 'The principle of human knowledge is in the sense, however it is not necessary for all that is known by man to be subject to sense, immediately, by a sensible effect, since the intellect itself understands itself through an act which is not subject to the senses': *'principium humanae cognitionis est a sensu; non tamen oportet quod quidquid ab homine cognoscitur, sit sensui subiectum, vel per effectum sensibilem immediate cognoscatur; nam et ipse intellectus intelligit seipsum per actum suum, qui non est sensui subiectus'* (*De malo*, q. 6, a. un. ad 18). This is a decisive point because St. Thomas also states that 'we would not be able to obtain knowledge about separate intellectual substances either through reason or through faith, unless our soul knew on its own to be an intellectual being': *'Cum enim de substantiis separatis hoc quod sint intellectuales quaedam substantiae cognoscamus, vel per demonstrationem vel per fidem, neutro modo hanc cognitionem accipere possemus nisi hoc ipsum quod est esse intellectuale, anima nostra ex seipsa cognosceret'* (*Summa contra Gentiles*, III, 46). Thomas also accepts that is it because of the spiritual soul that the human intellect can raise itself to God: 'the soul itself, through which the human intellect ascends to knowledge of God': *'etiam ipsa anima per quam intellectus humanus in Dei cognitionem ascendit'* (*Ibid.*, I, 3).

<sup>42</sup> *Jn*, 1:17.

Hence the observation about the constructive originality of this sphere of praxis in which 'philosophy open to faith' acts. This pre-supposes the first theoretical and moral principles and fundamental facts such as the existence of the world and the self, of nature and of other men and women. It encounters them at every step of consciousness as conditions, to express the point in Kantian terms, of its possibility. The originality of this dimension of praxis is the completely original fundamental situation which we may call 'the capacity to act freely'. Thus, in this sphere, as is attested to by the fundamental part of ethical reflection, is to be found the protagonist of selfhood and the self, that is to say the human subject. In this capacity, philosophy open to faith finds its authentic meaning and the solid bases of perspectives by which to actuate the person. The reality of the person is an achievement of Christian thought which appeared in history after the message of Christ and was then stimulated by faith.

We can thus say that attraction to good, to perfection and to justice has priority over all the other approaches of consciousness. St. Thomas read this in the *Eudemian Ethics* of Aristotle, which speaks explicitly about a divine instinct, or a 'starting point of motion ( $\delta\sigma\mu\eta$ )' from God.<sup>43</sup> The inclination to good thus constitutes in man the absolute beginning in the ethical sphere. 'Man has an inclination to good, according to the nature of his reason, which nature is proper to him: thus man has a natural inclination to know the truth about God, and to live in society'.<sup>44</sup> This inclination constitutes a natural impetus to know the truth about God and is at the same time the primordial dynamic for the achievement of social life. We can thus conclude that in the existential sphere, which is the sphere of the person in act in different praxes, the fundamental questions concerning God and the soul do not present special difficulties but emerge spontaneously in the consciousness in its first contacts with the real.

Thus these two fundamental truths of the existence of man have a special metaphysical status of immediacy which rises above the need for analytical demonstration, which thus demonstrates and requires its own and original metaphysical status. We can, in fact, state that the existence of

<sup>43</sup> *Eth. Eudem.*, VIII, 14, 1248 a 20 ff, ed. F. Susemihl (Leipzig 1884). Available on the Internet: <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/ptext?doc=Perseus:text:1999.01.0049:book=8:section=1248a>. Cf. C. Fabro, 'Le "liber" de bona fortuna chez Saint Thomas', *Revue Thomiste*, 1988, p. 356 ff.

<sup>44</sup> *S. Th.*, I-II, q. 94, a. 2.

God, as the absolute Principle of thinking, and the instinct to search for the foundation of acting in social life and justice, come forward on their own as a result of the immediate impetus of man's collective nature. Both have a specific meaning in the human consciousness as foundations: one for the setting in motion of metaphysical and scientific thought, the other for the beginning of moral, social and political life. Through metaphysical thought, consciousness takes on the first speculative principles that support the edifice of science, whereas the principle of morality of doing and pursuing good and avoiding evil organises and defends ethical activity and social and political practice.

Thus science, metaphysics and morality are distinct without being separate: the principle of contradiction in the speculative sphere supports the search for the truth of knowledge at the different theoretical levels (physical, biological, mathematical, metaphysical), whereas the first principle of practical reason (do good and avoid evil) is built into the existential pathway of the person and a society of persons. They are, in their fields, two principles that are after a certain fashion indecipherable: they participate in the original propulsion of the person to know truth and do good and to live well (and to 'be' well), in line with friendship, justice and concord with others. General reflection on praxis embraces them both in order to achieve responsible personal action, as is required by philosophy open to Christian faith.

Why have I dwelt in detail upon this question of the original structure of ethics, of good and justice, and on how they are different to the purely theoretical sciences? Not only to bring out the plurality of human praxes and to contextualise non-theoretical activities but also to prepare the ground for the discussion of interferences, examples of overlapping, and conflicts over boundaries and spheres of competence which today bring into question the status of the human being during the age of science, that is to say our daily knowledge about the human being in a world that is increasingly conditioned by scientific knowledge. Man is in effect the only being that demonstrates varied praxes (if not all praxes): the theoretical, the technical, the moral, the juridical and the political. He is the being of the intersection of praxes, the being of many faces, as the Greeks used to say.

### *Knowledge about Man: the Circularity of Science and Knowing Yourself*

There was no great problem between the different domains of knowledge until a border was drawn between nature understood as having a soul or surrounded by a soul, and a soul which was in itself characterised by an

end: this was the age of Aristotelian physics and natural ethics. This border was drawn at the end of the Renaissance, which had not assimilated the originality of the thought of St. Thomas.

The problem became acute when nature became the subject of a science based on pure observation, mathematical calculation, and experimentation. This was the meaning of the Galileian and Newtonian revolution, as Kant (1787) defined it.<sup>45</sup> The human mind thought that it did not have access to the principle of the production of nature in itself or in something other than itself, what Aristotle called form or the formal principle as principle of operation: 'every essence in general is called "nature", because the nature of anything is a kind of essence'.<sup>46</sup> Therefore one can only gather natural gifts made known through their appearance in space and time and try to 'save the phenomena' (τὰ φαινόμενα σώζειν), as Plato himself suggested, who in this was Galileo's mentor. This is no minor endeavour given that the field of observation is so unlimited and that the imaginative ability to form hypotheses with a mathematical formula, to enlarge and replace models, to vary the character of models, and to invent procedures of verification and falsification, is so powerful. This is no minor endeavour, also, because mathematics, which is in part a construction of the mind of the human being, corresponds to the quantity that indeed constitutes the specific matter of every individual and expresses in bodies the realisation of individuality through the parts of such material structure. There is quantity in the mind of man and in the corporeal structure (atoms and sub-atomic structures, molecules, cells, organs, etc.). Thus, although there is not the ancient correspondence between the mind and reality through the notion of form, there is the modern correspondence through quantity – something that has been pointed out on more than one occasion by Benedict XVI in his recent *Magisterium*.

However, as regards phenomena relating to human beings, this asceticism of hypotheses, of the creation of models, and of experimentation, is in part compensated for by the fact that we have partial access to the production of certain phenomena that can be observed through philosophical self-reflection (and of course, for believers, through faith). Thus we are dealing with what in the praxes that are different from this scientific theory and tech-

<sup>45</sup> Kant, Immanuel, *Critique of Pure Reason*, Preface to the second edition (1787). Available on the Internet: <http://etext.library.adelaide.edu.au/k/kant/immanuel/k16p/k16p2.html>.

<sup>46</sup> Aristotle, *Metaph.*, 5, 1015 a 12 f.

nologies can be deemed the genetics of action that belong to fundamental anthropology and to ethics. Reflection on praxes expresses the point of convergence because it indicates the path that leads to the end, i.e. perfect human work as fullness of the act. The success of work (ἔργον) can only be observed in the perfection of praxis itself (ἐνέργεια) in relation to its end.

Thus the action shows that man proceeds for an end and thus that he himself is the principle of action. In the vast field of activity, the human being considers himself responsible for his own action. This means that he can go back from the observable effects of his actions to the intention that gives them meaning and even to the mental acts which create finalities that generate the intentions and the observable results. Thus the action not only exists to be viewed from the outside, like all the natural phenomena of which it is part: it exists to be understood beginning with expressions that are at one and the same time the effects and signs of the intentions that give meaning to it and with the acts that create meaning that at times sometimes produce such intentions. It follows from this that man's knowledge is not a matter of a single plane or level – that of external observation, explanation, and experimentation (as a reproduction of phenomena): this knowledge develops in the interface between the observation of nature and reflective understanding. The human being is contemporaneously an observable being, like all the beings of nature in which he participates, and a being who interprets himself, (a 'self-interpreting being' to employ the phrase of Charles Taylor). On this point we find an illuminating text in the Encyclical *Fides et Ratio* which declares: 'Metaphysics should not be seen as an alternative to anthropology, since it is metaphysics which makes it possible to ground the concept of personal dignity in virtue of their spiritual nature. In a special way, the person constitutes a privileged locus for the encounter with being, and hence with metaphysical enquiry'.<sup>47</sup>

This statement on the various objective levels of knowledge and of the science of knowledge, or epistemology, and to begin with on the different levels of knowledge and self-awareness of the human being, can provide an answer of reconciliation and pacification to the question raised by the status of the human being in the age of science, as long as, that is, positivist ideology does not claim the right to abolish the border between the sciences of nature and the sciences of man and to annex the latter to the former.

<sup>47</sup> *Fides et Ratio*, § 83.

*Conflicting Loci: the Biological Sciences*

Three conflicting loci should be considered here in order to achieve a real comparison between the objective or naturalistic approach of science and the approach of the ethical philosophical approach and an anthropological that we can term 'ontological' (in line with *Fides et Ratio*). These three controversial loci are the framework of biology concerning states at the beginning and end of human life, the field of the neurosciences, and, finally, the fields of genetic mutations and the sciences of heredity whose point of arrival are the theories of evolution.

Of course in these three fields I will only outline the conditions for a reasonable expression of the two analyses of man, that of the sciences and that of anthropological and ethical philosophy.

In terms of the biological sciences, the scientist is expected to seek at the cellular level the correlation between the observable cell and the beginning of actual human life. The biologist affirms that the first embryonic stem cell, which is made up of a male and female genetic heritage, already has DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid), i.e. the macromolecule which contains and transfers genetic characteristics in all living organisms beginning with a genetic code that is the same genetic code that the individual will have throughout his life. Indeed, as Nicole Le Douarin, has observed, the point of departure of embryology is the following: 'each one of us began our lives as a cell, an ovum...a tiny corpuscle of living matter'. From this comes the fundamental question of embryology: 'how can it be that from this single *isolated* cell come the parts of the body of an adult, made up of various billions of harmoniously ordered cells to form various and complex organs such as the brain, the limbs, the eyes and the face?'<sup>48</sup> A biologist observes a living cell that is all potential and then begins to have quantitative and qualitative changes directed by that specific genetic code. This cellular behaviour of the human being, which for that matter is matched by the cellular behaviour of higher animals, is inscribed, so to speak, and reference is no longer made to the genetic code or to DNA but to the same subject who has an internal principle of development or self-genesis beginning with an active potentiality that reaches a mature reality that is also the same physical and biological subject with the same genetic code during the whole

<sup>48</sup> N. Le Douarin, *Des chimères, des clones et des gènes* (Editions Odile Jacob, Paris, 2000), p. 15.

time of his existence from the beginning until death. With respect to humans, it is not the case that the embryonic cell is a kind of mini-man. Instead, the genetic code is a project of development, a 'programme', that contains a collection of information which means that the same subject progressively organises himself so as to form, one after the other, the various organs that make him up, to the point of arriving at the complete individual who emerges at the moment of birth.

We find here a dualism of language that should not compromise the unity of the reality in question. The biologist speaks of a cell or group of cells with a great potential that has or have a dynamic development; the philosopher and the expert in theology can speak of a single subject who, from the start, is what he is and becomes what he is. Therefore when a subject is a genetic stem cell we refer to a non-developed human being. Therefore the corollary of an interdisciplinary anthropological vision, that is to say that which takes into account both languages and approaches which explain the same reality, is that such a stem cell cannot be seen as a pure genetic material, which can be used or exploited even for good purposes, to cure another human being, because every human person from the beginning until the end of his life is an end in himself and cannot be a means or an instrument of another person, according to the various ethics that the West has produced from Aristotle to Kant, passing by way of the golden rule of the Gospel: 'do not do unto others what you would not have them do unto you'.

Something similar happens at the other extreme of life, namely the state of death. The specialist, the neurologist, speaks of brain death as an irreversible fact in the life of a higher living being and in particular of a human being. The brain does not give signs of life and thus does not carry out its own function, and does not even give unity to the other vital systems. It thus does not allow the existence of natural life. The philosopher, on the contrary, speaks of the death of the human being. Since the body is no longer capable of receiving life from the soul, the soul (or vital principle) has separated from the body. Thus, this body, since it is no longer informed by the soul, is in actual fact a body in an equivocal sense, and it is for this reason that we call it a 'cadaver', even though there may be manifestations of life in the heart. Let us think, for example, of a person who has been beheaded in a road accident: at the time of the accident, when the head is severed from the body, the person of course dies, but the heart (and other organs) may still 'live' because of a mechanical movement or because of an artificial instrument, the ventilator, which enables the heart to continue

functioning for a certain period of time, perhaps for a period of time that is sufficient for a transplant to be carried out. The medical neurologist declares that the death of the brain is an irreversible fact for the life of a human being; the philosopher and the moralist declare that the death of a person takes place with the separation of the soul from the body. Therefore two moral ills must be avoided in this field by scientists: the bringing forward of death (euthanasia), even for altruistic reasons, for example conserving the life of another person through a transplant, and trying to keep a cadaver living at all costs, which is what we term aggressive medical treatment (dystanasia).<sup>49</sup>

### *The Neurosciences and Self-understanding*

As regards the neurosciences, the scientist is expected to seek at the cortical level the correlation between the observable structures and the functions where the structures are the bases, the supports, the nervous material or whatever we may want to call it. The scientist only observes quantitative and qualitative changes, the ever more complex hierarchies of observable phenomena; but the meaning of the function which corresponds to the structure is understood only by the speaking subject who says that he perceives, that he imagines, and that he remembers. These oral statements, together with behavioural signs that the human being shares to a large extent with the higher animals, fall within a type of analysis where there is no mention of neurons, synapses etc. but reference is made to impressions, intentions, dispositions, wishes, choices, ideas etc. We again find here a certain semantic dualism, if we can use this phrase, which does not, however, jeopardise the absolute nature of the human being. An important corollary of such semantic dualism lies in the fact that we speak in similar terms of the body, of the same body, in both analyses: there is the body-object, of which the brain is the guiding force with its marvellous architecture, and the body proper, this body that is the only one that is mine, that belongs to me, which I move, which I suffer; and there are my organs, my eyes 'with' which I see, my hands

<sup>49</sup> For a detailed analysis of the concept of brain death as a definition of death see *The Signs of Death. The Proceedings of the Working Group 11-12 September 2006* (Pontificia Academia Scientiarum, Scripta Varia 110, Vatican City, 2007), esp. 'Why the Concept of Brain Death is Valid as a Definition of Death. Statement by Neurologists and Others', pp. XXI-XXIX.

‘with’ which I grasp. And it is on this body proper that all the architecture of my powers and my non-powers is built: the power to do and not to do; the power to do this or that; the power to speak, to act, to attribute to myself my own actions, given that I am their real author, and thus free.

There is thus raised the question of the relationship between the two analyses – that of the neurologist and that of the philosopher and metaphysician. And it is here that the analyses cross over without ever dissolving each other. The scientist and the philosopher can agree on calling the body-object (and its marvel, the brain), the ‘reality without which we cannot speak, or think or decide or feel or live or act’. The scientist can continue to profess a kind of materialism in his analysis which enables him to work without metaphysical scruples. The philosopher speaks about the brain in terms of recipient structure, of support, of substrata, of basis, of potency, of encephalic matter, of part of the person. It must be accepted that, for the moment, we do not have a third analysis where there is awareness that this brain-body and my living body are one and the same being. However, the analysis of the brain-body must have a certain opening towards the analysis of my living body and vice versa, namely that while the analysis of my living body gives to me in itself my experience and philosophical reflection, it must be open or enable indirectly or per accidens the analysis of the mind-body and vice versa.

We notice here that we do not have direct access to the very origin of the being that we are, in other words we do not have a sort of self-transparency of ourselves and of our selfhood and, starting from this centre, a self-transparency also of all of our actions. In this sense we cannot understand ourselves immediately through our being and essence by essence. On the contrary, our being attests to its existence in the concrete and current exercise of our life. In a realistic vision, St. Thomas indicates this clearly: ‘For one perceives that he has a soul, that he lives, and that he exists, because he perceives that he senses, understands, and carries on other vital activities of this sort’ (*In hoc enim aliquis percepit se animam habere, et vivere et esse, quod percepit se sentire et intelligere et alia huiusmodi opera vitae exercere*).<sup>50</sup> For this reason Aristotle declares: ‘We sense that we sense, and we understand that we understand, and because we sense this, we understand that we exist’.<sup>51</sup> In the perception of our praxis or activity there is the co-perception of the beginning:

<sup>50</sup> St. Thomas Aquinas, *Q. d. De Veritate*, q. 10, a. 8.

<sup>51</sup> Aristotle, *Ethica Nicomachea*, IX, 9, 1170 a 30.

'from a perception of the acts of the soul we perceive the principle of such acts' (*'perceptis actibus animae, percipitur inesse principium talium actum'*).<sup>52</sup> St. Thomas assures us that our soul, since it grasps universals, perceives (*percepit*) that it has a spiritual form; he argues that we are aware of the very becoming of the universal in the soul and even that the very light of intelligence makes its presence known to us by means of the soul. This signifies affirming in an explicit manner a perception proper to the spiritual reality in a positive way but by means of the spiritual operation of implementing the intelligible: 'And we know this by experience, since we perceive that we abstract universal forms from their particular conditions, which is to make them actually intelligible' (*'Et hoc experimento cognoscimus, dum percipimus nos abstrahere formas universals a conditionibus particularibus, quod est facere actu intelligibilia'*).<sup>53</sup>

The ultimate originality of this perception of our spiritual reality is the absolutely original fundamental situation which we may call the genetics of the act or 'the emergence of freedom' as a move from potency to the act or the capability to act or the capability of acting or of non-acting and our awareness of it. Quite rightly Christian thought, long before, and with more precision than, the moderns, when considering this reality of the spiritual subject called freedom the '*motor omnium*' of the activity of the person, and the protagonist of the person, the 'I', the self (selfhood), the human subject that we discover through praxis. This perception is so radical that it is more than an opinion and it is prior to every science, whether theoretical or practical; indeed it is converted into the principle of the foundation of the different praxes.

### *Brain, Mind, Soul and Being*

Aware of the lack of a direct and self-transparent knowledge of such a founding origin, scientists and philosophers should aim to seek an increasingly precise adjustment between a neuroscience which is increasingly

<sup>52</sup> St. Thomas Aquinas, *Q. d. De Veritate*, q. 10, a. 9.

<sup>53</sup> St. Thomas Aquinas, *S. Th.*, I, q. 79, a. 4. Available on the Internet: <http://www.corpusthomicum.org/sth1077.html> – 237k He also states: 'The human soul understands itself through its own act of understanding, which is proper to it, showing perfectly its power and nature' i.e. '*Anima humana intelligit seipsam per suum intelligere, quod est actus proprius eius, perfecte demonstrans virtutem eius et naturam*' (*Ibid.*, I, q. 88, a. 2 ad 3; available on the Internet: <http://www.corpusthomicum.org/sth1084.html> – 226k).

expert in material architecture and phenomenological and anthropologic descriptions centred on human operations (seeing, understanding, living well, acting) where praxis is subject to philosophical analysis. In Aristotle, the act that achieves a human praxis is clearly dissociated from the act of movement: 'Since no action which has a limit is an end, but only a means to the end, as, e.g., the process of thinning; and since the parts of the body themselves, when one is thinning them, are in motion in the sense that they are not already that which it is the object of the motion to make them, this process is not an action, or at least not a complete one, since it is not an end; it is the process which includes the end that is an action. E.g., at the same time we see and have seen, understand and have understood, think and have thought; but we cannot at the same time learn and have learnt, or become healthy and be healthy. We are living well and have lived well, we are happy and have been happy, at the same time; otherwise the process would have had to cease at some time, like the thinning-process; but it has not ceased at the present moment; we both are living and have lived. Now of these processes we should call the one type motions, and the other actualisations. Every motion is incomplete – the processes of thinning, learning, walking, building – these are motions, and incomplete at that. For it is not the same thing which at the same time is walking and has walked, or is building and has built, or is becoming and has become, or is being moved and has been moved, but two different things; and that which is causing motion is different from that which has caused motion. But the same thing at the same time is seeing and has seen, is thinking and has thought. The latter kind of process, then, is what I mean by actualisation, and the former what I mean by motion'.<sup>54</sup> What makes this text remarkable is that the disjunction between action and movement is upheld by a criterion that involves a phenomenology of a metaphysical character, namely the possibility of saying, 'at the same time', we are seeing and we have seen, we are living well and have lived well, we are happy and we have been happy. If this kind of praxis transcends pure movement it is because it is a more perfect kind of act, that is to say it has all the perfection of the act of movement but its imperfection is not linked to the succession of matter.<sup>55</sup>

<sup>54</sup> Aristotle, *Metaph.*, IX, 6, 1048 b 18-35.

<sup>55</sup> Cf. Paul Ricoeur, 'Tenth Study: What Ontology in View?', in *Oneself as Another* (Chicago-London, 1992), pp. 302-308; 'Que la science s'incrit dans la culture comme "pratique théorique"', in *The Cultural Values of Science* (The Pontifical Academy of Sciences, Vatican City, 2003), pp. 14-23.

This connects the investigation of the being of the self to the interpretation of one of the four primordial meanings of being, which Aristotle placed under the distinction of act and of potency.<sup>56</sup> It is essential – for a deep ontological understanding of human action – that the examples taken from this final sphere of human perfection appear in turn as central and decentred. Let me explain this: if *energeia-dynamis* were simply another way of saying praxis, the lesson of ontology would have no bearing; it is instead by extension that *energeia-dynamis* irrigates fields of application other than human action and its fecundity becomes manifest. In Aristotle, *dynamis-energeia* is sometimes applied to explain the intellect in the act of intellection, to say that the intellect in potency cannot be understood as matter but in a different way. Thus, it is essential in an ontological understanding of the self to decentre praxis – both upwards and downwards – thanks to which *energeia-dynamis* points toward a foundation of being, at once potentiality and actuality where human action has its basis. In other words, it appears equally important that human action be the place of readability *par excellence* of this meaning of being as distinct from all the others and that being as act and as potency has other fields of application than human action alone. The central character of action and its decentring (or better ‘re-centering’) in the direction of a foundation of act and potency are two features that equally and conjointly constitute an ontology of selfhood in terms of actuality and potentiality. In other terms, if finding a being of the self is possible or if an ontology of selfhood is possible, this is in conjunction with a foundation starting from which the self can be said to be acting.<sup>57</sup>

Indeed, being, the mode of being, is revealed by operating, that is to say by the mode of operating. Thus from the point of view of the *via inventionis* one can say: *esse sequitur operari*. Now the soul knows the truth in itself and tends to good in itself, which is perfect and limitless: hence the unquenched thirst for knowledge and happiness. Thus the soul, in knowing and willing (thereby achieving that kind of praxis that Aristotle describes as perfect), draws on the absolute and does not depend on the body or stop at material realities: it aspires to science and perfect knowledge and to ultimate reality. This emergence or independence in operating reveals independence in being so that the *esse (actus essendi)* does not belong to the body but specifically to the intellectual soul as a subsistent form in itself.

<sup>56</sup> Aristotle, *Metaph.*, V, 7 and 12; and IX, 1-10.

<sup>57</sup> This is the pathway that Aristotle employed to define the soul as: ‘the first act of a natural body having life in potency’ (*De Anima*, II, 1, 412 a 27 f.).

Therefore, neuronal and philosophical centrality in acting and decentring in the direction of a foundation of act and potency are equally and jointly constitutive of an ontology of the human being in terms of act and potency. Therefore only the human being has this double legibility: the external objective reading, common to all the beings of nature, which is the subject of the sciences (*epistémé*), and the approach of auto-reflection, which belongs to philosophy (*sophia*), according to the Socratic precept 'know yourself', which understands being as an act of an active potency which we call the 'soul'.<sup>58</sup> Thus only a human being is able to create a circularity between this double legibility, seeing, so to speak, externally, the functioning of his brain with new sensors that portray it in film-like fashion, and interpreting from the inside this film-like portrayal starting from auto-reflection on himself.

There is nothing that is more ours than our brain yet there is nothing that we know less about. The ancients thought that the heart was the centre of life because it beats constantly like a pump and tells us 'I am here'.<sup>59</sup>

<sup>58</sup> Saint Thomas Aquinas, *Q. d. De Spiritualibus Creaturis*, a. 1.

<sup>59</sup> Indeed, St. Thomas says: '*Secundum igitur quod anima est forma corporis, non potest esse aliquid medium inter animam et corpus. Secundum vero quod est motor, sic nihil prohibet ponere ibi multa media; manifeste enim anima per cor movet alia membra, et etiam per spiritum movet corpus*' (*Q. d. De Spiritualibus Creaturis*, a. 3 co.). Also: '*unumquodque operatur in remotiora per id quod est maxime proximum. Sed vires animae diffunduntur in totum corpus per cor. Ergo cor est vicinius quam ceterae partes corporis; et ita mediante corde unietur corpori*' (*Q. d. De Anima*, a. 9, arg. 13). Also: '*cor est primum instrumentum per quod anima movet ceteras partes corporis; et ideo eo mediante anima unitur reliquis partibus corporis ut motor, licet ut forma uniatur unicuique parti corporis per se et immediate*' (*Q. d. De Anima*, a. 9, ad 13). Again, from a general point of view: '*cum anima rationalis sit perfectissima formarum naturalium, in homine invenitur maxima distinctio partium propter diversas operationes; et anima singulis earum dat esse substantiale, secundum illum modum qui competit operationi ipsorum. Cuius signum est, quod remota anima, non remanet neque caro neque oculus nisi aequivoce. Sed cum oporteat ordinem instrumentorum esse secundum ordinem operationum, diversarum autem operationum quae sunt ab anima, una naturaliter praecedit alteram, necessarium est quod una pars corporis moveatur per aliam ad suam operationem. Sic ergo inter animam secundum quod est motor et principium operationum et totum corpus, cadit aliquid medium; quia mediante aliqua prima parte primo mota movet alias partes ad suas operationes, sicut mediante corde movet alia membra ad vitales operationes: sed secundum quod dat esse corpori, immediate dat esse substantiale et specificum omnibus partibus corporis. Et hoc est quod a multis dicitur quod anima unitur corpori ut forma sine medio, ut motor autem per medium. Et haec opinio procedit secundum sententiam Aristotelis qui ponit animam esse formam substantialem corporis. Sed quidam ponentes secundum opinionem*

On the contrary, the brain was, so to speak, the great silence or the sealed box of our body.<sup>60</sup> Today however the brain opens itself up and shows itself, in part because of the neurosciences, as being the centre of the body, and this may turn out to be a turning point for a new beginning where external experience can be joined to internal experience and science can be joined to philosophy, each in their respective functions and consistencies and in their mutual circularity. This was not present in ancient philosophies, or in Medieval, modern or contemporary thought, and if the human being is analysed, he is analysed from a formal point of view without these dynamic and circular links with scientific knowledge and auto-reflective knowledge of my body and my brain. In truth, it is not that I am my body, not even its masterpiece, the brain: I am neither my brain nor my body; I have a brain and a body but – as I have tried to show – in order to understand my ‘being’ I must know what to have a brain means, to have a body means, through that knowledge of them that experience and science offer to me.

*Platonis animam uniri corpori sicut unam substantiam, alii, necesse habuerunt ponere media quibus anima uniretur corpori; quia diversae substantiae et distantes non colligantur, nisi sit aliquid quod uniat eas. Et sic posuerunt quidam spiritum et humorem esse medium inter animam et corpus, et quidam lucem, et quidam potentias animae, vel aliquid aliud huiusmodi. Sed nullum istorum est necessarium, si anima est forma corporis; quia unumquodque secundum quod est ens, est unum. Unde cum forma secundum seipsam det esse materiae, secundum seipsam unitur materiae primae, et non per aliud aliquod ligamentum’ (Q. d. De Anima, a. 9 co.).*

<sup>60</sup> However, Saint Thomas had already acutely observed the absolute necessity, for the working of the mind, of the state of perfection of the body: ‘*naturale est animae quod indigeat phantasmatis ad intelligendum; ex quo tamen sequitur quod diminuatur in intelligendo a substantiis superioribus. Quod autem dicitur, quod anima a corpore prae-gravatur, hoc non est ex eius natura, sed ex eius corruptione, secundum illud Sapient. IX: corpus quod corrumpitur aggravat animam. Quod vero dicitur quod abstrahit se a nexibus corporalibus ut se intelligat, intelligendum est quod abstrahit se ab eis quasi ab obiectis, quia anima intelligitur per remotionem omnis corporeitatis; non tamen ab eis abstrahitur secundum esse. Quinimmo, quibusdam corporeis organis laesis, non potest anima directe nec se nec aliud intelligere, ut quando laeditur cerebrum’ (Q. d. De Spiritualibus Creaturis, a. 2 ad 7). Also: ‘*Hanc igitur oportet esse dispositionem corporis cui anima rationalis unitur, ut scilicet sit temperatissimae complexionis. Si quis autem considerare velit etiam particulares humani corporis dispositiones, ad hoc inveniet ordinatas, ut homo sit optimi sensus. Unde, quia ad bonam habitudinem potentiarum sensitivarum interiorum, puta imaginationis et memoriae, et cogitativae virtutis, necessaria est bona dispositio cerebri. Ideo factus est homo habens maius cerebrum inter omnia animalia, secundum proportionem suae quantitatis; et ut liberior sit eius operatio habet caput sursum positum; quia solus homo est animal rectum, alia vero animalia curva incedunt’ (Q. d. De Anima, a. 8 co.).**

*Evolution and Human Nature*

In the same spirit we can reconcile another controversial locus – that of science and genetic mutations or heredity, which, although (and let us not forget the point) they were discovered by the Augustinian monk G. Mendel (1822-1884), were after Darwin (1809-1882) frequently linked to the theories of evolution. No external limit can be imposed on the hypothesis according to which random variations, given changes, have been established and reinforced in order to ensure the survival of a species, and thus of the human species as well. Of course hitherto this has been a hypothesis, or more than a hypothesis, to quote John Paul II, which the experimental sciences will have to ascertain more decisively with the rigour of the Galileian method of mathematical formulae (in this case in relation to life) and the reproduction of the hypothesis in a concrete and factual experiment. We are not against evolutionism in this sense but we have the right to request scientific proof in order for this not to be a mere scientific ‘belief’.

Philosophy, in turn, and not philosophy but also the social sciences, are open to knowledge that derives from biology, but they must not engage in the battle, which is lost from the beginning, to establish the facts. Philosophy should ask itself how it can find a meeting point with the naturalistic point of view, starting from the position according to which the human being is already a speaking, questioning being (there is a road in Santiago de Compostela named ‘*preguntorio*’ to commemorate this practice of questioning which is typical of students and characterises the human being). Thus, starting from his questions, the human being has given himself some answers that speak of his domain of freedom in relation to given nature. While the scientist follows the descending order of species and brings out the uncertain, contingent and improbable aspects of the result of evolution, philosophy starts from the self-interpretation of man’s intellectual, moral and spiritual situation and goes back through the course of evolution to the sources of life and of being that man himself is. The starting point can still be the original question, which has existed from the beginning and has always been latent with a sort of self-referentiality of principle. Freedom is what Hegel calls ‘the essence of the spirit’.<sup>61</sup> But for Hegel, in the full maturity of modern thought, the concept of the universal

<sup>61</sup> *Enzyklop. d. philos. Wiss.*, § 482.

and the radical, in the sense of the original nucleus of the dignity of every man as free man, entered the world only with the message of Christ.<sup>62</sup>

John Paul II began his pontificate with a statement from Vatican Council II, according to which 'Christ the Redeemer fully reveals man to himself'.<sup>63</sup> He said that 'This is the human dimension of the mystery of the Redemption. In this dimension man finds again the greatness, dignity and value that belong to his humanity'.<sup>64</sup> The Pope, therefore, was convinced that faith in Christ the only begotten son of God, can suggest, stimulate, and fully discover man and can offer perfection in knowledge about, the carrying out or the fullness of all the praxes of the human being. Indeed, the reality of the person is also, according to *Fides et Ratio*, an achievement of Cristian philosophy, as is the notion of the participated act of being in which the person finds his foundation, which, in turn, is based on the act of being by essence of God. John Paul II was convinced that the *habitus* of faith, informed by the love of Christ, when present in a powerful and creative mind, manages to discover new objective and subjective worlds. He observed on this point that 'Galileo feels in his scientific research the presence of the Creator, who stimulates him, inspires and helps his intuitions, acting in the deepest recesses of his spirit'.<sup>65</sup>

So, reason helped by faith, once it recognises that man is characterised by his freedom, can legitimately ask itself how the human being came to be in animal nature. Thus the gaze is retrospective and retraces the chain of mutations and variations. This gaze meets the other, progressive, gaze, which descends the river of the progeny of the human being – man and woman. The two gazes intersect at a point: the birth of a symbolic and spiritual world where achieved freedom defines the humanity of man. The confusion that has to be avoided lies in the two meanings of the term 'origin': the meaning of genetic derivation and the meaning of ontological foundation.

<sup>62</sup> Cf. loc. cit.

<sup>63</sup> *Redemptor Hominis*, n. 10, and *passim*.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>65</sup> Address to the PAS of 10 Nov. 1979, in *Papal Addresses to the Pontifical Academy of Sciences and to the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences*, p. 242. With regard to the invention of the telescope, Galileo wrote at the beginning of his *Sidereus Nuncius*, recalling some of his recent astronomical discoveries: '*Quae omnia ope Perspicilli a me excogitati divina prius illuminante gratia, paucis abhinc diebus reperta, atque observata fuerunt*', that is to say 'All these things have been discovered and observed in recent days using the telescope which was invented by me, previously illuminated by divine grace' (Venice, 1610, fol. 4).

One refers to the origin of species in the succession of space and time beginning with an already originated datum; the other poses the question of the appearance of its participated being beginning with the Being by essence. This is the first origin of the being that is the 'passage' of the being from nothing to being which is not properly a passage but the primary origin of the being that emerges from nothing thanks to the act of participated being: '*Ex hoc quod aliquid est ens per participationem, sequitur quod sit causatum ab alio*'.<sup>66</sup> Hence the complete formula of the creation as participation (passive in the creature and active in God): '*Necesse est dicere omne ens, quod quocumque modo est, a Deo esse*'.<sup>67</sup> The essential in this origin is the analogical decentering towards the profound, or the self, of each person, and the analogical recentering towards the other, namely God, as was also observed by St. Thomas in his late work: '*Deus est et tu: sed tuum esse est participatum, suum vero essenziale*'.<sup>68</sup> In contemporary philosophy, Kierkegaard has a similar expression of origin when he finds the foundation of the self, which Kant had theorised for the first time<sup>69</sup> but closed up within the horizon of time, in transcendence, that is as the theological self in transparency in He who established it.<sup>70</sup> And here I return to what I said at the outset in relation to the philosophical and scientific prologue for today's man in the light of dialogue with science.

### *Brief Epilogue*

One could, therefore, conclude by saying that God has loved (in the sense that He loves eternally) us twice,<sup>71</sup> in the creation of natural being and in the recreation of the being of grace, and both from the cosmic negative

<sup>66</sup> St. Thomas Aquinas, *S. Th.*, I, q. 44, a. 1 ad 1.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, *S. Th.*, I, q. 44, a. 1.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, *In Psalmum XXXIV*.

<sup>69</sup> Kant, Immanuel, *Critique of Pure Reason*, § 16. Available on the Internet: <http://etext.library.adelaide.edu.au/k/kant/immanuel/k16p40.html>.

<sup>70</sup> Cf. S. Kierkegaard, *The Mortal Illness*, notion of the self, *passim*.

<sup>71</sup> 'When the term Love is taken in a notional sense it means nothing else than to spirate love; just as to speak is to produce a word, and to flower is to produce flowers. As therefore we say that a tree flowers by its flower, so do we say that the Father, by the Word or the Son, speaks Himself, and His creatures; and that the Father and the Son love each other and us, by the Holy Spirit, or by Love proceeding': '*Secundum quod notionaliter sumitur, sic diligere nihil est aliud quam spirare amorem; sicut dicere est producere verbum, et florere est producere flores. Sicut ergo dicitur arbor florens floribus, ita*

of nothing, then from the free negative of sin. But God, in creating from nothing and redeeming man, lost nothing of His divinity and in redeeming man from sin conserved man's freedom. Indeed, He formed a society of spiritual beings that freely sing His glory. One could say, with a phrase that is rather empirical but based on a text in Sirach, that God 'overflowed' Himself not to increase Himself but to communicate His love, demonstrating first the power of love in the creation and then revealing the mercy of love in the redemption. This is the infinite paradox of infinite transcendence which is expressed with the dual participation of the natural being of nature and of the human being made in the image of the Trinity, and with the supernatural being of grace and glory, with which God, love and loving, associates man with the participation of His life so as to introduce him into

*dicitur Pater dicens Verbo vel Filio, se et creaturarum: et Pater et Filius dicuntur diligentes Spiritu Sancto, vel Amore procedente, et se et nos* (S. Th., I, q. 37, a. 2). Also: *'Amor enim est causa gaudii: unusquisque enim gaudet de re amata. Deus autem se amat et creaturam, praecipue rationalem, cui infinitum bonum communicat. Christus ergo de duobus ab aeterno gaudet: scilicet de bono suo et Patris. Item de bono creaturae rationalis, idest, in hoc quod comunicor filiis hominum: et de his gaudet ab aeterno'* (Super Evangelium Ioannis, chap. 15, lect. 2, Marietti, Taurini, 1952, nro. 2004, p. 378). In the same Trinitarian sense: *"Pater et Filius diligunt nos Spiritu sancto", hoc verbo 'diligere' potest sumi essentialiter et notionaliter, et utroque modo vera est locutio. Si enim sumatur essentialiter, tunc in verbo dilectionis designabitur efficientia totius Trinitatis, et in ablativo designante personam Spiritus sancti, designabitur ratio efficientiae, non ex parte efficientis, sed ex parte effectorum, quorum ratio et origo est processio Spiritus sancti, sicut et verbum; quamvis proprie verbum sit ratio creaturarum, secundum quod exeunt a Deo per modum intellectus. Unde dicitur, quod Pater dicit omnia verbo vel arte sua. Sed Spiritus sanctus est ratio earum, prout exeunt a Deo per libertatem voluntatis; et ideo dicitur proprie diligere creaturarum Spiritu sancto, et non verbo. Si autem sumatur notionaliter, tunc est vera etiam locutio, sed habet aliam rationem veritatis; quia verbum dilectionis non importabit ex principali intentione habitudinem efficientiae respectu creaturae; sed principaliter denotabit rationem huius efficientiae ex parte effectorum, et ex consequenti dabit intelligere habitudinem efficientiae, et tunc est sensus: Pater diligit creaturam Spiritu sancto, id est, spirat amorem personalem, qui est ratio omnis liberalis collationis factae a Deo creaturae'* (In I Sent., d. 32, q. 1, a. 3, Mand. I, p. 750). Because 'knowing' and 'wise' in God are only essential terms one could not say that the Father is wise or that He knows the Son, whereas *'diligere sumitur non solum essentialiter, sed etiam notionaliter. Et secundum hoc possumus dicere quod Pater et Filius diligunt se Spiritu Sancto'* (S. Th., I, q. 37, a. 2 ad 1). Thus *'Cum dicitur quod Spiritus Sanctus est amor Patris in Filium, vel in quidquam aliud, non significatur aliquid transiens in alium; sed solum habitudo amoris ad rem amatam'* (Ib., 1 ad 2). For a more detailed investigation see M. Sánchez Sorondo, 'Il Padre e il Figlio amano se stessi e noi per lo Spirito Santo (Sth I 37 2)', in *Doctor Communis*, fasc. 2 (Vatican City, 2003), pp. 41-57.

an interpersonal relationship with the Son, the Holy Spirit, and the Father. Two absolute emanations of the essential love of God that provoke two emanations of created love: the first to transcend nothing and open the world in beauty, the second to restore the communication interrupted by sin and raise man to 'divine commerce' with the Persons of the Trinity. This is the marvellous reality of the Love of freedom, an inseparable plexus of absolute immanence and total transcendence. Such is the first paradox of the creation consigned to philosophy and science. Such is the second paradox of the recreation that took place through the kenosis of the eternal Word in the Incarnation and the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, which animates the Church until the end of time: this is the paradox that is nearest to the mystery of God and His Trinitarian life which, like the Church, is consigned to faith and revealed theology. This is why today we are called to renew reason and faith alike, as *Fides et Ratio* points out.