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between John Paul II's Laborem Exercens and Dies Domini**

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INTEGRATING WORK AND LEISURE
The Complementary Relationship between
John Paul II's *Laborem Exercens* and *Dies Domini*

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I first read John Paul II's *Laborem Exercens* (On Human Work, 1981) when I was teaching high school back in the 1980s. This encyclical on work had a profound impact on my own work. At the time, I was enjoying high school teaching and actually did not see myself moving into higher education, but the encyclical touched me in a deeply personal way because it engaged theology with the ordinary lives of people. It inspired me to read more on the Church's understanding of work and eventually to enter a PhD program at Marquette University to focus on this very question of the moral and spiritual meaning of work and its relationship to people's lives.

There are several characteristics about this document that I found inspirational and that make it unique within the canon of social encyclicals. *Laborem Exercens* is the most *systematic* social encyclical, since its focus is principally on the nature of work, which John Paul sees as key to the social question. It is also one of the most *theological* social encyclicals. John Paul grounds the document within Genesis and the doctrine of creation as the principal theological thrust, although in the last chapter he also connects the doctrine of redemption to the sufferings that work brings to us. *Laborem Exercens* is also a very *personal* document, since much of it was written by John Paul and I have heard it said that it was his favorite social encyclical. This personal connection is extended to the Polish Solidarity Movement as well as the way his philosophical work of integrating phenomenology and Thomism is incorporated throughout the document. But even more profoundly, John Paul saw himself as a worker and his work as a pope was deeply connected to all workers around the world. Soon after issuing *Laborem Exercens*, he went to Solvay, Italy, to talk to workers at a chemical factory on the feast of St. Joseph. His opening words were the following:

What I wish to reaffirm here is that I feel I am one with you because I feel I participate in your problems, having shared them personally. I consider it a grace of the Lord to have been a worker, because this gave me the opportunity to know firsthand the man of work, but also of every other type of work. I have been able to know the concrete reality of his life; an existence imbued with profound humanity . . . When I left the factory to pursue my vocation to the priesthood, I brought with me the irreplaceable experience of that world and the profound dignity of human friendship and vibrant solidarity with my fellow workmen, keeping these things in mind as something precious.¹

These unique characteristics produced within *Laborem Exercens* make it an important contribution

¹ Robert G. Kennedy, Gary Atkinson and Michael Naughton. *The Dignity of Work*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1994. 180. Access online at <http://www.stthomas.edu/cathstudies/cst/mgmt/publications/dignityofwork.html>.

to the rich treasure of Catholic social teachings. Its first fruit is overcoming the privatization of faith within the world, especially the economic world of work, where many people spend a significant period of their waking hours. John Paul II is keenly aware that a faith inactive, a faith turned in on itself, a hesitant faith paralyzed by the secular, is ultimately a “decapitated faith”² that fails to humanize work. This is why the last chapter of the encyclical, “Elements for a Spirituality of Work” is, I believe, one of the most prophetic and enduring parts the encyclical. In 1981, the very phrase “spirituality of work” was practically unheard of. Today, its use is so ubiquitous that its overuse creates suspicion.³

These insights and others were not simply written by John Paul and forgotten. *Laborem Exercens* launched the pope on a 24-year reflection on work, which he brought around the world. In his travels, he would talk to factory workers, managers, entrepreneurs, unionists, government employees, etc, where he developed themes that are only mentioned in the encyclical such as vocation, gospel of work, community of work, social nature of capital, solidarity, and so forth.⁴ In his intense pastoral concern for his people, John Paul helped the Church and the world to answer the concrete question of the purpose of our work—*What am I working for?* Many of us work too much to deprive ourselves of a serious answer to this question. *Laborem Exercens* and the talks he gave to workers throughout his pontificate go a long way in helping us to answer this question.

And yet, a good answer to this question cannot be captured by work itself, since our work does not provide us the height or depth to a good answer. Anton Stres, C.M. explains that “the ultimate meaning of work is not found in work itself. Work belongs to the order of a means and not that of an end. The question then becomes: a means in view of what? Where can one see and experience the ultimate meaning of man if not in work itself?”⁵ Here we come to a certain limitation of *Laborem Exercens* since it does not adequately address the place where we need the height and depth to adequately address work’s purpose. This is why talking only about *Laborem Exercens* in dealing with work’s meaning is not enough. Our conversation needs to focus on another document by John Paul, *Dies Domini* (The Lord’s Day, 1998), where he takes seriously another question that is necessary to answer our first question: *What am I resting in?*

George Weigel in his biography of John Paul calls *Dies Domini* a complement to *Laborem Exercens*.⁶ This complementarity is like the inhaling and exhaling of life. Their relationship is a complementarity of the active and contemplative life, of a dynamic between giving and receiving that is necessary for a unity of life. *Laborem Exercens* is about our vocation to work, to action. Hans Urs von Balthasar explains that humanity’s “calling is to *action* because the grace of God always charges him with a mandate or task to be carried out by his own efforts. In thus charging him, however, God draws the recipient of his grace into his confidence, reveals to him a part of the

² See John Paul II, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, 44.

³ Other insights in the document are his analysis of the subjective dimension of work, the priority of labor over capital, capital ownership, the right to organize, a just wage, economism and capitalism, and so forth.

⁴ See Kennedy, *et al.* *Dignity of Work*.

⁵ Bishop Anton Stres. “*Laborem Exercens* and Human Work.” *Work as Key to the Social Question*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2002. 28.

⁶ George Weigel. *Witness to Hope*. New York: HarperCollins, 1999. 836.

divine plan, and commissions him to realize a part of it by his own strength and ingenuity.”⁷ *Dies Domini* is about leisure, rest, receptivity, contemplation. We are not only called to work but to rest. Again, von Balthasar puts it well: “But man’s calling to action is likewise a calling to contemplation [leisure] because the recipient of grace can understand and complete the task assigned to him only by holding all the more closely and exclusively to the thought of God in gratitude for the trust God has shown him, by undertaking no deed independently of God or that might run counter to God’s plan, and by seeking, with his gaze fixed unwaveringly on God, to understand and accomplish the divine will in all things.”⁸

The complementarity of these two fundamental dimensions of our lives, of work and rest, of giving and receiving, of action and contemplation is not principally about a balance of the two, but a profound integration that answers a deeper third question: *What am I living for?* Leisure and work are not simply two isolated periods of time in human life, but rather as Karl Rahner has written, they are “moments in a person’s self-realization which exist only in their relation with one another and are the primary constituents of human existence itself.”⁹

What I am arguing for in this paper is a unity of life that is premised on the proper relationship between work and leisure. This unity is profoundly desired by us, precisely because it is a good that eludes us by our disintegration, which has been called the divided life, split personality, or most damning, hypocrisy. This division is a widespread human vice, and yet it seems rarely confessed, especially in reference to our working lives.¹⁰ *Gaudium et Spes* (1965) has called it one of the more serious errors of our age.¹¹ As important as work is, it tends to hide from us a deeper self and perpetuates a false self when it is not connected to an authentic leisure that has capacity to reveal who we are created to be. Working life, particularly in modern life, is a powerful source of fragmentation, of the estrangement of self from self, and not only because work occupies so many of our hours. Work is central to the practical life of goal-setting and decision-making, of personal and inter-personal achievement, from which springs our well-being as creatures who are, above all, doers. If our working lives spawn inner division and conflict, our search for happiness beyond the transitory satisfactions of “success” will fail. The measure of our need for unity, for integrity or wholeness is, then, intrinsically connected to our relationship between work and leisure.

If our work is to be a vocation, a place of sanctification where the universal call to holiness is manifested, it must be connected to leisure, a leisure that has the capacity to re-create us in our original image. There are many smart people at work who get no further than being people of talent. There are also many moral people who are capable of a deeper sanctity at work, but who have get “no further than being souls of goodness.”¹² Our division in life can be most solidified

⁷ Hans Urs von Balthasar. *The Christian State of Life*. Trans. Sr. Mary Frances McCarthy. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1983. 80.

⁸ Von Balthasar. *The Christian State of Life*, 80.

⁹ Karl Rahner. "Theological Remarks on the Problem of Leisure." *Theological Investigations vol. IV*. Baltimore: Helicon, 1969. 379.

¹⁰ This insight is from Fr. Raniero Cantamelessa, preacher of the papal household. See <http://farmstrong.blogspot.com/2007/03/cantalamelessa-first-lenten-sermon.html>.

¹¹ *Gaudium et Spes*, 43.

¹² Hubert Von Zeller. *The Inner Search*. New York : Sheed and Ward, 1958. 11.

in our self-satisfaction of growth opportunities of our talent or in our smugness of our codes of conduct. John Paul in *Laborem Exercens* is calling us to a deeper collaboration with God in our work, but that can only happen if we heed his call in *Dies Domini* that our rest must be in the Lord, who is the source of restless hearts.

More specifically, this relationship between work and leisure, this unity of life, has a particular order to it, which can be described in the following thesis: if we don't get leisure right, we won't get work right. In this essay, utilizing both *Laborem Exercens* and *Dies Domini*, I also want to argue an even finer point: if we don't get the Sabbath or the Lord's Day or Sunday right, we won't get Monday right. Ultimately, however, this unity, as Henri DeLubac has pointed out, is found in our end, not in our beginning.¹³ We are all in danger of false unities informed by facile and shallow reasoning and egos quite satisfied with themselves. We need to beware of an oversimplistic understanding of unity. Our own division and fragmentation is always with us. It is part of the human condition, but it is not a deterministic fact. While our unity is to be found in our end, not our beginning, we are on the way, and if we can more deeply understand the relationship between our work and leisure, we can more likely remember those graced-filled moments that expose our divisions and illuminate our unity.

In this essay, I set up this engagement between *Laborem Exercens* and *Dies Domini* by first describing what I see as a particularly modern view of how we look at our work as a job and rest as amusement. This is not the only modern view of work and leisure, but it is a view that I see as becoming increasingly pervasive.¹⁴ I will then engage this modern view with what John Paul proposes when we see the complementarity of *Laborem Exercens* and *Dies Domini*.

I. ECONOMISM, CONSUMERISM AND THE LIFE OF GRATIFICATIONS

WORK AS A JOB: Some people see their work as a job. In an interview with Studs Terkel, Nora Watson provides a stark and seasoned view of work as a job. "Jobs are not big enough for people. It's not just the assembly line worker whose job is too small for his spirit, you know? A job like mine [editor], if you really put your spirit into it, you would sabotage immediately. You don't dare. So you absent your spirit from it. My mind has been so divorced from my job, except as a source of income, it's really absurd."¹⁵ For Nora Watson, and too many like her, work understood as a job is devoid of any meaning, except economic meaning. A job centers on the means by which people make money so as to find meaning outside of work.

I grew up on the south-side of Chicago in a blue collar neighborhood and this view of work dominated our upbringing. Work was either difficult physically or monotonous since it was so manual—sanitation, factories, trades, truck driving, stocking, and so forth. My friends from the south-side would most likely tell me to get "real" with my proposal that work should be seen as a vocation. Work is not the place of fulfillment. They would most likely quote a fellow Chicagoan,

¹³ Henri DeLubac. *The Splendor of the Church*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1986. 179.

¹⁴ Michael Naughton. "A Divided Life: One of the More Serious Errors for the Christian Professional." *Scrutinizing the Signs of the Times and interpreting them in Light of the Gospel*. Katholieke Universiteit Leuven: Faculteit Theologie, en de Faculté de Theologie, Université Catholique de Louvain-la-Neuve BETL Series, December 2006.

¹⁵ Studs Terkel. *Working*. New York: Pantheon, 1972. 521.

Mike Royko, who once said: “If work is so great, why do they have to pay us to do it.”

Work understood only as an economic means has always been around. However, it took on a systematic meaning in the 20th century with Frederick Taylor’s scientific management. For Taylor, the value of work for the worker is judged by the monetary benefits received. Consequently, worker motivation is confined to so-called extrinsic rewards. Maximizing these extrinsic benefits is seen as the ultimate value or goal of work for the worker. For employers, as the Tayloristic argument goes, the benefit of tapping a worker’s economic nature results in increased efficiency, productivity, and profitability for the firm. Any sort of intrinsic value, such as a worker’s psychological, moral, or spiritual satisfaction, is relegated to one’s non-work life. Work, according to this view, is equated with “making a living,”—in a purely economic sense. Since work is only an economic activity, its organizational aspects should reflect this economic reality.¹⁶

This Tayloristic notion of work is not only restricted to the bottom rungs of the organizational ladder. One sees this phenomenon even more clearly with CEOs and how stock options are structured. Stock options provide an employee a certain number of shares of the company’s stock during a particular set time in the future and at a set price. The incentive behind stock options is that the employees, and in particular the CEO and a handful of top level executives, will work toward increasing the stock price so as to cash in on the difference, which will serve the shareholders by maximizing their returns. One of the principal reasons why CEOs and senior executives are making 300-500 times more than their average employees is stock options. Most large, publicly-traded companies within the U.S. distribute the majority of their total stock options to their five top executives.¹⁷ This lopsided distribution signals that these executives are the principal players of success, which, when accompanied by options that are worth millions, creates significant incentives to reduce the value of their work only to price. The pressures and temptations of such huge sums of money are so significant that it would take an unusual person, one who is spiritually grounded and morally developed, to resist the conclusion that the person’s pay does not equate with her work. And if such a person was in such a position, she would see the injustice of such a lop-sided reward system and would redistribute the stock options.¹⁸

This Tayloristic notion of work, however, is not only a blue collar or business phenomenon, but it has been increasingly informing the professions. Kathleen Kaveny explains that the increasing dissatisfaction among lawyers is not only from the sheer number of hours lawyers are working, “but

¹⁶ Frederick W. Taylor. *Scientific Management*. New York: Harper and Row, 1947. See also Yves Simone. *Work, Society and Culture*. New York: Fordham University Press, 1971: 18, on the etymological negative connotations of the word “work.”

¹⁷ John Mackey. “Final Word.” *Fast Company* (February 2007): 112.

¹⁸ These pressures of performance actually begin to look like bribes. A bribe is a payment made to someone to get the people to do something they should not do or to *omit* something they should do. As my colleague Robert Kennedy has argued, when executives are paid huge sums of money tied to the increase of stock price, they are strongly encouraged to favor the shareholders at the expense of other stakeholders. Stock options serve as an irresistible temptation for executives to become one-dimensional in their work in order to increase share price. The consequence is that their vocational calling as executives, which calls them to have authentic and rich relationships with various stakeholders, is marginalized for a monolithic advocacy for shareholders where the work of executives is equated with the payment incentive of shareholders. Their work is simply a job.

rather the way in which they understand the time they spend working, which is directly related to the manner in which they are forced to account for it. At the heart of the problem is the widespread practice of charging clients for the amount of a lawyer's time that they consume—charging them, in other words, according to the number of 'billable hours' solving their problem requires."¹⁹ The lawyer's time is increasingly equated with a monetary unit where one hour of law equals \$200 or \$800 or whatever. The dominance of this cash nexus exchange flattens all work time to a price. This relationship between price and time also has a way of consumerizing the relationship between lawyer and client. When a client thinks that he is buying a lawyer's time, the good lawyer is defined as a "cost efficient lawyer," a lawyer who does what the client (or better yet, the consumer) wants of him. Because the compensation system of billable hours is so powerful in law firms, the identity of a lawyer is more and more defined by the values of that system. These pressures have caused lawyers to view their time as extrinsic and instrumental, rather than as intrinsically valuable. As extrinsic characteristics become more dominant, such as the cost-effectiveness for the client, profits for partners, and income for the lawyer, intrinsic characteristics become more difficult to attend to, such as justice, mentoring younger associates, pro bono work, and so forth. This consumer model has impacted other professions as well. Arthur Anderson's Houston office did what Enron wanted them to do. Jack Kevoorkian did what his patients wanted him to do.

This brief description of work as a job is critiqued in *Laborem Exercens* as an expression of "economism." John Paul defines economism as the restriction of human work solely "to its economic purpose."²⁰ When the value of work is restricted only to its economic reality, the person has created such a small world that the moral and spiritual considerations of work are *a priori* excluded.²¹ The principal scandal of work as a job, of economism, is found in what it does to the person himself. This is why John Paul's insight into the "subjective dimension of work" is such an important contribution to the social teachings of the Church.²²

When we act, we affect and change *objects* outside or beyond ourselves ("transitive").²³ This is most evident in our work, which John Paul calls the objective dimension of work. We are by nature a *homo faber*, a "builder of the world and maker of things."²⁴ Yet, however impressive we are as builders in communications, computerization, construction, travel, etc., work is not simply an activity that terminates in an object. As workers, we change not only the world, but we also change ourselves ("immanent"). As a self-reflexive activity, work reflects right back into the person—it changes *me*, the employee, lawyer, teacher, carpenter, entrepreneur.

We see this subjective change quite clearly in the physical changes of the blacksmith. As he

¹⁹ M. Cathleen Kaveny. "Living the Fullness of Ordinary Time: A Theological Critique of the Instrumentalization of Time in Professional Life." *Work as Key to the Social Question*. 111-112

²⁰ *Laborem Exercens*, 13.

²¹ John Paul describes economism as that "fundamental error of thought can and must be called an error of materialism," a materialism that tends to be more practical in its expressions, which more easily seeps into a way of life for a Christian. *Laborem exercens*, 13.

²² *Laborem Exercens*, 5-6.

²³ *Laborem Exercens*, 4-5.

²⁴ Hannah Arendt. *The Human Condition*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958. 160.

forms the metal with his hammer, the very activity is forming his physical body in the development of his muscles. This dynamic, while obvious on one level, is quite striking on another, especially when we take into consideration not only the physical aspects of work, but also the intellectual, emotional, social and spiritual. When people work, they not only make a choice about what they work on, that is, the objective dimension of work, but they also simultaneously make a choice about themselves, that is, the subjective dimension of work. In many respects, the subjective change may last longer than some of the objective changes he has initiated.

When work is seen as only a job, we magnify the objective dimension of work, which prevents us from seeing the subjective dimension. Yet, as Alasdair MacIntyre explains, the end of farming, fishing, architecture, construction, and so forth, “when they are in good order, is never only to catch fish, or to produce beef or milk, or to build houses” nor is it simply to make money. Work is to be ordered in such a way “that not only is there a good product, but the craftsperson is perfected through and in her or his activity. . . . It is from this that the sense of a craft’s dignity derives.”²⁵ Of course the fisherman who fails to catch fish is no longer a fisherman; he is broke. But, his work is never fully or essentially explained by the fish caught or the money made. In other words, to explain the phenomenon of the fisherman by his product of fish or by his remuneration, is to remain on the surface of what is actually happening. As John Paul II puts it “The sources of the dignity of work are to be sought primarily in the subjective dimension, not in the objective one.”²⁶

This connection between one’s work and one’s identity can be found in the history of names. During the Middle Ages as well as other earlier historical periods, the products created were closely identified with the people who made them. Names such as Baker, Smith, Miller, Cook, Mason, Carpenter, Hunter, and Farmer attest to the close identity between what one made and who one was. Even today when people ask “What do you do?” they answer, “I’m a teacher,” “I’m a carpenter,” “I’m an accountant.” As John Paul II wrote before he became pope, “[h]uman actions once performed do not vanish without a trace: they leave their moral value, which constitutes an objective reality intrinsically cohesive with the person, and thus a reality profoundly subjective.”²⁷ The all important moral question is what is work transforming us into?

So when a lawyer, manager, teacher or plumber works, he affects the inner landscape of his character. The issue is not whether he changes himself, but how he changes himself and here we are at moral conversation. And the key to understanding the significant revealing of one’s personhood is not found in the amount of revenues he has generated, or even in the skills and knowledge he has acquired. Rather, the moral character of the worker will be captured in the responsible relationships they have forged with others, what John Paul calls “a community of work.”²⁸ Failure to take into account the subjective dimension of work is not to take up a neutral

²⁵ Alasdair MacIntyre. “A Partial Response to My Critics.” *After MacIntyre*, editors John Horton and Susan Mendus. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame. 284.

²⁶ *Laborem Exercens*, 6.

²⁷ Karol Wojtyła. *The Acting Person*. Boston: D. Reidel Publishing Co., 1979. 150.

²⁸ *Laborem Exercens*, 20. John Paul explains that “It is characteristic of work that it first and foremost unites people. In this consists its social power: the power to build a community. In the final analysis, both those who work and those

position; it inevitably leads (at least at the practical level) to a commitment to a merely materialistic view of the organization, what John Paul calls economism or what I have been calling a job.

There are many reasons for this increasing notion of work as a job. First of all, there are a lot of bad jobs out in our world as with Nora Watson. Some jobs are so mindless, so numbing, so bureaucratic that it is difficult to find any value but economic value. In the kitchen at Al's diner in Minneapolis, the sign reads with great certainty: "There's no fulfillment here." Some jobs are simply designed to waste people.²⁹ Other forms of work pay so little that even economic reward is even difficult to attain. Other people, because of globalization, immigration, changing labor markets, etc. cannot find work that will utilize their talents and are forced to take jobs that fail to tap their education and skills. Yet, while much more needs to be said about labor markets, public policy, training and development, organizational culture, job design, and so forth, another reason why people look to their work as a job has to do with their leisure, to which we will now turn.

LEISURE AS AMUSEMENT: When work is reduced to only an economic activity, leisure tends to mirror the economic meaning found within work into a form of consumerism. With work described as a monetary tool, leisure often becomes the monetary end of consumption, where the focus of the leisure activity increasingly becomes a form of amusement as entertainment. For example, the amusers of culture, entertainers, are increasingly the highest paid people in society. While there are still plenty of starving artists and actors, entertainers (music, sports, film, etc.) have become literally the icons of our culture supported and used by major multinational companies making the entertainment industry one of the largest exporters in the US economy. Such companies, "the merchants of cool," in order to maximize a continuous stream of revenue, utilize their sophisticated machinery to churn out what are at first marginal trends and through mass marketing and production, create cultural movements.³⁰

Propelled by a massive industry, leisure as amusement has had a major impact on our culture. Leisure is not a time for reflection, but a time to forget. Billy Joel best captures this in his song "The Piano Man": "Cause he knows that it's me they've been coming to see to forget about life for a while." Or to put it more philosophically, Jacques Ellul explains that leisure has increasingly become something that distracts the person: "Instead of being the moment when man, because he is no longer in the grip of everyday worries, rediscovers himself, thinking about what he is and what he ought to be, leisure becomes, on the contrary, the moment when amusements succeed to the

who manage the means of production or who own them must in some way be united in this community." See also my "The Corporation as a Community of Work: Understanding the Firm Within the Catholic Social Tradition." *Ave Maria Law Review* vol. 4 2006: 33-76.

²⁹ Howard Rosenbrock. "Engineers and the Work People Do." *IEEE Control Systems Magazine* vol .1, no. 3 (September 1981). Reprinted in the Open University Reader. *The Experience of Work*. ed. Craig R. Littler. Aldershot: Gower/The Open University, 1985: 161-171. Rosenbrock wrote: "If the engineers could think of people as if they were robots, they would give them more human work to do." Engineers are concerned to maximize the use of the robot when they try to mechanize a task, but they feel no such need to make better use of the available talents, skills and abilities of the human worker. If they did, they would design more humane work (see Helen Alford and Michael Naughton. *Managing as if Faith Mattered*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001. Chapter 4).

³⁰ "Merchants of Cool." Frontline, <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/cool/>.

maximum in making him *forget*.”³¹ Instead of discovering and penetrating the meaning and mystery of one’s life, leisure amuses the person to escape.

The very word *amuse* reveals a deeper level of our modern problem. It comes from “the Muses,” the Greek goddesses who were divine patrons of the liberal arts. The Muses would refresh and re-create people helping them to regain their true worth.³² One of their principal roles was to “remind” people of who they are. The different schools in the ancient world would have a shrine to the Muses called *mouseion*, where we get the word “museum.”³³ The museum is a reminder of where we have come from which is necessary to help us understand where we are going and who we are now. The Muses, then, were a form of re-creation not a distraction. Once we place the “a” in front of “muse,” the “amuse” is a denial of the muses. Amusement no longer recreates us, but rather to amuse is to “stupefy” “to stare stupidly,” a rather good description of much of our entertainment today.

A couple of years ago I saw an advertisement for a hotel chain touting the weekend getaway. A couple in a swimming pool are looking at each other in a rather non-platonic fashion with the caption, “where your body checks in and your mind checks out.” The ad captures in both an image and a caption this modern form of leisure. It describes the weekend as a time to flee reality, rather than a time to penetrate it. Because we deal with the harshness of reality, particularly the economic grind of work, we need relief from this sphere of life. Whether it’s in the forms of weekend getaways, malls and shopping, casinos, spas, TV, movies, concerts, amusement parks, cruises, internet, video games, or strip joints, as a culture we seek to escape, to veg out, to flee our existence for a realm of time that gives gratifications.

In *Dies Domini*, John Paul is concerned about the increasing materialistic character of our weekend. He explains that “when Sunday loses its fundamental meaning and becomes merely part of a ‘weekend’, it can happen that people stay locked within a horizon so limited that they can no longer see ‘the heavens’. Hence, though ready to celebrate, they are really incapable of doing so.”³⁴ While the weekend is crucial for our rest, without spiritual forms of leisure, especially worship, we lose sight of authentic celebration, of what is good in the celebration we in which participate. The so-called real living within an amusement culture such as ours is a suppression of our minds, our ends, of our selves, not a revelation of our destiny and character. This form of leisure is predicated on a dualistic divide between body and mind, which is even better expressed in Las Vegas’ now infamous tagline: “What happens in Vegas, stays in Vegas.” Of course the only thing that stays in Vegas is people’s money. All their actions come right back with them on the plane.

This repression of the spiritual in our leisure is not only a weekend phenomenon, but it has also influenced our notion of “celebration” and in particular our “holidays”: the commercialization of Christmas, the decadence of Mardi Gras and St. Patrick’s Day, the trivialization of Easter. Our holidays have changed their character. They are looking different than in the past, because their cultural expressions are increasingly becoming consumeristic and less religious. Our celebrations increasingly miss the meaning of that affirmation of what is good and holy—of the resurrection

³¹ Jacques Ellul. “Reflections on Leisure.” *Interplay*. December, 1967: 54.

³² Josef Pieper. *Leisure: The Basis of Culture*. South Bend, Indiana: St. Augustine’s Press. 1998. 57.

³³ See <http://www.crystalinks.com/greekgods3.html>.

³⁴ John Paul II, *Dies Domini*, 4

(Easter and funerals), the incarnation (Christmas), love, particularly *caritas* (marriage), life (baptism), etc. all of which have the capacity to re-create us and remind us of where we have come from, where we are going, and who we are now.

As John Paul explains in *Dies Domini*, what is needed in leisure is “not just any kind of *interruption* of work, but the *celebration* of the marvels which God has wrought.”³⁵ As our weekends and holidays become frenetic forms of amusements, we miss out on the meaning of celebration, of a way of seeing the deeper reality of the world that can be only be received in contemplation. Weddings, baptisms, funerals, masses as well as other celebrations help us, when we are in a contemplative mode, to participate in a form of festivity that “draws glory and exaltation from the past, not merely as reflected history, but by virtue of a historical reality *still operative in the present*.”³⁶ In the Eucharist, for example, the past is not simply an isolated chronological moment of the past; nor is the future Kingdom something simply to be awaited patiently as we muddle through history. In the Eucharist, past and future simultaneously converge, and the whole Christ, the eschatological Church of all times and places, is present. That is, the deepest notion of leisure found in the receptivity of the infinite, of God.³⁷

INTEGRATION OF JOB AND AMUSEMENT: ECONOMISM AND CONSUMERISM: When we view our work as a job and leisure as an amusement, we fall into a place that leaves us morally and spiritually depleted. While it is difficult to prove a cause and effect relationship between work and leisure, I tend to see that the principal culprit here is not work, but leisure. For the new technologies of leisure such as the internet, video games, casinos, ipods, TV, and the like have fostered a private and individualized notion of leisure leaving many collective forms of leisure practices such as education, worship, feasts, family, the arts, and so forth ineffective in terms of their cultural power. That is, our forms of leisure have become so weak in the last fifty years through this process of privatization and individualization, that economic life has become the dominant activity in terms of our time, language, relationships, and thinking. As Dee Hock, former chief of the Visa bank card operation, explained: “It’s not that people value money more but that they value everything else so much less—not that they are more greedy, but that they have no other values to keep greed in check.”³⁸ When leisure is exclusively restricted to entertainment and consumption, it fails to provide the moral and spiritual resources necessary to offer the world a robust notion of the good, and instead settles for a conventional and thin description of the good that neither has the capacity to inspire greatness nor the resources to overcome our impulses for more.

Our leisure as amusement also fails to give us rest. When people are consumed in a substantial amount of entertainment, they are far from relaxed or rested. Rather, they become restless, diseased, or what has become the worse of all things, bored. Too much sleep makes one tired, sluggish, and apathetic. Too much entertainment makes one restless and anxious. It is what Josef Pieper describes as *acedia*, a spiritual poverty that stems from despair. *Acedia* is a “deep-seated lack of calm which makes leisure impossible.” It is a restlessness that not only means

³⁵ *Dies Domini*, 17

³⁶ Josef Pieper. “What is a Feast” in *Josef Pieper: An Anthology*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1989.153

³⁷ See William Cavanaugh. *Eucharist and Torture*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1998.

³⁸ Quoted in John Kavanaugh. *Christ in a Consumer Society, Still*. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2000. 11.

inactivity or laziness, but rather, as Kierkegaard noted, a despairing refusal “to be oneself.”³⁹ *Acedia* results from failing to ask what things ultimately are. It is a failure to marvel at the ordinary and to experience its mystery. It is forgetfulness. This is not to say that entertainment or consumption are inherently bad. Rather, it is to say that our culture has become dominated by these activities and the immediate pleasures they provide, that these forms of leisure will not provide rest to the restless human heart.

What we have described thus far is a profound moral and spiritual disease that has pervaded not only our economic order, but even more disturbing our culture institutions, our families, our schools and even our churches. This vision of work as a job and leisure as amusement is a spiritual crisis, a metaphysical crisis whose only remedy is one that is spiritual at its core. This does not mean that the remedy is merely a return to the past, as though the past, at some particular moment had some pristine moment of integrity of work and leisure. But it does mean we need a moral and spiritual tradition that will enable us participate in a deeper wisdom with spiritual resources that we as individuals cannot muster ourselves. While elements of this solution may have political or technical dimensions to it, its principal form must be cultural, where the family, education and in particular the church must play an important part. This solution has to be an incarnational spiritual solution,⁴⁰ which leads us to see our work as a vocation and leisure as contemplation.

II. A CATHOLIC INTEGRATION OF WORK AND LEISURE

A. VOCATION TO GIVE: Within the history of the Church, the notion of vocation has been expressed in a wide variety of ways and there is still today debate over how we should employ the word. John Paul II has been rather expansive in his use of vocation. There are a variety of ways in which he uses it: universal call to holiness, state of life (priestly, religious and lay), marriage, work, etc. In order to understand work as a vocation, we need to see our vocation first in terms of our universal call to be human and in terms of our state of life. These two vocations capture the moral and spiritual foundations of our vocation to give, which is necessary to understand our vocation in the way in which we do our work.

UNIVERSAL CALL TO HOLINESS: A CALL TO BE HUMAN. The word vocation comes from the Latin *vocare* which means “to call” and in particular for John Paul, this call is to give oneself. Our first call to give is not to our work, but to be fully human, to be who we were created to be.⁴¹ Throughout his papacy, he would often quote *Gaudium et Spes* 24: because the person is made in God’s image and because the person is “the only creature on earth which God willed for itself, [one] cannot fully find himself except through a sincere gift of himself.” In *Centesimus Annus* he explains “[t]his gift is made possible by the human person’s essential ‘capacity for transcendence.’”⁴² We are made in such a way that our happiness is found in giving ourselves, in

³⁹ Quoted in Josef Pieper. *Leisure: The Basis of Culture*. South Bend, Indiana: St. Augustine’s Press, 1998. 28.

⁴⁰ *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2004. 265, especially its references to the early Church fathers.

⁴¹ *Laborem Exercens*, 6 and *Gaudium et Spes*, 1.

⁴² John Paul II. *Centesimus Annus*, 41. One of the more powerful stories that reveal this fact of nature is found in the story Lewis Hyde tells in his book *The Gift* where he speaks of the “gift economy.” Hyde explains that when Native

transcending ourselves, to others and the Other. John Paul explains that this essential dimension of gift is revealed in the book of Genesis. “When God says ‘It is not good that man should be alone’ (Gn 2:18), he affirmed that ‘alone,’ man does not completely realize this essence. He realizes it only by existing ‘with someone’—and even more deeply and completely—by existing ‘for someone.’”⁴³ Created in God’s image, we are made for communion by giving ourselves to others, which is the basis to our development. The very essence of our humanity is found at this profound level of giving ourselves.

In other words, we are at our best not when we are taking, or calculating our interests, or maximizing our utilities, or shouting claims of freedom, but when we give of ourselves. This vocation to be human is a call that is heard by the sheer fact that we are created, which makes it a universal call. God calls all people out of nothing and chaos and into being, into a relationship with Him and all others who have been created. This call, this voice of creation, reveals to us that a core dimension of our identity as individuals is found in our relationships and in our gift of ourselves to others. This is not a reality we can deny, unless we want to deny ourselves. This dynamic of self-gift is a natural law of sorts—if we break it, we break ourselves.⁴⁴

This call to give is further specified to a call to holiness of every Christian on account of their baptism. This vocation to be human, what *Lumen Gentium* (1964) calls “the universal call to holiness,” is fundamentally expressed in how we give of ourselves.⁴⁵ In more Christian eschatological terms “We actually become, eternally, what we have given ourselves to.”⁴⁶

A CALL TO A STATE OF LIFE: The *second* dimension of our call is to a state of life, which the Church describes in terms of the religious, priestly and lay states. This dimension has a long and complicated history within the Church, which cannot be fully rehearsed here. What we can say about them is that they express a differentiation of how this law of gift, this universal call to love and holiness is lived out.

In the past, the temptation was to relegate the lay state to simply obeying commandments, divorcing it from the radical call to holiness and love found in the beatitudes.⁴⁷ Throughout his

Americans encountered Puritans in their first set of gift encounters, they were baffled by their possessiveness over gifts given them. Native Americans expected their English visitors to give back their gifts in order to keep them moving. This idea of setting gifts in motion equally baffled the Europeans, who negatively characterized Native Americans as “Indian givers.” Yet, what Native Americans understood, and what we should take heed of, is that when a gift is not shared, it corrupts the holder. The one who makes the gift an occasion for selfish hoarding, who fails to put the gift in motion, becomes corrupted by the gift itself. See Lewis Hyde. *The Gift*. New York: Vintage Books, 1983. 3-4. Obviously, Native American practice is not consciously biblical, but a religious outlook—an outlook grounded in an order of creation—will, with few exceptions, encounter a reality of giftedness where “[t]he more you give, the more you are fulfilled, the more you are; since you have what you give, what you give makes you be.” Lorna Gold. *The Sharing Economy: Solidarity Networks Transforming Globalisation*. Hampshire, England: Ashgate, 2004. 62

⁴³ John Paul II. General Audience of January 9, 1980. <http://www.ewtn.com/library/PAPALDOC/jp2tb13a.htm> (Theology of the Body).

⁴⁵ *Lumen Gentium*, Chapter V. See also John Paul II. *Christifideles Laici*, 16.

⁴⁶ John S.J. Kavanaugh. “Last Words.” *America* (January 21-28, 2002): 23.

⁴⁷ See *Catholic Encyclopedia* (1908) entry on Evangelical Counsels <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/04435a.htm>. See also Servais Pinckaers. *The Sources of Christian Ethics*. Washington D.C.: The Catholic University Press of America,

papacy, John Paul II has sought to dispel this form of legalism and minimalism for the laity. In *Christifideles Laici* (1988), he explains that “The vocation to holiness must be recognized and lived by the lay faithful, not as an undeniable and demanding obligation, but as a shining example of the infinite love of the Father that has regenerated them in His own life of holiness.”⁴⁸ Or as Hans Urs von Balthasar puts it, “love does not inquire how far it *must* go, but how far it *may* go.”⁴⁹ In the past, the lay state was often understood in static terms as though understanding the commandments were a dried up legal single interpretation. While one may come to obedience of the commandments in duty, if one does begin to move to love, such obedience leads to rigidity, minimalism, and legalism. Simply obeying the commandments easily turn into duties, which turn into a love grown cold.⁵⁰ This static view of the lay state prevented a rich notion of gift to animate their lives, especially their marriages and their work. While we do not have time to explore John Paul’s contribution to marriage and sexuality, his development of the theology of the body is all about the self-gift necessary to understand the profound vocation of marriage.⁵¹

A CALL TO WORK: John Paul’s use of vocation overcomes a long-time tendency in the Catholic Church to restrict a calling to only the priestly and religious states of life. His use of the term also prevents a tendency in the Church to describe work as only a means to serve the vocation of marriage and the family, losing its wider social contribution to the world. As a man of Vatican II, John Paul sees the sphere of work as an important place in how the universal call to holiness is lived out.⁵² He is concerned about a danger within the Church of failing to speak meaningfully to a sphere of life that can take up to a third to a half of our waking hours. To relegate work to only an economic means understood as a job is to evacuate work of its moral and spiritual power, a power that can humanize and even sanctify people. As he explained to managers and workers in Rome, “[t]he dimension of work and the dimension of faith, are not two separate things, any more than the dimension of the world and the dimension of the Kingdom of God. They have been

1995. 136-137. In *The Christian State of Life*, von Balthasar explains that “[t]he content of the commandments is positive to the extent that they point to love and live from the love that finds its expression in them. Their content is negative insofar as they reveal only a partial view of love and . . . assume the character of prohibitions that lay claim to obligatory observance” (31). “As love cools, the glowing lava of its immense spontaneity hardens into the fixed and narrow molds of individual commandments. ‘Where loves grow sluggish, law flourishes’” (30).

⁴⁸ *Christifideles Laici*, 17. It needs to be noted that particularly near the end of his papacy, John Paul became increasingly concerned about an identity crisis that ignored the unique charism of the priestly/religious state. In an address to bishops, John Paul argued that the Second Vatican Council, while fostering “the awakening of the lay faithful in the Church,” did not signal an alteration in the priests/religious irreplaceable role in the church. He goes on to describe the states of life in the church in terms of their complementarity, a term he used quite often in his pontificate to describe relationships that need both equality and distinction. He explained that Vatican II “underscored the deep complementarity between priests and the laity that the symphonic nature of the Church implies.” For John Paul, however, the current situation has led to a misunderstanding of what complementarity means among these states of life resulting in “a crisis of identity and confidence among priests, and also to forms of commitment by the laity that are too clerical or too politicized” http://www.catholicculture.org/docs/doc_view.cfm?recnum=4284.

⁴⁹ von Balthasar, *The Christian State of Life*, 48.

⁵⁰ *The Christian State of Life*, 30-32.

⁵¹ See John Paul II’s General Audience on January 16, 1980, where he connects *Gaudium et Spes* 24 and his Theology of the Body (<http://www.ewtn.com/library/PAPALDOC/jp2tb14.htm>).

⁵² *Laborem Exercens*, 9.

joined together in the eternal thought and will of the Creator. From the beginning, the path of faith passes through work, and the path of work through faith.”⁵³ Our universal call to love, to be holy is informed by a sacramental vision of life which “does not allow us to submit just one part of our lives to its demands and leave the rest free for other pursuits; it does not allow us to dedicate just one period of our lives to it and the rest, if we will, to our own interests. The command to love is universal and unequivocal. It makes no allowances. It encompasses and makes demands upon everything in our nature: ‘with thy whole heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy mind’. . . . Love cannot endure to have limits to it.”⁵⁴

John Paul described this incarnational view of work as the “gospel of work,” which situates work in terms of salvation history, of creation, sin, and redemption/sanctification. The first dimension of this gospel of work is creation. In the very first paragraph of *Laborem Exercens*, John Paul writes that from the very beginning of creation, the person “is called to work.”⁵⁵ This call is particularly expressed in “the biblical calling to ‘subdue the earth,’”⁵⁶ which for John Paul reflects a profound insight about human work. Precisely because we are made in God’s image, our work is called to participate in “the very action of the Creator of the universe.”⁵⁷ God’s creation is not only a one-time event, but an unfolding process in which we have been asked to participate in God’s command to us to have dominion through the work we do. Dominion here does not mean exploitation, but a way in which we do our work, which determines whether we participate in this call to collaborate with God or to frustrate God’s ongoing revelation in the created order. Human work can express a sharing in the divine work of creation, or it can express a violation of the created order. By putting to use the wealth of spiritual and material resources given to us by our Creator toward not simply our self-interested ends, but toward the good of others, we can contribute to the progress of society and our own development by allowing all people to participate in this dominion.

The second dimension of a gospel of work is the fallen character of work. As a worker himself, John Paul is aware of the pain, toil, monotony and suffering of work. Work is a fallen reality and its command for dominion leads easily to exploitation. He speaks about those without work, those without living wages, those who cannot enjoy the fruits of dominion, those who work in subhuman conditions.⁵⁸ These are injustices precisely because they create obstacles that prevent people from living out their vocation. Their disorder is revealed by an original created order. These disorders create an overwhelming burden for people, especially those who are unskilled and poor. John Paul explains that “[h]idden in a work that is at times heavy and wearisome, love does not always immediately reveal its presence.”⁵⁹ Even when work is not accompanied by injustice, work carries with it a toil that creates suffering.

⁵³ Kennedy, *et al.*, *Dignity of Work*, 103.

⁵⁴ *The Christian State of Life*, 27.

⁵⁵ *Laborem Exercens*, Introduction.

⁵⁶ *Laborem Exercens*, 9.

⁵⁷ *Laborem Exercens*, 4 and 25.

⁵⁸ *Laborem Exercens* describes the sections on problems of work—unemployment, immigration, unjust wages, economism, etc.

⁵⁹ Kennedy *et al.*, *Dignity of Work*, 313.

The third dimension is that work, especially the suffering that comes from work and the alleviation of that suffering, can be a participation in Christ's redeeming/sanctifying mission. Because of sin, we suffer and cause suffering at work. Our identity is particularly linked to our response to this suffering. For suffering will make us either bitter or better, but it will never leave us the same. As with all suffering, our toil at work can be an opportunity for deep sanctification if our suffering participates in the cross of Christ's love for us.⁶⁰ This participation in Christ's redemption, expressed through the cross, deepens our sensitivity to those who suffer around us. When we share in the sufferings of others, we imitate Christ's emptying of himself for the sake of friendship.⁶¹ We cannot, then, have an authentic vocation to our work unless we understand the sufferings of those in the workplace:⁶² those who suffer from sub-living wages, dehumanizing job processes, products that harm the body and the soul. As Christ seeks our good by suffering on the cross, we must seek the good of others by taking on their sufferings. This is an essential element of our vocation in our work. Our vocation to work must be shaped by deep charity and expansive justice that aims to alleviate as much suffering as possible in the workplace by developing a "disciplined sensitivity" to the sufferings of others.⁶³ It is here in being connected to the sufferings of others that our deepest sanctification can occur at work, our deepest avenue to the call to holiness can manifest itself.⁶⁴

What this theological vision of work, this gospel of work, this vocation to work, is orienting us toward is a way of giving ourselves at work according to our created and redeemed reality. We simply do not work only for ourselves, but also for others, for our family, community, nation, humanity and God. This is why John Paul writes that work "constitutes one of the fundamental dimensions of [our] earthly existence and of [our] vocation" precisely because our work can be a participation in the ongoing creation and redemption of the world, a work that allows us to exercise our gifts in service to this end.⁶⁵

Yet, as profound and as meaningful our vocation to give at work is, we still have a problem. Or at least, I have a problem. When I give of myself at work or at home for that matter, I often experience certain dysfunctional characteristics. I become resentful in my giving. I find myself whining "why am I *doing* all the work, why am I *doing* all the sacrificing in this relationship, why aren't they giving as much as I am giving, why is this an 80-20 relationship," etc. I often feel unappreciated wondering why my colleagues don't recognize my contributions. I feel a

⁶⁰ *Laborem Exercens*, 27. John Paul explains that "By enduring the toil of work in union with Christ crucified for us, man in a way collaborates with the Son of God for the redemption of humanity. He shows himself a true disciple of Christ by carrying the cross in his turn every day in the activity that he is called upon to perform."

⁶¹ Phil 2:7.

⁶² *Laborem Exercens*, 27.

⁶³ Michael Buckley. *The Catholic University as Promise and Project*. Georgetown University Press: Washington, 1998. 111ff.

⁶⁴ *Laborem Exercens*, 27. Christ, "undergoing death itself for all of us sinners, taught us by example that we too must shoulder that cross which the world and the flesh inflict upon those who pursue peace and justice"; but also, at the same time, "appointed Lord by His Resurrection and given all authority in heaven and on earth, Christ is now at work in people's hearts through the power of His Spirit.... He animates, purifies, and strengthens those noble longings too by which the human family strives to make its life more human and to render the whole earth submissive to this goal."

⁶⁵ *Laborem Exercens*, 11.

heavy duty that has lost a generous spirit that tends to lead to a victimization syndrome. This victimization then leads to resentment, which not only neutralizes the power of giving, but actually works against myself producing exhaustion/burnout and ultimately cynicism. My work is no longer a place of development and sanctification, but dis-formation.

What we find is that we cannot give what we have not received. As the Latin proverb puts it, *nemo dat quod non habet* “nobody gives what he does not have.”⁶⁶ In other words, in order for us to give rightly, we need to be able to receive rightly. Or to hearken the thesis I stated at the beginning of this paper, in order to get work right, we need to get leisure right, but leisure not as amusement, but as contemplation, as receptivity. We not only need to know how to give at work, to understand our vocation to work, but we need to know how to receive the world and God.⁶⁷ This in many respects is a tougher challenge, to which we now turn.

B. LEISURE AS CONTEMPLATION: HABITS OF RECEPTIVITY. Leisure as contemplation is a different kind of activity than work. Its structure is not an “achievement” on our part, but a “receivment” where we lay ourselves bare to accept what God wants of us.⁶⁸ This receptivity creates what John Paul calls a contemplative outlook that does “not presume to take possession of reality but instead accepts it as a gift, discovering in all things the reflection of the Creator and seeing in every person his living image.”⁶⁹ It is a receptivity that is ever new, unpredictable, never settled and has the capacity to surprise us, to cause in us wonder as well as fear that we will have to change our ways in thought and action.⁷⁰ This is why the person “comes in the profoundest sense to himself not through what he does but through what he accepts” not through what he achieves but what he receives.⁷¹ This primacy of receptivity or acceptance does not resign us to passivity leaving us in some idle state. Rather, it creates in us a centeredness, a wholeness that “alone makes it possible to do the things of this world in a spirit of responsibility, yet at the same time in an uncramped, cheerful, free way, and to put them at the service of redemptive love.”⁷²

This act or habit of receivment is difficult for those of us brought up on a heavy dose of consumerism, careerism, athleticism, and other forms of achievements. Ultimately, it is an act of humility in the recognition that I have to take my “turn to be worked upon.” There is something that I don’t have, and, no matter how hard I work to achieve through skill development, technical

⁶⁶ I am grateful to Ken Goodpaster for giving me this phrase.

⁶⁷ *Laborem Exercens*, 13. John Paul II explains that people in the created order enter into two inheritances, two forms of receptivity, when they work: 1) the dependence of the Creator, “the Giver of all resources” and 2) interdependence with others. Before we even start work, we are indebted to both the Creator and other human beings who provide the tools and opportunities to participate in the goods of creation. But besides this fact of indebtedness, my giving will always be characterized with distortion, calculation, quid pro quo, if I fail to both realize the indebtedness of what I have been given as well as my need to constantly receive in humility the grace necessary to ground me in the being of who I actually am.

⁶⁸ John Haughey. “The Primacy of Receivment.”

<http://www.stthomas.edu/cathstudies/cst/mgmt/publications/businessasacalling/01Haughey.pdf> .

⁶⁹ John Paul II, *Evangelium Vitae* (1995), 83.

⁷⁰ Hans Urs Von Balthasar. *Prayer*. Paulist Press : New York, 1967. 20.

⁷¹ Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger. *Introduction to Christianity*. Ignatius Press: San Francisco, 2004. 267

⁷² *Ibid.*, 268.

progress, financial formulas, or strategic foresight, I will never get *work* right, unless I can receive.

It is precisely in our refusal to receive that we find ourselves in so much trouble. When we take by force those things that we should only be received, we violate the divine image inherent within us. This refusal to receive is found in our origins, in the story of the fall of Adam and Eve, when God commands them not to eat “of the tree of knowledge of good and evil” (*Gen* 2:16-17). The moral law is given by God which we can only receive. We cannot take it, manipulate it, or create it, we can only accept it.⁷³ If we take and achieve when we should rather be accepting and receiving, we distort our place within God’s order and our actions will increasingly be characterized by alienation, distrust and ultimately despair.⁷⁴

There are few better than Nietzsche to explain the person who cannot receive. His “noble man” or “superman” is one who regards “*himself* as determining values . . . he *creates values*.”⁷⁵ This notion of the person as only creative, active, constructive distorts the place of the person within the cosmos as well as overrates the role of work within our lives. This is why leisure as contemplation, as receptivity must have a certain primacy for our work to be ordered to its proper end.⁷⁶ It is in leisure that we begin to understand that the human situation “calls not for a resolve but for a rescue,” a rescue that can only be received.

To become a bit more concrete on what this receptivity looks like, we can describe leisure in terms of habits of receptivity, of receivment. The first is the habit of solitude, of silence, not only external noiselessness, but an internal ceasing of our emotional tapes that have been playing for years, where we can hear again the wisdom that “deafens every fool.” A common experience for most people is that we become scattered as we move into the world and we lose a certain center which causes within us a loss of sight of who we are.⁷⁷ Our activity from our work, our families, our community, and so forth, no matter how good they are, can cause a diffusion of the self. The scattering generates a whole series of emotional tapes: of the illusions of grandeur of who I think I am; the feelings of the unappreciated genius; the debate scenarios with one’s nemesis; the award speeches for recognition; the pretend heroism, etc. Our emotional tapes, as Thomas Keating calls them, mask the conditions of our reality and create a false image of ourselves.⁷⁸ It is often our tapes, our endless monologues, that prevent us from a deep rest, since it is the tape that perpetuates the restlessness of the restless heart. Our amusements do not have the resources to check and challenge our tapes. While our internal tapes tend to stop in the more traumatic moments of our lives, death of loved ones, sickness, significant failure and disappointment, broken marriages, and so forth, silence is the power of the soul to receive reality as it is, not only on occasion, but to live it in every aspect of

⁷³ John Paul II, *Veritatis Splendor*, 35-37.

⁷⁴ Ron Rolheiser. “Daybreaks: Daily Reflections for Lent and Holy Week.” Liguori: Liguori Publications, 2005. 24.

⁷⁵ Friedrich Nietzsche. *Beyond Good and Evil*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998. 154.

⁷⁶ David Schindler. “Christology and the Imago dei: Interpreting Gaudium et spes” *Communio* 23 Spring 1996: 159. “Receptivity thus seems to be the primary and indeed constitutive act of the creature’s creatureliness. In a word, we have the primacy of the contemplative dimension; receiving (from the Father, in Jesus Christ) is the anterior condition for the creature’s being (authentically) creative.”

⁷⁷ I am grateful for my colleague Fr. Michael Keating for this insight.

⁷⁸ Thomas Keating. *An Invitation to Love*. New York: Continuum, 1994.

one's life.⁷⁹ This is why Josef Pieper's warns that "unless we substitute true leisure for our hectic amusements, we will destroy our culture—and ourselves."⁸⁰

We, especially in our highly consumeristic and careerist oriented world, have an even greater need to re-collect ourselves, to re-center ourselves, and it is in silence where clarity, honesty, and insight are received. When we stop our tapes, we create the conditions that allow the freedom of God's Word to speak its full force to us. It is here that we see the deepest form of silence and its most profound fruit is prayer—a silence that stills the mind and heart and opens the person to God.⁸¹

The second habit is celebration, of Sabbath. It is in this habit where we get to the heart of our thesis: "if we don't get the Sabbath right we will never get work right." The Sabbath is not merely a day at the end of the week, the weekend, nor is it the "mop up" day in which to complete unfinished projects from week, but it is "a holy day," God's day, where we receive through Word, sacrament, leisure, rest, silence, etc. the meaning of our existence including our work activity. The Jewish theologian Abraham Heschel explains that the Sabbath is a different kind of time "where the goal is not to have but to be, not to own but to give, not to control but to share, not to subdue but to be in accord."⁸²

Although it has suffered much damage in the last 30 years, the Sabbath is still one of the most powerful signs in our market economy that production and consumption do not own us, because it provides one of the few times and spaces in which the person is not defined principally as a worker or a consumer, but as human, as created and redeemed. Actually to be only a worker or consumer is an eventual process of dehumanization, since by themselves working and consuming preoccupy us with limited ends. The Sabbath is necessary for our own humanization, if it is characterized by a celebratory dimension of a festival in which we *receive* and affirm our end. John Paul explained that we are in special need of rediscovering the Sabbath, and in particular, the Lord's Day, "not only so that we may live the demands of faith to the full, but also so that we may respond concretely to the deepest human yearnings. Time given to Christ is never time lost, but is rather time gained, so that our relationships and indeed our whole life may become more profoundly human."⁸³ The Lord's Day, as a time of reception, of grace is indispensable to the humanization of our lives precisely because it is premised on a receptive spiritualization of God's gift of grace.

The Sabbath is not, however, an escape from work. In a paradoxical manner, it is only in our detachment from work that we see our deepest meaning of work. Benedict XVI explains this connection by stating "that the biblical teaching on work finds its coronation in the commandment to rest."⁸⁴ To rest in God is not to escape one's work, but rather an invitation to live out in our work "in a new way—as a consequence of a light which allows one to appreciate that this existence has

⁷⁹ Josef Pieper. *Leisure: The Basis of Culture*, 41.

⁸⁰ Josef Pieper. *Leisure: The Basis of Culture*, back cover.

⁸¹ Von Balthasar, *Prayer*, 19.

⁸² Abraham Heschel. *The Sabbath*. New York: The Noonday Press, 1951. 3.

⁸³ *Dies Domini*, 7. See *Compendium*, 258, 261 and 284-286.

⁸⁴ Benedict XVI. "Man Is Subject and Protagonist of Work." Homily on Feast of St. Joseph, Vatican City, March 19, 2006, <http://www.zenit.org/english/visualizza.phtml?sid=86234>.

divine dimensions which previously had been hidden.”⁸⁵ Worship, particularly in terms of its sacramental meaning, is not an escape from the world, “rather it is the arrival at a vantage point from which we can see more deeply into the reality of the world.”⁸⁶ This sacramental/incarnational view of worship reveals that spirit pervades materiality, grace perfects nature, and worship makes one’s work holy, which is why from a Catholic perspective the Eucharist is the most profound expression of Sabbath since it is where we see most deeply and most profoundly “the work of humans” the bread and wine are transformed into the real presence, a presence that has the power to redeem the world.⁸⁷

The third habit, the habit of service, of going to the margins, is intimately tied to the habit of the Sabbath. In *Dies Domini*, John Paul makes the powerful link between Eucharist and service. It is worth quoting it extensively so as to not misunderstand his point.

The Eucharist is an event and programme of true brotherhood. From the Sunday Mass there flows a tide of charity destined to spread into the whole life of the faithful, beginning by inspiring the very way in which they live the rest of Sunday. If Sunday is a day of joy, Christians should declare by their actual behaviour that we cannot be happy "on our own". They look around to find people who may need their help. It may be that in their neighbourhood or among those they know there are sick people, elderly people, children or immigrants who precisely on Sundays feel more keenly their isolation, needs and suffering. It is true that commitment to these people cannot be restricted to occasional Sunday gestures. But presuming a wider sense of commitment, why not make the Lord's Day a more intense time of sharing, encouraging all the inventiveness of which Christian charity is capable? Inviting to a meal people who are alone, visiting the sick, providing food for needy families, spending a few hours in voluntary work and acts of solidarity: these would certainly be ways of bringing into people's lives the love of Christ received at the Eucharistic table. . . . [Instead of being dominated by amusements, Sunday can become] “a great school of charity, justice and peace. . . . a compelling force for inner renewal, an inspiration to change the structures of sin in which individuals, communities and at times entire peoples are entangled. Far from being an escape, the Christian Sunday is a ‘prophecy’ inscribed on time itself, a prophecy obliging the faithful to follow in the footsteps of the One who came ‘to preach good news to the poor, to proclaim release to captives and new sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, and to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord’ (Lk 4:18-19).”⁸⁸

Unlike the other two habits, this habit of service seems more like work than like leisure, yet to be with those who on the surface cannot do anything for us, can actually be a most profound

⁸⁵ Jose Luis Illanes. *On the Theology of Work*. Dublin: Four Counts Press, 1980. 39.

⁸⁶ Joseph Woodill. “Virtue Ethics: An Orthodox Appreciation.” *Thought* vol 67 (June 1992): 186. He is quoting Alexander Schmemmann. *For the Life of the World*. New York: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1973. 27.

⁸⁷ Miroslav Volf explains, “Communion with God in worship establishes the context of meaning that gives work ultimate significance” (*Work in the Spirit*. Oxford University Press, New York, 1991. 140). Or as Teilhard de Chardin notes “by virtue of the Creation, and, still more, of the Incarnation, nothing here below is profane for those who know how to see” (Teilhard de Chardin. *The Divine Milieu*. New York: Harper and Row, 1960. 66).

⁸⁸ *Dies Domini*, 72-73

experience of receptivity. Jean Vanier explains that “[i]f we remain at the level of ‘doing’ something for people, we can stay behind our barriers of superiority.” We share most deeply with people when we are “with” them, especially those who are most vulnerable and marginalized.⁸⁹ To be with those who on all appearances cannot do anything for us are precisely those who can do more for us than we can for them. As Benedict XVI explains, “Those who are in a position to help others will realize that in doing so they themselves *receive* help; being able to help others in no merit or achievement of their own. This duty is grace.”⁹⁰

While there are more habits to be examined, the point is hopefully clear that without these forms or habits of receptivity, we cannot see clearly our vocation in work because we cannot receive the vision the Lord wants to give us. Without habits of receptivity, we increasingly become self-satisfied with what we already know and our hearing becomes further blunted by our emotional internal tapes.

C. INTEGRATION: INTEGRITY. When we can see our work as a vocation and leisure as contemplation we have the ingredients for real integrity, where the roots of its meaning are exposed. In Latin, integrity comes from *integritas*, where we get the word “integer,” a whole number. Integrity is about being whole, the ability to order the parts of our lives as whole human beings. It is not only about balancing work and leisure. Actually balancing the two often perpetuates and even strengthens the divisions and gaps in our lives, because balancing lures us into believing that we are solving our own hypocrisies. Without real integration, balance serves as a therapeutic device that offers a cheap version of integrity.

What is needed are not just doers or contemplatives, but contemplative practitioners, people who can first experience their being as receivers of creation, redemption, grace, and who then see their work as a form of giving.⁹¹ This integration of work as a vocation and leisure as contemplation has an interesting connection with Jim Collins’ work on leadership. Collins is one of the more insightful business theorists and consultants today. In the *Harvard Business Review*, he wrote about five levels of leadership and at the fifth level, where he places a small number of great leaders of American business, he explains two important characteristics. The first is resolve. These leaders work hard, they don’t give up, they are tough, industrious, creative, diligent and they are ready to make great sacrifices. This quality is actually shared with those on the fourth level. What makes the fifth level different is their “humility.”

Humility for these leaders did not come from their work, but for many of them from their leisure. Collins explains that many of these fifth level leaders had significant non-work experiences that informed their notion of work, of leadership. For some it was the forced leisure of life-threatening sickness. After his near-death experience with cancer, Darwin Smith, CEO of Kimberly-Clark, developed into a level five leader. For others it was religion. Colman Mockler, CEO of Gillett, whose conversion to Christianity while getting his MBA at Harvard, significantly altered the way he managed and led. What made these two men great leaders were not only techniques and formulas

⁸⁹ Jean Vanier. *Community and Growth*. New York : Paulist Press, 1989. 186.

⁹⁰ Benedict XVI. *Deus Caritas Est*. 35.

⁹¹ Schindler. “Christology and the Imago Dei.” 179.

from work, but a vision of leadership than came from their leisure, from events that while initially had nothing to do with their work, nonetheless transformed their work.⁹²

What Collins helps us to see on a more practical level is the relationship between work, and in particular leadership, and leisure. Great leaders, level five leaders, must be able to receive (humility), otherwise they shut off the source of great work. Leadership cannot be isolated from the realm of leisure. Yet, while Collins work is helpful, his idea of humility does not neatly map upon what I have described as leisure. Among his great leaders is Joseph F. Cullman III, CEO of Philip Morris, producer of a cancer causing addictive product largely marketed to the young and now developing world countries. The integrity of work and leisure we are proposing here has moral boundaries of which tobacco products and in the particular way these products are marketed cannot fit.

CONCLUSION:

It would be a mistake to interpret this essay as demeaning the economic dimension of work. Our actions always have “mixed motives,” and most of us work for money, and there is nothing wrong with this. John Paul wrote, “It is not wrong to want to live better.”⁹³ Actually, most workers in the world need to live better. We have not enough jobs and too many low paying ones. As Josef Pieper explains, authentic leisure is predicated on an economic system that provides just wages and access to property.⁹⁴ There are also people who work in jobs that are so physically and mentally exhausting that when they finally do get to leisure, the only thought is to collapse.⁹⁵ So there is a sense that we can slightly reverse our thesis and say that without good work, leisure is difficult to attain. Certain economic and work structures make it difficult for people to experience authentic leisure.

Yet, throughout this article I have emphasized the point that work as a job stems also from an internal poverty of the soul. The problem with understanding one’s work *merely* as a job is that its reality is so small, that we refuse to receive and accept the greatness that God has for us in our work. Augustine explains in the *Confessions*, “[t]he house of my soul is too small for you to come to it. May it be enlarged by you.”⁹⁶ We too often create such small places of work that we cannot encounter anything except our own narrow interests. To overcome this smallness of soul, we need a largeness of leisure.

In a similar way, there is nothing wrong with leisure as amusements. Frank Deford, a sports philosopher of sorts, said that it is good to have a common sport that binds us together, it is fun to cheer for a home team, and it can bring us together for a momentary burst of connection with others, but its bonds of communion are not strong enough to make us grow. However wonderful it is to

⁹² Jim Collins. “Level 5 Leadership.” *Harvard Business Review* January, 2001: 66-78. While Collins work is helpful, his idea of humility does not neatly map upon what I have described as leisure. Among his great leaders is Joseph F. Cullman III, CEO of Philip Morris, producer of a cancer causing addictive product largely marketed to the young and now developing world countries. The integrity of work and leisure we are proposing here has moral boundaries of which tobacco products and in the particular way these products are marketed cannot fit.

⁹³ John Paul II. *Centesimus Annus*, 36.

⁹⁴ See Pieper, *Leisure the Basis of Culture*, chapter 4.

⁹⁵ I am grateful to Fr. Michael Keating for this insight.

⁹⁶ Augustine. *Confessions*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992. 6

watch a game of football, soccer, or baseball, it does not have the capacity by itself to provide us rest.⁹⁷ The more we have of amusements by themselves, the more restless, sluggish and dis-ease we become.

The integrity we are seeking is a tall order. Work as a job and leisure as amusements do not have the resources to move us toward such integrity. They leave us divided, exhausted and small. Even when we move toward work as vocation and leisure as contemplation, we have to realize that integrity is a life long project and all of us should be hesitant to claim such integrity too quickly or superficially or smugly. As I mentioned in the introduction of this essay, our unity is found in our end not our beginning, This integrated view of work and leisure that John Paul presents us with is the mature Christian, a maturity that is ultimately found only in the kingdom, but which in this world we are not there yet. Overcoming our own divisions and hypocrisies, this constant gap between what we are and who we were created to be, never leaves us. The principal danger of our division and our hypocrisy is failing to address it openly and trying to hide it.

And yet, we need to be cautious of being too distant about where integrity takes place. It is not simply in the occasional heroic acts of our lives, but in the ordinary and mundane affairs that integrity begins to take root. When I was in college, during the summers I would work for my dad in his remodeling business. One house we had to remodel had a major fire in it, and we had to clear it out. The work was filthy and we were covered with silt and cinder less than hour into the job. When my father stopped by to check on our progress, we started complaining to him about the dirt we were enduring, and he said in his thick Irish accent, “Ah boys, but that’s honest dirt. That’s not bad dirt you have, but it’s good dirt.”

Our lives in the ordinary day-to-day existence is full of muck. It doesn’t necessarily feel as though we are experiencing great moments of integrity, but in fact depending on this relationship between work and leisure, great connections can be made. This is seen most clearly in the concreteness of St. Benedict’s Rule. The Rule is not only about moral and spiritual principles, but also about these principles and insights in the concrete ordinary activities of the monks. It is about the bursar (Chapter 31), the kitchen servers (Chapter 35), the porter at the gate (Chapter 66) and how these ordinary, and at first glance, unspectacular encounters confront us with God’s presence.⁹⁸

As a continuation of Benedict’s Rule, John Paul’s writings provide us a profound vision of what this integrity looks like, an integrity of work as a vocation and leisure as contemplation. But even more profoundly, it was John Paul’s life that witnessed such integrity, a profound sense of his own work and a deep spiritual life of receptivity. His ability to teach this vision was not only found in his encyclical and talks, but also it was communicated in his own witness of a man of great work and deep prayer. May we ourselves be such witnesses to the people with whom we live and work.

⁹⁷ Frank Deford. Morning Edition (Sept. 7, 2005)
<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=4835872&ft=1&f=1055>.

⁹⁸ Ester de Waal. Introduction to *The Rule of St. Benedict’s Rule*. Gracewing, UK, 1990. xix.