

Philosophy, Education, and Integral Human Development

To commence, I wish to express my gratitude for facilitation of this event, and of my participation in it. My formation is in semiotics, phenomenology, and metaphysics, and a concern for nihilism guides all my work. My doctoral work is in philosophical theology, with a focus on Aquinas' concept of God qua be-ing (*esse*) and Heidegger's critique of onto-theo-logy. With that said, although my presentation is somewhat *about* the topic of my thesis, it is not *on* but rather *around* it. Here and now, I shall concentrate on Paul VI's encyclical *Populorum progressio*, circulated in 1967, with my intention being to isolate and emphasise critically important aspects of its central concept of *integral human development* in relation to the Faith. My presentation consists of three parts: the first coordinates concerns of integral human development; the second addresses two pertinent humanistic enterprises needed for its instantiation; and, the third exemplifies damage these enterprises may cause and advises a measure of mitigation therefor.

Part 1: Coordination of concerns of integral human development

In accordance with the dicastery for its promotion, integral human development is most summarily defined as '[t]he [...] well rounded [...] development of each man and of the whole man'.¹ Of concern, therefore, is the 'complete development' of 'man', by which is meant not simply 'each [...] man' in isolation, but 'each human group', and ultimately 'human society as a whole'.² Of course, such 'concern' is proper 'to the Church'; but '[t]he present state of affairs', as the encyclical states, is especially 'urgent'.³ Some such affairs are undeniably material, given the miseries of famine, indigence, and ill-health.⁴ And to the degree that such miseries are due to unjustifiable 'inequalities', each instance ought to be 'overcome'.⁵ But man is not merely material; although he could be discussed in other terms, in those of Thomistic metaphysics, he is a composite being (an *ens*), to be sure constituted of matter, but also the form of the essence individuated thereby, and the *esse* whereby each other constituent part, and thus also the whole, at all *is*.⁶ Man, therefore, is *substantial*, and, furthermore, *accidentally modifiable*.⁷ To be precise, however, each man consists of *two* substances.⁸

¹ Paul VI, *Populorum progressio* (1967), §14.

² *Ibid.*, §§5, 14, 17. In brief, of concern is 'humanity as a whole', by which is meant 'all mankind' (*ibid.*, §§5, 14). Here, 'humanity' is intended to indicate essence, since it is said that 'each man can grow in humanity', as if to 'enhance his personal worth, and perfect himself' (*ibid.*, §15). Likewise is it said that '[m]an is truly human only if he is the master of his own actions and the judge of their worth, only if he is the architect of his own progress' (*ibid.*, §34). However, this sense of 'humanity' only has sense it is presupposes human essence. Thus, it is also said that man 'must act according to his God-given nature, freely accepting its potentials and its claims upon him' (*ibid.*).

³ *Ibid.*, §§1, 32, 44, 55, 80; cf. *ibid.*, §§12, 32.

⁴ *Ibid.*, §§1, 6.

⁵ *Ibid.*, §§9, 32. One thinks of the exemplary comparison of 'hungry nations' and those 'blessed with abundance' (*ibid.*, §3).

⁶ Thomas Aquinas, *On Being and Essence*, trans. Armand Maurer, 2nd ed., Mediaeval Sources in Translation (Toronto, Canada: Pontifical Institute for Mediaeval Studies, 1968), c. 2, §§1–5, 12; *ibid.*, c. 4, §4.

⁷ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, trans. Fathers of the Dominican Province (Notre Dame: Christian Classics, 1981), Ia, q. 3, a. 3, co.

⁸ *Ibid.*, Ia, q. 75, prolog.

His *ostensible* substance is his ‘body’: the compound of matter, the individuated form of the essence, and *esse*. This body subsists like that of any other animal, that is, as corruptible, which means naturally prone to loss of its ‘*esse*’. Thus, it is naturally *un-aeviternal*.⁹ Hence, man does well to remember that he is dust: from the moment of his conception, he progressively matures over the course of his life — with the vestment and divestment of diverse material accidents, as those contingent upon national, familial, and personal fortune or misfortune — until his eventual bodily death. Also as in every animal, in man the ‘soul [...] is the form of the body’, that is, the very form which is by matter individuated from essence in virtue of *esse*, so as to bestow upon the body various faculties.¹⁰ The irrational animal (the brute) is distinguished by its sensitive soul, so named for its distinctive power of sense, which facilitates sensation.¹¹ But man (the rational animal) has an intellectual soul, named for its power of intellect, facilitative of intellection.¹² Critically, however, the brute’s soul is not known to subsist, for it has ‘no per se operations’ independent of ‘change in the body’ (bodily sensation, it is noted, occurs only with bodily change), while ‘the human soul’ by contrast ‘has an operation per se apart from the body’ (because intellection occurs irrespective of bodily change), which indicates its subsistence.¹³ In other words, the soul of the brute is naturally *un-aeviternal*, since it naturally corrupts with its body, as a flame with its candle, whereas ‘the human soul’ is naturally *aeviternal*, for it is naturally incorruptible despite its body.¹⁴ In fact, like the purely intellectual angel, man’s intellectual soul subsists as an *occult* substance.¹⁵ But, since the intellectual soul is embodied while the angel is unembodied, each subsists very differently. The angel enjoys *supra*-spatiotemporal conditions, so its intellection is naturally always already intuitively perfect: naturally, its knowledge is neither gained nor lost.¹⁶ However, the intellectual soul enjoys conditions *intra*-spatiotemporal, such as succession, which implies its accidental change: bound as it is to the body as its form, it experiences sensation sequentially, reasons discursively, and thus gains and loses knowledge over time.¹⁷

In summary, therefore, man’s composition is bi-substantial.¹⁸ One substance is corporeal and *sub*-ordinate; the other, incorporeal and *super*-ordinate. Naturally, his soul determines his body, such that, upon his death, when his body and soul are torn asunder (in what might be called ‘human hylomorphic *dis*-integration’), his naturally *aeviternal* soul endures the decay of his naturally *un-aeviternal* body (which suffers ‘human material *dis*-integration’). But, also naturally, man’s soul dominates his body, for it is through his soul, by its volitional power, that he does or does not submit himself to reason, so as to rightly or wrongly order his fortunes. And it is for this reason that, as a rule, every man must be engaged intellectually: *one cannot reasonably hope to*

⁹ Ibid., Ia, q. 75, a. 6, co.

¹⁰ Ibid., Ia, q. 76, a. 1, co.

¹¹ Ibid., Ia, q. 76, a. 3, co; *ibid.*, Ia, q. 79, a. 1, ad. 1.

¹² Ibid., Ia, q. 76, a. 1, co; *ibid.*, Ia, q. 79, a. 1, co.

¹³ Ibid., Ia, q. 75, a. 2, co; *ibid.*, Ia, q. 75, a. 3, co.

¹⁴ Ibid., Ia, q. 75, a. 6, co. For definition of ‘aeviternity’, cf. *ibid.*, Ia, q. 10, a. 5, co.

¹⁵ Ibid., Ia, q. 76, a. 1, co; *ibid.*, Ia, q. 75, a. 2, co; *ibid.*, Ia, q. 79, a. 1, ad. 3.

¹⁶ Ibid., Ia, q. 50, a. 1, co; *ibid.*, Ia, q. 58, a. 3, co; *ibid.*, Ia, q. 79, a. 2, co.

¹⁷ Ibid., Ia, q. 55, a. 2, co; *ibid.*, Ia, q. 58, a. 3, co; *ibid.*, Ia, q. 76, a. 5, co.

¹⁸ Ibid., Ia, q. 75, prol.

*sustainably correct an injustice contingent upon the autonomous volition of man's intellectual soul if one fail to avoid the mal-formation of every individual intellect responsible for that injustice.*¹⁹

Man's concerns, therefore, must accord with the perfect integration of his components, and most especially his bi-substantial corporeal and spiritual composition. And, consequently, integral human development, if it indeed concern the whole man, must needs care for this most important of his compositions, as Paul VI did not fail to recognise. Thus does *Populorum progressio* state that 'the problem' is 'spiritual', that there is need for 'growth' in 'spiritual [...] values', and that especially intended is 'man's spiritual [...] development'.²⁰ Here, 'spiritual' means 'intellectual', since man's spirit is his intellectual soul. And *Populorum progressio* rightly accords chief intellectual concern to the Faith. Hence its statement that 'above all [...] is faith', wherethrough one comes to know 'Christ, Who calls all men to share God's life as sons of the living God, the Father of all men'.²¹ *This obviously indicates salvation, in which man's naturally aeviternal soul is supernaturally rescued from the damnation any grave sin otherwise entails, and his naturally un-aeviternal body, supernaturally reanimated and resurrected in defiance of human material dis-integration, such that he enjoy human hylomorphic integration in and through Christ, by the supernatural grace that flows from Him, the living sacrifice, without Whom '[n]o man cometh to the Father'.*²² Only via Christ, therefore, may man not only retain but veritably *perfect* his integral human development, for which reason Christianity is very much a *humanism*, nay, in Paul VI's words, a '[t]rue', 'full-bodied' and yet 'transcendent humanism' that 'points the way toward God', for '[m]an becomes truly man only by passing beyond himself', which 'is the highest goal of human self-fulfillment', 'the fulfillment of the whole man and of every man'.²³ And it is by authority of several ecumenical councils that one knows this *perfection* of integral human development attainable only via the Church — *extra Ecclesiam nulla salus* — for the Church is at once Christ's mystical body and His bride.²⁴

Moreover, only if a man, as a 'rational creature', 'of his own accord', morally orders 'his life to God', his Creator, 'the first truth and the highest good', may he recognise that 'the whole of creation', all mankind as well as the world given man to subdue and dominate, is in every way rightly so 'ordered', and to be loved as perfectly befits this order.²⁵ This is implicit in Christ's answer to the question asked about the greatest commandment in the synoptic gospels.²⁶ Christ

¹⁹ As every credible charitable organisation acknowledges: gift a hungry man a fish and he may sate his hunger for a day; teach a man to fish and he may never hunger again.

²⁰ *Populorum progressio*, §§13, 73, 76.

²¹ *Ibid.*, §21.

²² John 14: 6. Cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. 2nd ed. (Washington: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2000), §§601–602, 616–617.

²³ *Populorum progressio*, §§16, 42. Conversely, '[a] narrow humanism, closed in on itself and not open to the values of the spirit and to God', 'becomes inhuman' (*ibid.*, §42).

²⁴ Cf. the Fourth Lateran Council, the Council of Florence, and the Second Vatican Council (Heinrich Denzinger et al., eds., *Enchiridion symbolorum definitionum et declarationum de rebus fidei et morum*, 43rd ed. (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2012), 802, 1351, 4136). For the Church as Christ's mystical body and bride, cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, §§789–796.

²⁵ *Populorum progressio*, §16. Gen. 1: 28. This is the imperative that God issued to man on the sixth day of creation.

²⁶ Matt. 22: 35–40; Mark 12: 28–31; Luke 10: 25, 27.

issues a twofold imperative — love thy God and love thy neighbour — which epitomises the Decalogue through simplification of the essential order of its theistic and humanistic commandments. Love of God and neighbour are commanded as if two halves of the single greatest commandment, as though both are indispensable, albeit with unalterable prioritisation. This is for at least two reasons. First, love of God has more importance than love of neighbour.²⁷ Second, love of God and love of neighbour share a conditional but not biconditional relationship: the former totally implies the latter, but the latter does not totally imply the former.²⁸ And man’s love of God and neighbour disposes him to recognise a third imperative, to wit, care for the world that God has given mankind. Again, this is for at least two reasons. First, the whole world is God’s creation, which should, as such, be loved.²⁹ Second, every man is a privileged part of it, and variously needs its support, wherefore each should *a fortiori* love it for love of his neighbour as himself.³⁰

These three imperatives, therefore, are not only necessary, but necessarily bound to each other, albeit always ordinately: the last, which is the third, follows from the first two, of which the second follows from the first (in a mirror of the Trinity).³¹ Hence the supreme importance of the first commandment: ‘I am the Lord thy God[. ... Thou shalt not have strange gods before me.’³² Failure to observe this commandment implies idolatry, in which man conceptually apotheosises (because he *dis*-ordinately loves) some part of the world, or even the whole world, which entails his own *dis*-integration, and that of the world given him to love. As *Populorum progressio* warns, ‘[m]an’s personal and collective fulfillment could be jeopardised if the proper scale of values were not maintained’.³³ Thus, the encyclical demands that ‘the spirit of the Gospel’ — the ‘Christian spirit’ — serve as the universal soul for the body of society, even so much as to be governmentally infused ‘into the laws and structures of the civil community’ for ‘the establishment of a supernatural order here on earth’, because only perfectly ordinate love orders man and world to *perfect* integrality.³⁴ And this unambiguous recommendation of what in political philosophy is called ‘integralism’, Paul VI insisted, only reflects the ‘one goal’ of ‘[t]he Church’, which is ‘to carry forward the work of Christ’ by ‘the preaching of the Gospel’.³⁵

Part 2: Pertinent humanistic enterprises for integral human development

Obviously, God, the first cause, delights in the use of secondary causes: hence the intercourse of creatures in the aforementioned natural order. And, with respect to cultivation of man’s pursuit

²⁷ Cf. Matt. 10: 37; Luke 14: 26 (Matt. 7: 12 is no refutation, for it must be understood within the context of what we should want for ourselves and our neighbours, i.e., the will of God, e.g., expressed in the Decalogue, which only thus resolves an otherwise apparent conflict between Matt. 7: 12 and Matt. 22: 40.)

²⁸ Cf. especially John 15: 18–21; but also Matt. 10: 22; 24: 9; Mark 13: 13; Luke 21: 17.

²⁹ Gen. 1: 1.

³⁰ Matt. 22: 39; Mark 12: 31; Luke 10: 27; *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, §357.

³¹ This follows the pattern of God Himself: the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son, and the Son is eternally generated by the Father.

³² Exod. 20: 2–3. Cf. Deut. 5: 6–7.

³³ *Populorum progressio*, §18.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, §§28, 81.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, §§12–13; Thomas Crean and Alan Fimister, *Integralism: A Manual of Political Philosophy* (Seelscheid: Editiones Scholasticae, 2020), pp. 5–6.

and embrace of the Faith, on which cultivation of that order variously depends, two *humanistic* enterprises are especially pertinent.

The first such enterprise is that of ‘education’, derived from ‘*educatio*’, itself related to ‘*educere*’ (to lead out). By this, however, the Latins intended the Greek concept of ‘*παιδεία*’, which means ‘the full development of all human faculties’ so as to result ‘in a harmonious whole’.³⁶ The goal of education, therefore, was, *ab initio*, balance in ‘physical’ (that is, corporeal) and ‘intellectual’ (thus also ‘spiritual’ and ‘moral’) excellence, to lead man ‘to the height of human perfection’: ‘*mens sana in corpore sano*’.³⁷ This concept was translated as ‘*humanitas*’, wherefrom derives that centre of education today called ‘the humanities’. But such education does not merely concern each ‘man’ individually. On the contrary, an educated man knows himself not as self-sufficient, but as dependent upon a cooperative community, ‘and therefore [...] like a part in relation to the whole’. As Aristotle declared, ‘[m]an is by nature a political animal’.³⁸ Thus, the well-educated man is compelled to educate others in his society, for the more well-educated men there be, the better for them in particular and their whole society on which they depend.³⁹ Consequently, education concerns ‘man’ collectively. Of course, the Church was born into this educational tradition, which it rarefied and magnified through Benedictine monasticism, the Carolingian revolution, and the University. And it is assuredly a renaissance of this Catholic education that *Populorum progressio* invokes in lamentation of the world’s ‘steeped’ state of ‘ignorance’, which ‘[I]ack of education’ is considered a ‘serious as lack of food’ for a ‘starved spirit’.⁴⁰ And for this reason, the encyclical rallies ‘educators’ in educational institutions to facilitate ‘formal education’ for those ‘less fortunate’, that they may broaden their own ‘horizons of knowledge’ and cultivate the ‘aptitudes and abilities’ that they have always had at least ‘in germinal form’, and thus progress towards *perfection* of integral human development.⁴¹

But education is governed by another humanistic enterprise, namely, ‘philosophy’ (*philosophia*), which literally means ‘love’ (*φιλία*) of ‘wisdom’ (*σοφία*), indicative of its ‘pursuit’ or ‘embrace’. In the sense of an embrace, philosophy operates as science (*scientia*, *ἐπιστήμη*), because it *maintains* what it has already obtained. Yet this passive sense of philosophy is but secondary, possibilised by its primary, active sense, that of pursuit, which operates as art (*ars*, *ποίησις*) so as to *obtain* that which it may maintain. This relation of active and passive philosophy is still evident in the commonly acknowledged goal of any doctorate in philosophy, which is to advance science via the arts, or in other words, to *pro-duce* knowledge. And here too is evident philosophy’s governance of education, since he who *pro-duces* knowledge is a teacher

³⁶ Habiger Institute for Catholic Leadership, *The Heart of Culture: A Brief History of Western Education* (Providence: Cluny Media, 2020), pp. 13–14.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 14, 22; Juvenal, *Juvenalis et Persii Satirae*, 2nd ed. ed., Bibliotheca classica (London: Whittaker and Co. and George Bell, 1867), s. 10, l. 365.

³⁸ Leadership, *The Heart of Culture: A Brief History of Western Education*, pp. 25–26; Aristotle, *Politics*, ed. Jonathan Barnes, trans. B. Jowett, *The Complete Works of Aristotle: The Revised Oxford Translation* (Bollingen Series) (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 1253a.

³⁹ *Παιδεία* for ‘the individual’ fosters ‘justice in the society’ (*The Heart of Culture: A Brief History of Western Education*, p. 22).

⁴⁰ *Populorum progressio*, §§1, 35, 53.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, §§6, 12, 15, 21, 48, 83.

(*doctor*) and the knowledge *pro*-duced is his taught teaching (*docuit doctrina*), wherefore philosophy also *pro*-duces doctors and the doctrines they teach (*docent*). This relation between philosophy and education is perhaps best exemplified by Plato's Academy, being the historical foundation for the very educational tradition, philosophically governed as it was, that the Church appropriated. It is, therefore, evident why *Populorum progressio* professed the importance of 'wise men' (philosophers) for integral human development.⁴²

Part 3: Exemplification of damage and advice for mitigation

*Thus, sound philosophy governs authentic education that leads man, through the ordinate love it cultivates, out of the profanity of the world and into the sanctity of the Church (the Ἐκκλησία, the summoned-out), in and through which one finds the perfection of integral human development.*⁴³ Conversely, however, unsound philosophy ruinously governs inauthentic education that lures man, through the *dis*-ordinate love it cultivates, out of sanctity and into profanity, which conduces to a veritable *dis*-integral human development, and, consequently, a *dis*-integration of the world, which is, in a word, *nihilism*.

One readily anticipates this threat of *dis*-integrality to be external to the Church. But Paul VI would seem to have recognised the very same threat as internal, wherefore he remarked in 1972 that 'the smoke of Satan has entered the Church of God'.⁴⁴ If this signal confirmation of the threat recognised by his predecessors, then this threat is of the 'heresy' of 'Modernism', discussed in numerous other encyclicals, but most notably in Pius X's *Pascendi Dominici gregis*, circulated in 1907 against the 'Modernists': 'enemies of the cross of Christ' noted both among 'the Catholic laity' and in 'the ranks of the priesthood', who, in the guise of 'the strictest morality', strive 'by *arts*' to produce '*knowledge* falsely so called', intended 'to destroy [...] the Church' through *reformation*.⁴⁵ Indeed, Pius X explicitly identified their erroneous '*philosophy*' as critical to their '*doctrines*' against 'the Faith', yet influential over every 'unwary' man who believes himself to confess it.⁴⁶ Thus may one recognise predication of priest and parish alike against reverence, remorse, repentance, and other conditions for the reception of our Lord, the remission of sin, and the resurrection of the dead, in advocacy of various species of idolatry. And, so as to arrest this error, *Pascendi Dominici gregis* reminds the Church 'to guard with the greatest vigilance the Deposit of the Faith'.⁴⁷

But if education governed by philosophy lie at the heart of such error, then one may recognise the significance of Leo XIII's urge, in his 1879 circulation of *Aeterni Patris*, for a restoration of Catholic philosophy, and, consequently, Catholic education. Specifically, Leo XIII advocated for a Thomistic re-*vival*, since it is 'Thomas Aquinas' who 'towers' as 'master' over all other

⁴² *Ibid.*, §20.

⁴³ One may note the significance of 'University' (*universitas*) and 'Catholic' (*catholica, καθολική*).

⁴⁴ Paul VI, 'Per il nono anniversario dell'Incoronazione di Sua Santità: "Resistite fortes in fide"', in *Insegnamenti di Paulo VI* (Vatican City: Tipografia Poliglotta Vaticana, 1972), p. 707.

⁴⁵ Pius X, *Pascendi Dominici gregis* (1907), §§1–4, 11, 33, 37. My italicisation.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, §§2–3. My italicisation.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, §1.

‘Scholastic Doctors’, and has thus been rightly praised by successive popes, and treasured by religious orders, universities, and even ecumenical councils.⁴⁸ To be sure, a re-*vival* of Thomism, which itself has suffered modernist suppression in recent decades, would re-*fortify* the Church in Her Traditionally Magisterial doctrine, since *both* comprehensively, and conformatively, treat of man and his place in the world as ordered to God.⁴⁹ Although, while defined dogma predominantly employs the Catholic language of *faith*, Thomism favours the universal language of *reason*, fit to gather together every man individually, and all men collectively, into the Church Herself for the *perfection* of their integral human development.⁵⁰

However, a Thomistic re-*vival* cannot remain complacent with Thomism’s historical accomplishments; rather, it must be a Thomistic re-*newal* that persistently presses Thomism forward (*pro-gressio*) to engage all novel challenges, ‘bringing into captivity every understanding unto the obedience of Christ’, and in this manner aid progressive explication of Magisterial doctrine in guardianship of the Tradition.⁵¹ For this is the service that philosophy and its consequent education owes the Faith, as handmaids serve their queen, and it is only in this servitude that Thomism remains alive. Thus may it engender the ‘new humanism’ that Paul VI envisioned to ‘guarantee man’s authentic development’.⁵²

This re-*newal* of Thomism is indeed the focus of my philosophical efforts, alas, in my opinion, of too few others. In termination, therefore, I call for attention to *Populorum progressio* in light of *Pascendi Dominici gregis* and *Aeterni Patris*, in hope to draw more into this re-*newal*.⁵³

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⁴⁸ Leo XIII, *Aeterni Patris* (1879), §§17, 19–22. As Leo XIII stated: ‘teachers’ ought to ‘implant the doctrine of Thomas Aquinas in the minds of students’, for it is ‘in conformity with the teaching of the Church’, and is continual dissemination ‘would certainly’ benefit ‘[d]omestic and civil society’, which ‘is exposed to great danger from [...] perverse opinions’ (ibid., §§28, 31).

⁴⁹ Ibid., §28.

⁵⁰ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, trans. Anton C. Pegis, et al. (Notre Dame, United States: University of Notre Dame Press, 1975), c. 2, ¶¶3–4.

⁵¹ II Cor. 10: 5.

⁵² *Populorum progressio*, §20.

⁵³ After all, Paul VI’s conception of integral human development was very much of Thomistic influence (Crean and Fimister, *Integralism*, p. 273 n. 52).