

**MAN’S OPENNESS TO HIS OTHER:
A STUDY OF HUMAN ‘SPIRIT’ AS A UNIFYING BRIDGE BETWEEN
THE PHILOSOPHICAL AND THEOLOGICAL ANTHROPOLOGY OF
KAROL WOJTYŁA/ST. JOHN PAUL II**

Abstract

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This dissertation investigates the term ‘spirit’ as a critical anthropological element within Wojtyła/St. John Paul II’s corpus. Asking initially what the term contributes to his philosophical vision, it concludes that while the Polish thinker affirms the traditional interpretation of spirit as the principle of life and form of the body, he develops this notion in key ways: First, through a metaphysical and phenomenological analysis of moral action, spirit is “made visible” in a transcendence that concerns the whole person, which includes elements of the person typically associated with matter. Second, this analysis demonstrates that because of spirit’s capacity to integrate, transcendence occurs in a twofold hierarchical manner: on the one hand, a vertical transcendence by which man is able to determine the whole of himself, specifically in relation to the truth of the good, and on the other hand, a horizontal transcendence, by which man genuinely gives himself to the other, moving his integrated self beyond ‘himself’ in his action. Third, because of this capacity to integrate and involve the whole of himself in action, spirit becomes the locus of communion, revealing that man’s fulfilment comes with and through others.

Through speculative-theological study, which ascertains the full truth of the human person in light of Scripture and Tradition, the Pope expands upon this philosophical vision, providing a theological formulation of spirit: In his *Theology of the Body* reflections, spirit is “made visible,” in its highest expression, not simply as a spiritual communion, but through a life-giving communion of persons that involves total, bodily spousal self-giving and receiving. Accordingly, spirit involves a necessary relation to the body, but even more, the ‘shape’ of the body and its spousal meaning — specifically recalling the destiny of the person for relation — indicates, even incarnates, the reality of the human spirit. The Pope’s analysis further reveals that this life-giving communion, as the “primordial sacrament,” makes “visible what is invisible: the spiritual and the divine”; by God’s original design, the man-woman *communio personarum* serves as a critical way to communicate the divine Spirit — an endowment bestowed upon the human spirit, ultimately in view of Jesus Christ.