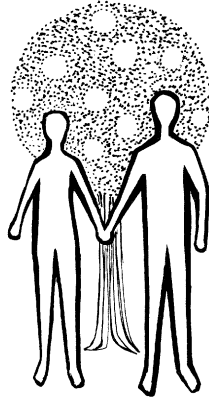


THE HUMAN PERSON
1. Man: the Image of God
Texts from the
Catechism of the Catholic Church



MAN'S VOCATION: LIFE IN THE SPIRIT

Life in the Holy Spirit fulfils the vocation of man (chapter one). This life is made up of divine charity and human solidarity (chapter two). It is graciously offered as salvation (chapter three). (1699)

THE DIGNITY OF THE HUMAN PERSON

The dignity of the human person is rooted in his creation in the image and likeness of God (article 1); it is fulfilled in his vocation to divine beatitude (article 2). It is essential to a human being freely to direct himself to this fulfilment (article 3). By his deliberate actions (article 4), the human person does, or does not, conform to the good promised by God and attested by moral conscience (article 5). Human beings make their own contribution to their interior growth; they make their whole sentient and spiritual lives into means of this growth (article 6). With the help of grace they grow in virtue (article 7), avoid sin, and if they sin they entrust themselves as did the prodigal son (Lk 15:11-32) to the mercy of our Father in heaven (article 8). In this way they attain to the perfection of charity. (1700)

MAN: THE IMAGE OF GOD

In the image and likeness of the Creator

“Christ, in the very revelation of the mystery of the Father and of his love, makes man fully manifest to himself and brings to light his exalted vocation.” (Vat II) It is in Christ, “the image of the invisible God” (Col 1:15), that man has been created “in the image and likeness” of the Creator. It is in Christ, Redeemer and Saviour, that the divine image, disfigured in man by the first sin, has been restored to its original beauty and ennobled by the grace of God. (cf. 2 Cor 4:4). (1701)

In the image of the Holy Trinity

The divine image is present in every man. It shines forth in the communion of persons, in the likeness of the union of the divine persons among themselves (1702)

Destined for eternal beatitude in God

Endowed with “a spiritual and immortal” soul, the human person is “the only creature on earth that God has willed for its own sake”. From his conception, he is destined for eternal beatitude. (1703)

Powers of intellect and will seek what is true and good

The human person participates in the light and power of the divine Spirit. By his reason, he is capable of understanding the order of things established by the Creator. By free will, he is capable of directing himself toward his true good. He finds his perfection “in seeking and loving what is true and good”. (1704)

By virtue of his soul and his spiritual powers of intellect and will, man is endowed with freedom, an “outstanding manifestation of the divine image”. (1705)

The voice of God calls us to a moral life

By his reason, man recognizes the voice of God which urges him “to do what is good and avoid what is evil”. Everyone is obliged to follow this law, which makes itself heard in conscience and is fulfilled in the love of God and of neighbour. Living a moral life bears witness to the dignity of the person. (1706)

Damaged by original sin

“Man, enticed by the Evil One, abused his freedom at the very beginning of history” (Vatican II). He succumbed to temptation and did what was evil. He still desires the good, but his nature bears the wound of original sin. He is now inclined to evil and subject to error:

“Man is divided in himself. As a result, the whole life of men, both individual and social, shows itself to be a struggle, and a dramatic one, between good and evil, between light and darkness.” (Vatican II) (1707)

Restored to new life by Christ

By his Passion, Christ delivered us from Satan and from sin. He merited for us the new life in the Holy Spirit. His grace restores what sin had damaged in us. (1708)

Called to follow the example of Christ and share his life

He who believes in Christ becomes a son of God. This filial adoption transforms him by giving him the ability to follow the example of Christ. It makes him capable of acting rightly and doing good. In union with his Saviour, the disciple attains the perfection of charity which is holiness. Having matured in grace, the moral life blossoms into eternal life in the glory of heaven. (1709)

IN BRIEF

“Christ... makes man fully manifest to man himself and brings to light his exalted vocation.” (1710)

Endowed with a spiritual soul, with intellect and with free will, the human person is from his very conception ordered to God and destined for eternal beatitude. He pursues his perfection in “seeking and loving what is true and good”. (1711)

In man, true freedom is an “outstanding manifestation of the divine image”. (1712)

Man is obliged to follow the moral law, which urges him “to do what is good and avoid what is evil”. This law makes itself heard in his conscience. (1713)

Man, having been wounded in his nature by original sin, is subject to error and inclined to evil in exercising his freedom. (1714)

He who believes in Christ has new life in the Holy Spirit. The moral life, increased and brought to maturity in grace, is to reach its fulfilment in the glory of heaven. (1715)