

St. Paul and the Natural Law: “*Written in their Hearts*”

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The present Pope, writing then as Professor of Theology at the University of Regensburg, wrote a critique of the treatment of the relationship between Philosophy and Theology in the Second Vatican Council document *Gaudium et Spes*. He referred to there not being a radical enough rejection of a doctrine of man divided into philosophy and theology and the tendency for a schematic representation of nature and the supernatural being merely juxtaposed¹.

He described as a fictional starting point the claim that it is possible to construct a rational philosophical picture of man intelligible to all and on which all men of goodwill can agree, “the actual Christian doctrines being added to this as a sort of crowning conclusion”.²

The approach in *Gaudium et Spes* to Philosophy and Theology that seems to merely juxtapose them is evident in the following passage (GS n. 62):

Although the Church has contributed much to the development of culture, experience shows that, for circumstantial reasons, it is sometimes difficult to harmonize culture with Christian teaching. These difficulties do not necessarily harm the life of faith, rather they can stimulate the mind to a deeper and more accurate understanding of the faith. The recent studies and findings of science, history and philosophy raise new questions which effect life and which demand new theological investigations. Furthermore, theologians, within the requirements and methods proper to theology, are invited to seek continually for more suitable ways of communicating doctrine to the men of their times; for the deposit of Faith or the truths are one thing and the manner in which they are enunciated, in the same meaning and understanding, is another.

In the same article, Ratzinger was highly critical of some Thomists saying that it can hardly be disputed that as a consequence of the division between philosophy and theology established by them, a juxtaposition has gradually been established which no longer appears adequate. “There is, and must be, a human reason *in* faith, yet conversely, every human reason is conditioned by historical standpoint so that reason pure and simple

¹ Joseph Ratzinger “The Dignity of the Human Person” in Herbert Vorgrimler (ed) *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II* Vol V (Burns & Oates: London 1969), pp. 115-163 I am grateful to my colleague Prof Tracey Rowland for identifying the quotations from Cardinal Ratzinger.

² Ibid.

does not exist”.³ It should be noted that a debate rages between Thomists over whether a pure reason model or a more Augustinian Thomism properly represents St Thomas⁴.

The new Bioethics document *Dignitas Personae* (DP) produced by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith during this papacy may be contrasted to *Gaudium et Spes* in this respect when in referring to the mysteries of creation and the incarnation, it seems to express a view more consistent with Cardinal Ratzinger. His view would seem to be reflected in *Dignitas Personae* (n.7) which, quoting John Paul II in *Veritatis Splendor* (n. 45) states:

The respect for the individual human being, which reason requires, is further enhanced and strengthened in the light of these truths of faith: thus, we see that there is no contradiction between the affirmation of the dignity and the affirmation of the sacredness of human life. “The different ways in which God, acting in history, cares for the world and for mankind are not mutually exclusive; on the contrary, they support each other and intersect. They have their origin and goal in the eternal, wise and loving counsel whereby God predestines men and women ‘to be conformed to the image of his Son’ (*Rom 8:29*)”⁵.

This issue is reflected in the debate over what is sometimes disparagingly called the “Hellenization of the early tradition”⁶ which may also be attributed to the influence of St Paul based on his background and philosophical education as a Roman citizen and the Hellenic influences on Roman culture. In relation to natural law the scriptural text most often quoted is St Paul’s letter to the Romans:

When Gentiles, who do not have the law, do instinctively things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law, since they show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, to which their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts will accuse or perhaps excuse them on the day when, according to my gospel, God, through Jesus Christ, will judge the secret thoughts of all.⁷

St Paul’s attitude to philosophy is confusing. He is negative about philosophy but evidently used the language of philosophy of the period and locality in which the Stoics had much influence and he would have been familiar with Aristotle of whose works the Stoics made free use. His reasoning reflects Aristotle, of an earlier period, and Stoics of the day – Seneca, Epictetus, Marcus Aurelius and Cicero.

³ Ibid.

⁴ I am grateful to my colleague A/Prof Tracey Rowland for drawing my attention to the Thomists’ differences of opinion. I read with interest the contributions to Vol 83, Summer 2009, Issue No.3 of the *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly*, which was devoted to a discussion of contemporary Thomisms.

⁵ *Dignitas Personae* n. 7

⁶ This is discussed by Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger in His “Faith, Religion and Culture” in *Truth and Tolerance* Ignatius Press: San Francisco 2004 pp. 90-95 in which he argues that there is simply a congruence of Greek Philosophy and Biblical themes that had in any case occurred before Christ.

⁷ Romans 2:14-16

Historically St Paul would have had a Greek philosophical training as a Roman citizen and clearly used Stoic arguments. He clearly believed that knowledge can be attained through reason and that ethics is constituted by knowledge. That is to say, he was a cognitivist. In relation to the Stoic Naturalist Ethics of the period, it is worth mentioning that they adopted the cardinal virtues (wisdom, justice, courage and temperance) and believed in inherent the goodness and purposefulness of human nature, and that the end of human beings was in community. St Paul would not have shared their belief that all people are manifestations of the one universal spirit (pantheism), but he clearly had adopted the view that the Stoics share with Christ that we should live in brotherly love and readily help one another.⁸

In his interesting account of the influence of Stoic philosophy on St Paul, Troels Engber-Perdersen suggests that St Paul adopts the same logic of their reasoning and simply substitutes *Christ* for *Reason* in explaining righteousness in terms of love and *communio*.⁹

Comparing St Paul to the Stoics, they both claim that goodness is knowable. For the Stoics that is through reason, but for St Paul it is through Christ (Gal 1:16, 2Cor 4:6). In *Corinthians* he makes the revealing comment: “Jews demand signs, Greeks desire wisdom but we proclaim Christ crucified” (1Cor 1:22-25). Also in the same letter he seems to embrace communitarianism using language of the Stoics (1 Cor 1:10-11) and elsewhere he shares the dominance of will and reason over pain and suffering (Gal 5:24) and concludes that joy is the proper response to suffering (Phil 2:17, 1:17-18), both Stoic claims.¹⁰

St Paul had of course been a Pharisee and trained under the major Jewish scholar Gamaliel (*Acts* 22:3) but his teaching in relation to Pharasaic Law seems to differ depending on the audience. He addresses Gentiles, Jews and Greeks differently. The dominant motif in his teaching is, of course, not reason, natural law or Pharisaic Law, but the Christ event is most evident in *Galatians*, and he claims authority on the basis of his “meeting” with Christ on the Road to Damascus.

In relation to claims about the Hellenisation of Christianity through St Paul, it is worth noting that Pope John Paul II says something that reinforces this view in his analysis of two difficult passages.

In the very familiar submission and headship passage of *I Corinthians* (11:2-16), St Paul asserts that Christ is the head of every man, man is head of woman, and also that man is image of God’s glory but woman is a reflection of man’s glory, as woman came from him. He says also that man is not created for sake of woman, but woman is created for the sake of man. In his analysis of this passage and the related passage in *Ephesians*, Pope John Paul II asserts:

⁸ Joseph A. Fitzmeyer SJ *Paul and his Theology: A Brief Sketch* Prentice Hall New Jersey 1989 pp. 27-34; also Troels Engber-Perdersen *Paul and the Stoics* T&T Clark, Edinburgh 2000.

⁹ Troels Engber-Perdersen *Paul and the Stoics* T&T Clark, Edinburgh 2000

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

The motif of “head” and of “body” is not of biblical derivation, but is probably Hellenistic (Stoic?). In Ephesians this theme is utilized in the context of marriage (while in First Corinthians the theme of the “body” serves to demonstrate the order which reigns in society). From the biblical point of view the introduction of this motif is an absolute novelty.¹¹

Developing the submission and headship theme in *Ephesians* 5: 22-33, St Paul writes that husband and wife should defer to one another in obedience to Christ, and that wives should regard their husbands as they regard the Lord: Christ is head of the Church and saves the whole body, so is husband head of his wife. Just as the Church submits to Christ, wives submit to their husbands. Husbands should love their wives as Christ loved the Church and sacrificed himself for her.

On this passage Pope John Paul II writes in *Mulieres Dignitatem* (n 24) that St Paul was rooted in the customs of the time. Adapting the teaching, the Pope writes that there should be mutual subjection out of reverence for Christ, and that the husband is “head” in order to give himself up for his wife. The Pope asserts that “subjection” is not one-sided but mutual. I mentioned these treatments of St Paul by Pope John Paul II to a Pauline Conference¹² recently and was greeted by what can only be regarded as a seething response by a recent convert from Lutheranism.

What is clear about St Paul’s treatment of Pharisaic Law is that he adapts to particular audiences but always asserts supremacy of the Christ event, and in relation to righteousness he says several seemingly inconsistent things:

- He requires both following the Law but that Christ is the fulfilment of the Law (Gal 2:15-21, 3:15-24, 4:1-3, Rom 9-11);
- Following Christ, but neutral about the Law (Philippians 3:4-9);
- Following Christ but not the law (Philippians 3:49)
- Attributes Law to Christ (Gal 3:7-11, 2:19-20); and
- Asserts Christ (grace) necessary to follow the law (Romans 7:7-25, 2:12-25).¹³

In *Galatians*, he testifies to his own personal encounter with Christ from whom he learned the Gospel, not through encounter with the Apostles (1:11-18), and disparages conformity with the Law: circumcision counts for nothing with Christ (5:2) and he asserts that the whole of the law is summed up in commandment to love one another (5:15) - Christ the new creation: active faith through love (6)

In relation to the natural law, the Church usually refers to the *Romans* (2:14-16) passage. However it is not clear in the tradition that natural law is a matter of pure reason, rather it

¹¹ Pope John Paul II *The Theology of the Body: Human Love in the Divine Plan* Pauline Books & Media, 1997, p. 382

¹² A *Pauline Colloquium* conducted by the John Paul II Institute for Marriage and Family, Melbourne July 27-8, <http://www.jp2institute.org/media/pauline-colloquium-programme-and-registration.pdf>

¹³ Troels Engber-Perdersen *Paul and the Stoics* T&T Clark, Edinburgh 2000

is seen as having a divine authorship. Pope Leo XIII, quoting St. Thomas, appealed to the "higher reason" of the divine Lawgiver:

“But this prescription of human reason could not have the force of law unless it were the voice and the interpreter of some higher reason to which our spirit and our freedom must be subject.” Indeed, the force of law consists in its authority to impose duties, to confer rights and to sanction certain behaviour: "Now all of this, clearly, could not exist in man if, as his own supreme legislator, he gave himself the rule of his own actions". And he concluded: "It follows that the natural law is *itself the eternal law*, implanted in beings endowed with reason, and inclining them *towards their right action and end*; it is none other than the eternal reason of the Creator and Ruler of the universe". St Thomas *Summa Theologiae* I-II, q. 91, a.2.¹⁴

Pope John Paul II also connected natural law directly to divine revelation when he wrote:

Man is able to recognize good and evil thanks to that discernment of good from evil which he himself carries out by his *reason, in particular by his reason enlightened by Divine Revelation and by faith*, through the law which God gave to the Chosen People, beginning with the commandments on Sinai. Israel was called to accept and to live out *God's law as a particular gift and sign of its election and of the divine Covenant*, and also as a pledge of God's blessing. Thus Moses could address the children of Israel and ask them: "What great nation is that that has a god so near to it as the Lord our God is to us, whenever we call upon him? And what great nation is there that has statutes and ordinances so righteous as all this law which I set before you this day?" (*Dt* 4:7-8).¹⁵

Then we have the then Cardinal Ratzinger declaring that “Reason has a wax nose” and “Reason will not be saved without the faith, but the faith without reason will not be human.”¹⁶

On the other side of the coin, Pope John Paul II asserted:

“Every people has its own native and seminal wisdom which, as a true cultural treasure, tends to find voice and develop in forms which are genuinely philosophical. One example of this is the basic form of philosophical knowledge

¹⁴ Leo XIII encyclical *Libertas Praestantissimum*, 1888, n. 8
http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/leo_xiii/encyclicals/documents/hf_1-xiii_enc_20061888_libertas_en.html

¹⁵ Pope John Paul II *Veritatis Splendor*, 1993, n. 44
http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_06081993_veritatis-splendor_en.html

¹⁶ Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger An address to the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith, “Current Situation of Faith and Theology” (1996) <http://www.ourladywarriors.org/dissent/ratzsitu596.htm>
Accessed 18th June 2008

which is evident to this day in the postulates which inspire national and international legal systems in regulating the life of society.”¹⁷

In our own time, an example of that seminal wisdom is surely to be found in the International Human Rights Instruments which assert:

- “...recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world,....”
- “Recognizing that these rights derive from the inherent dignity of the human person...”¹⁸

An analysis of the texts of the covenants shows that “Dignity” in this context implies the inestimable worth of each member of the human family and “rights” presume to identify what is needed for human beings to flourish. The International instruments therefore presume that human goodness is knowable and can be specified.¹⁹

Pope John Paul II encouraged philosophers, but again sought to connect their endeavours to Scripture:

“They should be open to the impelling questions which arise from the word of God and they should be strong enough to shape their thought and discussion in response to that challenge. Let them always strive for truth, alert to the good which truth contains. Then they will be able to formulate the genuine ethics which humanity needs so urgently at this particular time. The Church follows the work of philosophers with interest and appreciation; and they should rest assured of her respect for the rightful autonomy of their discipline. I would want especially to encourage believers working in the philosophical field to illumine the range of human activity by the exercise of a reason which grows more penetrating and assured because of the support it receives from faith.”²⁰

The teaching of these three Popes at least, Leo XIII, John Paul II and Benedict XVI, would seem to suggest that there is to be no dichotomy between faith and reason. Rather the teaching would suggest that as philosophers we would be foolish to ignore Scripture and that our discipline should properly consider the nature of the Creator and the

¹⁷ Pope John Paul II *Fides et Ratio* (1998) n. 4

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_15101998_fides-et-ratio_en.html

¹⁸ See the preambles of the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*;

<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/ccpr.htm>; or the *International Covenants on Economic Social and Cultural Rights*; <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/pdf/cescr.pdf>

¹⁹ See my doctoral thesis *Human Dignity: Autonomy and Sacredness in the International Human Rights Instruments* available from the University of Melbourne

http://dtl.unimelb.edu.au/view/action/singleViewer.do?dvs=1250825170935~58&locale=en_AU&search_terms=SYS%20=%20000008617&adjacency=N&application=DIGITool-3&frameId=1&usePid1=true&usePid2=true

²⁰ Pope John Paul II *Fides et Ratio* n. 106

relationship between created and Creator, and seek to test theological propositions against reason, seeking justification rather than accepting them simply as a matter of faith. From a protestant perspective our humanity may be too “fallen” to be able to do that, but from a Catholic perspective we have trusted in the role of reason as an important contributor to our Tradition, but not in isolation from faith and the Scriptures.

That suggests to those interested in public policy issues, such as Bioethics, that we should participate in public debate openly as Christians rather than try to engage in an exercise of pure reason. I would suggest that in public discussion we should be open about our faith because subterfuge is beneath dignity and would only breed suspicion, in any case. In a pluralist society we can approach this by insisting on being willing to listen to others, willing to encourage their contribution from their own cultural beliefs, and willing to test our own Christian concepts, and in that way seek common ground by seeking to identify human goodness and the virtues. That provides a mutually respectful pathway towards seeking human transcendence together in recognition of our differences but also our commonalities.

In this respect I have been greatly encouraged by finding links between Alasdair MacIntyre and Pope John Paul II and Benedict XVI in MacIntyre’s emphasis on culture and tradition and the historical development of ideas, and his rebuttal of the notion of pure reason building a morality from the ground up without the benefit of culture²¹; John Paul II’s recognition of native and seminal wisdom and his encouragement to philosophers to consider questions from the Word of God; and finally, Benedict XVI’s insistence on the connectedness of philosophy and theology.

In that way a Catholic Philosopher has much to contribute to public policy from our traditional exploration of human nature and identifying doctrines that are good for mankind and justified in human terms and our acceptance that we are formed by faith but willing to test propositions from Revelation, knowing that God loves us and wants what is good for us.

However, I do think that a response is needed to Cardinal Ratzinger’s “wax nose” concept and would conclude that reason may not be saved without faith BUT goodness is a property that is recognisable even by those who are unfamiliar with the Gospels, and that in a pluralist society we can mutually seek to identify a common understanding of human goodness. The project of the contemporary natural law theorists²² to seek to identify basic human goods that are the fundamental aspects of human flourishing is one we can share with non-believers, even though the goods do take on great depth of meaning in the light of the *imago dei*.

It is relevant that in making a distinction between cardinal and theological virtues, St Thomas Aquinas claimed that all virtues other than the theological are in us by nature, according to aptitude and inchoation, but not according to perfection, and the theological virtues are from without.

²¹ Alasdair MacIntyre *After Virtue* University of Notre Dame Press 1981

²² Such as Germain Grisez, William May, Joseph Boyle, and John Finnis

“Sic ergo patet quod virtutes in nobis sunt a natura secundum aptitudinem et inchoationem, non autem secundum perfectionem: prater virtutes theologicas, quae sunt totaliter ab extrinseco”²³

By “from without” I understand him to mean that the theological virtues are revealed to us by God rather than the product of our own reasoning.

That does raise questions about many of the issues that have been developed in *Dignitas Personae* in relation to the emphasis placed on Trinitarian Love:

By taking the interrelationship of these two dimensions, *the human and the divine*, as the starting point, one understands better why it is that man has unassailable value: *he possesses an eternal vocation and is called to share in the trinitarian love of the living God.*(n. 8)

and

These two dimensions of life, the natural and the supernatural, allow us to understand better the sense in which *the acts that permit a new human being to come into existence*, in which a man and a woman give themselves to each other, *are a reflection of trinitarian love*. “God, who is love and life, has inscribed in man and woman the vocation to share in a special way in his mystery of personal communion and in his work as Creator and Father” (n.9)

These passages raise something of a challenge to a natural law approach because the Trinitarian mystery is only known through Divine Revelation and these passages suggest that we should understand human love in marriage in imitation of the love between the divine persons. Hence the truth of that communion of persons informs our human relationships because the *imago dei* is not of single person but of a Trinity. That then suggests that human nature, being seen relationally through the relationship of the Divine Persons, and the nuptial mystery and *communio*, can only be fully understood through Divine Revelation.

This does however seem to be consistent with St Thomas’s view about the theological virtues being understood only through Divine Revelation.

One of the most difficult aspects for us as Catholic Bioethicists to argue in a pluralist context, particularly a bigoted secularist context, is the Pauline Principle²⁴ that underlies our morality and the related claim that there are absolute moral norms.

We generally take the Pauline Principle from the passage in *Romans* (3:8):

²³ St. Thomae Aquinatis *Summa Theologiae* (Marietti: Taurini/ Romae 1952) Prima Secundae Partis Q. 63, Art I

²⁴ John Finnis offers a robust defence of the Pauline Principle in his *Moral absolutes: tradition, revision, and truth* Catholic University of America Press 1991

Why not say--as we are being slanderously reported as saying and as some claim that we say--"Let us do evil that good may result"? Their condemnation is deserved.

From which we draw the conclusion that one must not do evil in order that good may come.

In *Veritatis Splendor* Pope John Paul II gave expression to this principle in his analysis of the moral act in terms that identified the need for the object of the act to be capable of being orientated towards God represented in the following excerpts:

“Activity is morally good when it attests to and expresses the voluntary ordering of the person to his ultimate end and the conformity of a concrete action with the human good as it is acknowledged in its truth by reason. If the object of the concrete action is not in harmony with the true good of the person, the choice of that action make our will and ourselves morally evil, thus putting us in conflict with our ultimate end, the supreme good, God himself” (n.72)

“... the moral life ...consists in the deliberate ordering of human acts to God, the supreme good and ultimate end (telos) of man. ... But this ordering to one’s ultimate end is not something subjective, dependent solely upon one’s intention. It presupposes that such acts are in themselves capable of being ordered to this end, in so far as they are in conformity with the authentic moral good of man, safeguarded by the commandments.” (n.73)

“The morality of the human act depends primarily and fundamentally on the ‘object’ rationally chosen by the deliberate will ...”(n. 78)

“In order to be able to grasp the object of an act which specifies that act morally, it is therefore necessary to place oneself in the perspective of the acting person. The object of the act of willing is in fact a freely chosen kind of behaviour.” (n.78)

“By the object of a given moral act, then, one cannot mean a process or event of the merely physical order, to be assessed on the basis of its ability to bring about a given state of affairs in the outside world. Rather that object is the proximate end of a deliberate decision which determines the act of willing on the part of the acting person.” (n.78)

Expressed in these terms of a teleology that involves the Creator, it is difficult to understand the Pauline Principle expressed in terms of the object of the act unless one invokes the relationship to the Creator and in so doing that set of beliefs about the Creator that we can only know through Divine Revelation.

I would suggest that the Pauline principle can be understood in terms of loving relationship as a desire to preserve authenticity of love. When one discusses the nature of

the moral act, the notion of an absolute does emerge in the context of understanding moral acts as expressive of human love of another. Doing evil then contradicts that loving relationship but especially so when we understand love in the sense that Christ's gift of self on the Cross gave to the meaning of love.

For example, a man who has an office affair might plead to his wife that it was a once off event, that the woman, his boss, might have cost him his job if he had not complied, and that it means nothing in the context of his real love to his wife. However she is likely to remain unconvinced because love is more than about consequences, it is about meaning and certain acts have meaning in themselves. Sexual intimacy with another has an inherent meaning that contradicts the nature of marriage and can never be the right choice. It is wrong in itself. His act was an act of disloyalty and inauthenticity.

Similarly, in one of the episodes of the TV series *The West Wing*, the US President, a Catholic and a Democrat, is confronted by a situation in which they have definite evidence that a middle eastern defence minister is planning and sponsoring terrorism in the US, but to present the evidence to a court of law would disclose vital CIA operations. He is presented with the option of arranging for the assassination of the defence minister. His Chief of Staff reasons that he cannot reason just as a man but must reason as a President in which his Oath of Office binds him to protecting the interests of the US people. Significantly he does not discuss the decision with his wife. Later when she discovers what he has done she is deeply shocked by his decision and the fact that he did not discuss it with her because she would have opposed it. The cold blooded murder of the man and his staff by the military after their plane had been landed in a remote area by a substitute US pilot could not be justified. The end did not justify the means. But that it did not justify the means is a principle that is difficult to explain outside of a Christian understanding that the meaning of every act must be such that that act itself is oriented towards God and the evil in an act cannot be outweighed by the good consequences.

The ancient Greek philosopher explains this in terms of such an act making the perpetrator(s) murders(s). The act changes the character of those involved for the worse. For us as Christians with a vocation to love God and neighbour and to live in community with God and neighbour, this takes on a greater depth of meaning in much the same way as the meaning of marriage excluded the office affair, so to does our love for others exclude acts which have a meaning that contradicts love for others including killing. The latter is only ever permitted as a last resort act of defence. That was not the case in the West Wing story. Because they knew the plans of the terrorist, they had other ways of defending the country against him.

There does seem to be something of a gap in natural law accounts based on reason alone when it comes to explaining absolute moral norms and the Pauline Principle when the depth and extent of our Christian obligation to act always out of love is taken into account. This is of course the central issue in relation to proportionalism, situation ethics and the fundamental option. What they lack is an adequate account of authentic human love. However it would seem that we cannot achieve an adequate account of authentic

human love from reason alone. As St Thomas expresses it, the theological virtues come from without.

Basically because the moral act is to be understood in terms of communion with God, it would seem difficult to posit communion with God as natural ultimate end, as a matter of pure reason, unless reason predicates existence of a creator who creates us for love of us (agape) and wants our love (eros) in return²⁵, and this notion of God seems to be peculiar to the Christian faith. It is also the case that the theological virtues (faith, hope and love), depend on both the *agapeic* and *erotic* notion of the Creator's love and in our understanding of that love we rely on the grace of God in revealing Divine Nature to us, and we rely on Christ and his sacrifice on the Cross for our understanding of the authenticity of love as complete gift.

Contemporary natural law seeks to engage the secular world in argument based on pure reason and without assistance from revelation. It would be wonderful if with reason alone we could lead others to a position that did not contradict the moral truths of our faith. However, when it comes to the true nature of love and hence the existence of moral absolutes and the Pauline Principle, it may not be achievable.

²⁵ Benedict XVI *Deus Caritas Est* 2005 n.3-8
http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20051225_deus-caritas-est_en.html