

Freedom and Truth in “Veritatis Splendor” (VS)*

Preliminary Approach to the Problem

The Error of Freedom and the Crisis of Truth

The question of freedom in the light of the VS encyclical can be summarized in three points: the nature of freedom, the relation of freedom to truth, evaluation of erroneous hypotheses about freedom and its relation to truth.

One can also reduce this whole issue to one question, namely to the question about the nature of freedom, as the relation of freedom to truth belongs to the field of personal freedom. Such an approach would be possible were it not for the fact that it is the crisis in the very approach to truth as a source of particular difficulties. In connection with this fact, the problem raised in the Encyclical, which is the subject of this dissertation, has the following form: firstly, it is a complex – in its structure – fact of the absolutization of freedom, which is in a special way associated with the crisis concerning the issue of truth; secondly – we are dealing with a hypothesis, which assumes the breakdown of the unity of human nature, opposing – in accordance with the principle of antinomy – freedom and nature; thirdly, we are dealing with a weakening of the relationship between freedom and normative truth, which is considered the measure (standard) of action. This applies mainly to the truth contained in God’s law. The problem of freedom, considered in these three aspects, however, has a common denominator: it is a falsification of freedom resulting from the rejection of the truth. This rejection of truth operates on three levels: epistemological, so it is not important whether freedom is true or not, and what is its essence at all, and it is not sure if there is anything inside it that could be called the essence: maybe we are dealing with pure “existence,” empty and nonsensical. Truth is also rejected on the metaphysical or ontological level: freedom in such

* STV 32(1994)1.

a case has no connection with being, with what we call a substance or nature, and therefore with something that would be understood as a subject of freedom. There is then no possibility of determining freedom by relation to a person or human nature; such a freedom would exist “in itself” and not in the nature of being, while “existence” would only take place in the imagination, because it would be deprived of its connection with being. Finally, the truth is rejected on the ethical level, and thus at the place of origin of the personal act. In this way, it ceases to be light and a normative principle for the will that makes the decision. In this assumption, the decision *must be* understood as a phenomenon that explains and justifies itself. Acting in the name of such liberty, someone would have the right to say (travestying Pilate’s statement) “*what I have done – I have done.*” Such a philosophy of action (and morality) revealed in Pilate’s attitude is closely related to a sceptical, perhaps even cynical approach to the truth (to the Truth) expressed in a question that is not expected to be answered because one does not believe in its existence: “what is truth?”

Premises for Solving the Problem

The author of the VS encyclical refers to both revealed and natural truth. It is always an objective truth which comes from God and through the gift of Him is granted to humans. Truth is already given within the created being, and moreover it is manifested through the Word and His Incarnation, which is directed towards man, to enable him to fully participate in the Truth, that is in Christ. With all the inevitable metaphysical way of thinking about truth, the basic subject of the encyclical is Personal Truth, Jesus Christ, which is the answer to the question of man.

Creation began to exist at the command of the omnipotent Word, “through which everything has become created” and which “over everything exercises power by the word of its power,” that is why the inner truth of being is simultaneously a command, a law, a norm. In the very voice of truth, there is the imperative of “become!,” “Be yourself!” “become *what you are!*” is included. The supernatural revelation also implies the law that is the truth of the new Creation, participation in the life and love of Jesus Christ. In every situation, truth is understood as the power to control action through the inner light that allows one to distinguish good from evil. Apart from this difference (between good and evil), the action would develop beyond the anthropological truth, beyond morality, beyond any rational sense. John Paul II systematically refers to the teachings of the Second Vatican Council, which especially in GS 17 presented a fundamental lecture on freedom. In this paragraph, it was stated firstly – the

link between the nature of freedom and the truth of creation. Freedom is the *eximium signum* of God's image. This *eximium* is more than "special;" it means "unique, unusual." Someone rightly said that "freedom does not come from the earth."¹ In this conciliar text, the anthropological and ethical nature of freedom was also emphasized, further – which is very important – transcendent orientation of the created personal freedom towards God. The logic of freedom reveals the inner truth that man's destiny is being in God, being one with Him, in communion with Him. This is implied by the following expression: *ordinatio ad Deum*. This is the inner truth of freedom, given as a goal, a calling and a norm. John Paul II will develop and emphasize this aspect of freedom. The Council also showed the duty of systematic work on freedom. The conciliar text *explicitely* states that it formulates the science of true freedom. At the same time, everything that was said about the essence of freedom points to its relation to the truth seen in the metaphysical, personalistic, moral and ascetic-spiritual aspects. The above-mentioned paragraph of GS 17 does not, of course, ignore the wrong tendency to interpret freedom in the sense of unhampered freedom, not respecting the distinction between good and evil. The Pastoral Constitution speaks about false autonomy in number 41, and the proper autonomy of temporal things is specified in number 36. The problem of autonomy of temporal things also applies to freedom because it concerns the value and meaning of human action, which in its entirety, including the sphere of the world (in the temporal sphere), should be subordinated to the Law of God, whose synthesis is the commandment of love (GS 38).

This activity is regulated not only by the general rule of love but also by specific orders that can be understood as categorial (cf. GS 39). We are touching this issue here because of the context of the problem discussed. At the foundations of VS is the teaching of the Second Vatican Council on the subject of the integral vocation of man, consistently developed in all the most important documents of the last Popes, especially John Paul II.

Absolutization of Freedom. A Deeper Approach

The movement towards freedom characterizes all human history; it is a reaction to the experience of a lack of freedom in one form or another, but mainly in the socio-political sphere. It is interesting for our question how the intellectual and

¹ R. Tremblay, *La liberte selon saint Irenee de Lyon*, in: *In libertatem vocati estis. Miscellanea Bernhard Hiaring* (Studia Moralia XV), Rome 1977, 444.

moral movement developed towards intra-personal autonomy. This concerns mainly the last centuries of our civilization. The development of this idea is concisely described by F. Bockle².

The analysis of this claim process – or the pursuit of moral autonomy – was begun by Bockle referring to Kant, who by emphasizing the role of the subject emphasized the importance of freedom. Kant defined autonomy as the right to self-determination of a human being as a rational subject. This definition has established firmly its position in post-Kantian philosophy, which negatively addresses everything that has the characteristics of “heteronomy.” Since autonomy is understood as “binding oneself – the *subject* – by means of the *right to reasonable* self-determination,” the subject is undoubtedly bound by himself, but at the same time he is consistently closed in himself. Kantism means a big breakthrough in philosophy, a transition from the autonomy of nature to the autonomy of the subject. Transcendental freedom in the Kantian sense is associated only with the subjective order of knowledge. The philosophy of Fichte is also the philosophy of the subject who is able to know himself. Yes, this self-knowledge of the subject is the basis for the interpretation of being: the world must be understood as the product of the absolute “I.” Reason is pure, absolute action, this reason establishes laws for the world. This philosophy accepts the existence of the basic, collective conscience of humanity. In this assumption, world history tends to fulfil moral obligation at the level of the great universal “I” in which individual individuals participate. The next stage is Hegelianism. Hegel attempts to reconcile the ideas of Fichte with the specific shape of history and social life. He analyses the subject’s relation to the object and consciousness to reality. The consciousness in the observed object sees only itself, this is its own reflection. The subject and object are interrelated and mutually co-define each other. In the context of dialectics, the Spirit enters the process of thinking with human individuals. Hegel’s position is critical with regard to the concept of absolute idea in the theories of Kant and Fichte. According to Hegel, it is not the subject which is absolute, but the idea itself. Hegel rejects the dualism of what is legal and what is moral. He completely subjects all morality to the (legal) order that is realized in the state. Despite this, he tries to save the autonomy of the

² F. Bockle, *Der neuzeitliche Autonomieanspruch. Ein Beitrag zur Begriffsklarung*, in: *In libertatem...*, op. cit., 57-77. More extensive presentation of the historical and philosophical background of the discussed issue can be found in the work of A. Szostek, *Natura – rozum – wolność*, Rome 1990. See also an article by the same author: *Człowiek jako autokreator. Antropologiczne podstawy odrzucenia encykliki “Humanae Vitae,”* in: *Dar ludzkiego życia – Humanae vitae donum*, Lublin 1991, 111-127.

subject, basing it on "divine freedom that permeates the world." Hegel considers the individual in the context of history, which he in turn understands as "freedom which *is coming to itself*": human history is the history of this freedom. Marks broke with the idea of the "spirit of the world" and entrusted to man the task of freeing his own consciousness. From now on, man is in some sense the subject of history in which man's self-liberation is to take place; unfortunately, according to the dialectical principle, present in this philosophy, man is also an object – understood in a total sense – of the social process. Autonomy shifts from a subject understood individually to a subject that is considered collectively and historically, or rather to the historical and social process itself, which happens according to the principle of internal necessity, which also absorbs the energy of human activity: man has to freely submit to objective necessity of social process. Autonomy again concerns some over-personal and non-personal entity. An interesting breakthrough in ethics is the philosophy of values, more precisely (according to Buckle) the theory of the autonomy of values. Scheler and Hartmann opposed formalism in ethics and modified the concept of autonomy: they opposed the ethics of an autonomous subject and the autonomy of ethics, that is the concept of a priori values. Values have their own independent, material (objective) "a priori." The obligation arises with the immediate evidence of the view of values. This type of obligation claim of value is autonomous. The autonomy of a person – in this ethical theory – is the result of an openness to value. The philosophy of values was undoubtedly a step towards personalist ethics. Much attention is paid by Buckle to a new, quite peculiar example of autonomy, which has been placed in the social "praxis." The concept of this autonomy has been expressed by a rather complex definition: "autonomy is basically located in the socially mediating praxis of entities acting in a communicative way."³ In this theory, the practice itself is understood as an expression of normative truth: here lies its autonomy. Bockle is aware of the methodological difficulties of validating this *Sprachpraxis* in terms of its normative force. The essence of this validation would lie in the mutual acceptance of operating entities in recognition of mutual claims. The mere fact of the universal acceptance of a particular way of acting obtains the status of a norm (*pragmatische Universalien qua Normen*). So the very fact of a specific action no longer requires a norm outside of itself. In this hypothesis, which places the norm in the praxis itself, it is assumed that not only everyone behaves in the same way but that they are also aware of the universal acceptance of this model of behaviour. This allows the proponents

³ Art. cit., 71

of this hypothesis to reflect on the intersubjective validity of norms. “Recognition of the basic norm is constitutive for the comprehensible nature of communication and thus for every self-understanding in general,” writes Bockle, and believes that in this model of thinking, the obligation is explained in some way. Turning his attention to theology, Bockle focuses on the subject of “theonomical autonomy,” a concept that he himself is a supporter. The concept of this “theonomical autonomy” is based on the assumption that man is a created being and therefore – in the final perspective – dependent on God. This dependence finds expression in the attitude of faith and conversion to which the Gospel calls. This dependence on God has ‘only’ a transcendental character and therefore does not cover the entire sphere of spiritual and moral life. The activity which man develops in the sphere of categorical values is autonomous and therefore moral decisions made in this field “are *evaluated* according to their own *structure* of values *within the framework of normative ethics*.”⁴

It is hard to resist the impression that this vision of ethics is based on some splitting of a human being: one half of a human being serves God, while the other half serves man himself. Faith and ethics do not intertwine internally. It is a vision alien to Catholic thought and the VS encyclical refers to it critically.

Presented above briefly the process of striving for autonomy brings about a reflection of a more general nature. Above all, in this process, one can see human thinking distances itself from the objective truth. Man ceases to focus his attention on what is, which exists independently of the mind, and turns to the creations of his own mind. This is accompanied – as an inevitable consequence – (paradoxically) by the process of a conscious loss of freedom, finding its finale in a state when a person realizes the necessity of being non-free. A man who, on the basis of Kant’s philosophy, is still granted autonomy, is gradually and definitively deprived of it, and the latter is then granted to various total units, understood as an idea or as an objective historical and social process.

As a tragedy one can consider the fact that such philosophical theories were not merely of a purely theoretical nature but that they had also attempted to implement their assumptions in the ordinary life of man also through terror and violence. The man who was persuaded to believe that he is free was unexpectedly trapped and enslaved by a Moloch who took control of everything that was supposed to be a sign of human autonomy. A man who could not believe in the possibility of knowing the essence of things and thus understand the difference between him and the world of things, was soon included in this world of things and treated as a “thing of history” and as an element of nature.

⁴ B. Haring, *Liberie fedeli in Christo. Teologia morale per preti e laici*, vol. 1, Roma 1979.

Surely the sources of this process go further. Certainly Descartes and perhaps Ockham is responsible for initiating the philosophy of the human subject under the guise of stressing the role of the conscious subject. However, the philosophies of the materialist and positivist type have also contributed to the development of this phenomenon which systematically cut off the human mind from the realm of objective truth. These philosophers tried to propose to man a "knowledge" through which he would be able to become independent from faith in God and follow a purely rational recognition of the rules governing life and the world. The abandonment of metaphysics and the loss of the ability to think at the level of wisdom made it impossible for a man who had only scientific knowledge to understand his own place among the beings of this world. The border between man and the world has blurred, the sense of the relationship between man and God was lost, as well as the sense of the created nature of human existence. There is some mysterious but deep and real bond between two phenomena that cannot be considered completely parallel and independent of each other: it is a phenomenon of gradual loss of trust in the Truth which has its origin in God and is received in accordance with the principles of faith – and the second phenomenon – the loss of the ability to recognize the objective truth and sense of reality. The second phenomenon is the consequence of the first. Longing for freedom cannot be suppressed. However, when freedom cuts away from the root of the truth, it feels somehow forced to feed itself with a lie. The aspiration to autonomy as a perfect form of freedom freeing us from the depths of the human soul was doomed to false realizations and implementations, to irrational absolutization and identification of this absolute was either with some "spirit of the world," or with the sum of historical and social processes, with the very subjective consciousness or finally with a pragmatic form of the social ethos in the aspect regarded in the aspect of a collective agreement of consciences.

Nothing is here itself and nothing is in its proper place: because either God is the world or the world is God, or man is a mixture of divine and cosmic elements, or he is completely lost in an impersonal existential background. In this confusion of everything, freedom simply dies or at least cannot be identified as an inner and dynamic property of a person.

Regardless of the complex *itinerary* of searching for a lost paradise of freedom, the pernicious process of man's effective failure to meet real freedom takes place within the human being. This is in accordance with the logic and dynamics of sin, which has been grafted in the human heart by the escape movement, the "Adam impulse" fleeing from God, sheltered in the shadow of created reality. This escape movement is a movement towards nothingness, although this path is accompanied by various myths and pseudo-absolutes, ready to convince

man that he is going in the right direction. There is a myth of unrestricted freedom, which in the absence of self-criticism can be an argument for someone to convince him that he is the only master of his own. Meanwhile, under the disguise of this myth, all the more destructive enslavement and subjugation of a man through the elements of the world, which already fully control human action, is taking place. Nor is there any doubt that the process of moving away from God is, at the same time, unavoidably the process of losing one's personality.

The created "I" separated from the reference to the Absolute "You" loses the necessary point of its support in the transcendent reality, which adequately explains it. As a result, the person is reduced to the world. A break with the truth leads to a break with transcendence, and vice versa.

In reference to VS 41, it must be stated that there is a very profound difference between obedience to the truth inscribed in created reality and the situation when man – apart from the truth – surrenders to created things. In the latter situation, one of the parties is definitely a master: but it is certainly not a human being who performs this function.

Only consent to the loss of one's moral personality can lead one to accepting the concept of a collective-communicative conscience. This is an example of conscious consent to sociological moral determinism. The human conscience is reduced to the act of adoration for the magic of statistical numbers (for statistical multiplicity), which grows to the rank of an absolute. It is some kind of "socialization" of consciences in the sense of a collective alienation of consciences in the spirit of Hegel and Marks. The statistic "praxis" replaces the truth, the moral norm and, finally, God. In this hypothesis people are only responsible for themselves: the social consensus solves all moral problems. It is in the name of freedom elevated to the highest rank that Bernhard Huring adopts in his textbook *Liberie fedeli in Christo* the concept of "mutual connection of consciences." This idea of mutual co-relation fulfils the role of the highest authority, even distancing itself towards the Church's Magisterium. "Apart from God, conscience is the highest authority for everyone" (p. 339), hence there is no need to refer to the Church's teaching, which presents only dry formulas and sclerotic laws (*ibidem*). Conscience, on the other hand, "achieves its fullness in reciprocity with the consciences of others." This community of consciences has only a horizontal dimension. Huring is inclined to recognize the authority of prophets, saints and people with mature consciences and with appropriate competence. However, he does not give us a recipe on how to check this, since in this community one cannot rely on objective criteria. It may appear that "reciprocity of consciences" will connect – as in the time of the prophet Elijah – four hundred false prophets, and the prophet of the True God will be left alone.

What if these false prophets are not only perfectly organized but still armed with modern propaganda? According to Huring's philosophy, the individual should submit to the majority of "mature consciences." What should one do when this entity is the Pope? Huring's concepts are largely dependent on existentialist philosophy. It is in the spirit of this philosophy that he claims that the essence of the moral answer that we owe to God is freedom and creativity. This, however, reduces the essence of the response to the elements of psychological experience.

Huring considers the Christian religion only in terms of freedom. These assumptions contain a dilemma that cannot be overcome because if man freely and creatively decided to refuse to answer God, how should one assess the essence of this act, if it is freedom that determines its value? The absolutization of freedom must lead to questioning the very foundations of ethics. Freedom is not a value in itself. It can be considered a value, if there exists a higher value than it, which determines its truthfulness⁵. If Huring accepts, following Tillich, that man is free so radically that he is even free with regard to his own freedom, he is free even from his own freedom, until he is free from his humanity, then it is impossible to demonstrate at what moment, by acting in a way free, he commits sin. However, the criteria of good and evil do not follow from freedom alone. At the same time, the author claims that personal sin exists only because there is freedom. Does that not mean that freedom is the source of sin, and not man? But how can freedom be a source of evil when, according to Huring, it is the highest form of good?

Radical monotheism and the radical character of the answer in the spirit of Barth and Tillich finally transforms into radical liberalism that implements a cult of personality ideology. Obedience to God is so arbitrary that it is completely non-binding. The false antinomy between freedom and duty leads to the obligation losing its moral value and deforms becoming a pretentious law of partnership with God, that is, the dialogue of two independent beings⁶.

Explanation of the Essence of Freedom and Its Relation to the Truth

Freedom as a Characteristic of the Human Being.

It is a relatively new trend in theology that the term "liberty" (*libertas*) is used instead of the term will *volunte*. This does not mean, at the very least, the intention of resigning from treating the will as a reality, although not substantial, but as

⁵ J. Bajda, *Powołanie chrześcijańskie jako zasada teologii moralnej*, Warsaw 1984, 110f.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 111.

an essential and intrinsic property of this substance, who we call a person. The source of this property lies in the spiritual side of human existence, and because of this spiritual fundament, the will is internally penetrating the mind as cognitive power, simply because the spirit is intrinsically undivided. Will moves the mind, and the mind illumines the will, and in this way they create a unity that cannot be broken both at the source of the act and in its internal structure.

Will is responsible for the activity of a person as a person, it is the basis of its acts. However, the will as dynamism is located deeper, it lies in what can be called the root of the ontic identity of being. One should refer to the very act of existence, thanks to which being not only is, but it is also itself, in a way that is proportional to its very nature. One can talk here about the law of the identity of being with itself. Based on this law, being with all its essence expresses the “will” of being itself, the will of duration, the will to confirm itself, which at the level of personal existence manifests itself as a kind of moral imperative experienced in the depths of its consciousness. Being, therefore, wants to be in harmony with itself, it opposes its own annihilation.

This inner regularity of being is more understandable when seen in the light of the truth of creation. For the created being does not exist by virtue of itself, it exists as a donated one, it exists in a way “on command,” as a result of obedience to the will of the Creator. The being created is the incarnate form of obedience, and therefore the moment of dependence: dependence on the Truth of Creation is built on the very structure of the will (of freedom!).

It can be, therefore, said that being exists because it is a definite word of metaphysical truth. In relation to man, it is the truth of being a created person, created thanks to intelligent freedom. This truth would not be fully understood if Revelation failed to add a very important thing: that the created being exists not only due to the principle of conformity with its metaphysical truth, but also because it is God’s Image, and therefore conforming to its Original and Source (Prototype).

2. The Truth of Freedom: the Vocation to Love

Therefore, man cannot only be considered a derivative of truth (because he comes from God), but he is also a being directed – with himself – to the Cause and the Ultimate Truth of his existence, which is his adequate goal. Freedom created was called the “unique and unusual” sign of this Image, which exists *a Deo* and *ad Deum*.

The vocation to God considered as Absolute Love can be understood from such a way of existence. All this tells us why apart from this relation to God a created person cannot be himself, and even – strictly speaking – cannot just exist.

Freedom as a trait of personal being is regarded this way by the Second Vatican Council. This vision will be shared by the author of the Encyclical *Veritatis Splendor*, especially emphasizing this dimension of vocation. Thinking about man in the light of the mystery of creation and vocation, how can one not acknowledge the fact that the basic, internal movement of created freedom is directed towards God? How can one not recognize, following the Second Vatican Council, that the essence of freedom is the internal *ordinatio ad Deum* (GS 17)? How strongly it harmonizes with the statement formulated in GS 24, proclaiming that "man is the *only creature on earth who was wanted by God, because of man himself*"! Freedom exists only because man was created as a subject of love and therefore he is in a perfect way himself when he loves in a perfect and free way the Absolute Love. This philosophy of freedom develops the commented text of GS. Freedom exists for Love to have its source in man: to be a source, not just an empty vessel filled from the outside, this is the moment thanks to which the created Image comes closest to the Original, not only in the sense of similarity, but above all in the sense of a meeting. Man becomes a source of love when God is present in him as the Source of Love, and man lives completely hidden in God. The similarity of man to God consists not only in the fact that man also can love, but rather that in the fact that love that comes from man Love, which has its source in God is present.

Such a nature of freedom determines man's way of life, the direction of his calling. This is expressed in the biblical *ut quaerat Deum* to seek God. This is what the conciliar text expresses. Man searches not because he lost God, because this circumstance concerns only the history of sin, but because this is the essence of will. Everything that takes the form of decision, choice, desire, tends toward union with God. Under this condition, the action of a person is carried out in the face of God. Searching for God is not a longing caused by separation, it is not a wandering in the darkness under the influence of the vague premonition of the presence of Supreme Being, but still unknown (as in Steinbeck's or Frankel's writings). It is confirmed, beyond any doubt, by the following definition of the will: *ei inhaerendo*. This means that we are already in a certain way united with God, we are already rooted in Him like an arrow strongly directed to the goal, we "hold on" to Him with all the power of will: of course, it is Him, in fact, who maintains us close to Him with his omnipotence and love.

Even when we are searching, we are already – to some extent – with God.

This search and abiding continuous existing in God, according to the Council, happens *sponte et libere*, and thus by an authentic choice, as a work of personal will, though supported by grace. Will speaks in this act in a basic way that finds its own natural and logical continuation in a series of decisions that are – and should be – a confirmation of this fundamental attitude. We do not go deeper into this issue because it is discussed separately. The conciliar text, used by John Paul II at the key point of the Encyclical, does not forget about the personalistic structure of the will, about conscious and free action, which consists in the fact that man acts as moved from within and not triggered by external factors. There is only one possibility of explaining this character of human action, which does not find its equivalent in the whole visible world: the only power able to move the will from within is the truth present in the mind which by the power of its spirituality (immateriality) is present within the will and which shapes its essence. Knowing, introducing the truth into the mind shapes the essence of every deed that could not be human or free if it were not done in the light of the truth about good and in the light of the truth of the act in which the person's pursuit of the good through the choice is realized. Only the known good can be chosen, and if it is not chosen, it is not the object of the act and it does not improve the person. There is no need to remind the reader that everything on this subject was investigated masterfully and presented in Karol Wojtyła's book *Osoba i czyn*⁷.

It is worth returning to this book while studying the teaching of the VS encyclical. This is not a trivial topic: after all, in man's action the human being is synthesized in a way that emphasizes ontical and dynamic unity. And in man, as a subject of moral action, in a certain way, the whole created world

⁷ Karol Wojtyła in the book *Osoba i czyn*, Kraków 1969 on p. 143, analysing the act of choice, writes, "what is essential is a significant reference of the will to the truth that penetrates the intentionality of desire and creates as if one internal principle (...). To choose is to make the decisions with regard to objects presented to the will in the intentional order in accordance with the principle of truth." And further: "Understanding the nature of choice consists in bringing the dynamism – which is appropriate to will – to truth as a principle of desire. This principle lies within the very will and determines the essence of choosing." On p. 144 he writes: "This reference to truth is not something external: it, in all its originality proper to choice (...), comes from the will and belongs to its proper dynamics. Although 'wanting' is not the same as 'getting to know' but 'wanting' is assigned to the truth. The dynamics of want is open to knowledge and is consistent with it: here is the source of the entire originality of choice. Thanks to this, the will responds to the motives, and is not subject to their determination." While on p. 145 he states that: "The relation to the truth constitutes the rooting of an intentional act in a person." In fact, the whole book should be quoted as a philosophical commentary on *Veritatis Splendor*.

is synthesized the truth of which will not be uttered completely, if a man in action, in shaping his own history, betrays the truth of his humanity. The world will not be compatible with itself, it will lose its purpose if man fails to realize his destiny revealed in the truth of Creation. A subject like this one cannot be exhausted in one paper. It is worth at least briefly signalling some thoughts that would merit further reflection.

The transcendent source of the bond that exists between freedom and truth is the unbreakable bond between the Wisdom and the Will (Providence) of God Himself, and therefore the supreme unity in the light of which and according to which man has been created. Man was conceived by God as a person, and thus as the highest unity in the created world, more precisely: in the visible world (VS 99). The author of the VS encyclical exceptionally clearly and strongly emphasizes the idea that the essence of freedom is obedience to the Law of God, that is, the truth that is contained in it, and which is given to man as the internal equipment of his being. Our civilization must have gone quite far from the truth, since we have to repeat this elementary principle so many times that we finally break the barriers of prejudice, emotional resistance and traumatic reactions caused by long-lasting propaganda that glorifies freedom "as such," empty freedom, freedom "oriented towards nothing."

Much could be said about the devastation that took place in our ethos of freedom under the pressure of the philosophy of sin. Freedom shares the fate of man: it is wounded, enslaved, it is dead. It is also redeemed, re-donated, recovered in Christ. Much has been said about this in the encyclical. John Paul II would not be himself if he did not say that Christ is our freedom and that he is the highest figure of the personal synthesis of freedom just when he has sacrificed himself totally for us in the drama of His sacrifice of the Cross. When is the Son free, if not in the hands of his Father? That is why Christ is the Truth that sets us free, he is the Source and the Fullness of freedom: he is also in the Church and through the Church. But just as it was with Christ, the church must also be a sign that will be opposed.