

Advisor:  
Dr. David S. Crawford

Author:  
Rev. Tomasz Mędrek

Faith and Moral Reasoning: The Development of Karol Wojtyła's/John Paul II's  
Ethical Theory in Light of Vatican II.

Abstract

This dissertation attempts to document the development of Karol Wojtyła's/John Paul II's moral reasoning regarding the relationship between faith and morality. According to John Paul II, there is a tendency in ethics and anthropology to detach freedom and truth (*Veritatis splendor*, 4), which is the “consequence, manifestation and consummation” of separating faith from morality (*Veritatis splendor*, 4, 88). Moral theology of the manuals, offering a response to Reformation and Enlightenment thought, tended, for its part, to see the theological as a *superadditum* to a purely normative and rationalistic moral substrate as a result of applying the “pure nature theory” to protect the gratuity of salvation and to engage in dialogue with the modern world regarding moral issues.

Wojtyła's early (primarily philosophical) thought does not exhibit an obvious means for integrating faith and moral reasoning. Nevertheless, Wojtyła's personalism and his interest in phenomenology, clearly mark, even at the early phase, important differences between his thought and dominant strands in moral theology. The Second Vatican Council brought for Wojtyła a deepening of his theological views. In his later work, Wojtyła was clearly influenced by the Council's more thoroughly Christological and creational approach. This development continued after Wojtyła's election to the papacy. The Council's Christological and creational approach brings

to Wojtyła's personalist beginnings both (1) an appreciation of the Christocentric form of anthropology and (2) the importance of embodied human nature as an expression of this form. It is the Christological turn of Wojtyła's/John Paul's thought following the Council that allows him to overcome the implicit dualism between faith and morality and between freedom and truth of his first works and to reconcile the seemingly diverse elements of his early thought, including personalism and the Thomistic concern for nature. The development that took place in Wojtyła's writings, which focused on exploring the mystery of man, finally led him to apply to ethics and moral theology the teaching of the Council that it is only in the light of Christ that the mystery of man becomes visible (Cf, *Redemptor hominis*, 1; GS, 22).