



Towards a Common Communion: The Relational Anthropologies of John Zizioulas and Karol Wojtyla

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Pope Saint John Paul II and Metropolitan John Zizioulas share a common relational approach to theological anthropology.¹ The Roman Catholic pope-philosopher and the Eastern Orthodox theologian place an emphasis on the person's call to communion through and in a complete gift of self. Both thinkers reflect the leitmotifs of the theological anthropology envisioned by the Second Vatican Council in *Gaudium et spes* nos. 22 and 24. Saint John Paul II did this conscientiously, whereas Zizioulas' writings happen to overlap with these conciliar themes.

Gaudium et spes no. 22 espouses the teaching that only Christ fully reveals the meaning of the human person.² This is complemented by *Gaudium et spes* no. 24, that emphasizes the theme of self-gift (exemplified by the Trinity) as the person's central identity and mission.³ Christology and Trinitarian theology undergird the anthropological vision put forth by the Council. This Christological and Trinitarian vision of the human person is also developed by Wojtyla and Zizioulas. In the first part of this article, we will focus on the work of John Zizioulas, particularly his Trinitarian theology, theology of personhood, and the culmination of these theologies in a

¹ I am grateful to Father Emery de Gaál (The University of St. Mary of the Lake) and to Aristotle Papanikolaou (Fordham University) for reading an earlier draft of this article. Any errors, which may remain, are certainly my own.

² *Gaudium et spes* 22: "The truth is that only in the mystery of the incarnate Word does the mystery of man take on light. For Adam, the first man, was a figure of Him Who was to come, namely Christ the Lord. Christ, the final Adam, by the revelation of the mystery of the Father and His love, fully reveals man to man himself and makes his supreme calling clear."

³ *Gaudium et spes* 24: "Indeed, the Lord Jesus, when He prayed to the Father, 'that all may be one . . . as we are one' (John 17:21–22) opened up vistas closed to human reason, for He implied a certain likeness between the union of the divine Persons, and the unity of God's sons in truth and charity. This likeness reveals that man, who is the only creature on earth which God willed for itself, cannot fully find himself except through a sincere gift of himself."

Eucharistic anthropology.⁴ In the latter part, we will examine the theological anthropology of Karol Wojtyła⁵ in dialogue with Zizioulas. Despite some differences in their fundamental presuppositions, Zizioulas and Wojtyła reach similar conclusions about the full meaning of the person revealed in self-giving communion.

Wojtyła and Zizioulas are both original and creative in their theological understanding of the human person. They both build on the foundation of previous tradition and come to similar conclusions about the nature of the human person made in the image and likeness of God. Wojtyła builds upon the foundation of Saint Thomas Aquinas and brings these insights into dialogue with the Personalist thought of thinkers such as Martin Buber (1878–1965), Emmanuel Mounier (1905–1950) and Max Scheler (1874–1928).⁶ Zizioulas draws upon the insights of the Church Fathers, particularly the Cappadocians, to engage critically the existentialist thought of thinkers such as Martin Heidegger (1889–1976).⁷ Subsequently, while they reach similar conclusions about the person directed towards communion, there are clear divergences in their respective anthropologies that stem in

⁴ For an introduction to the thought of Zizioulas, see Aristotle Papanikolaou, *Being with God: Trinity, Apophaticism, and Divine-Human Communion* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006) and Douglas H. Knight (ed.), *The Theology of John Zizioulas: Personhood and the Church* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2007). Knight's work contains an excellent biography of secondary sources on Zizioulas's ecclesiology, Trinitarian theology, and theological anthropology.

⁵ For an overview of Wojtyła's thought, see George Williams, *The Mind of John Paul II* (New York: Seabury, 1981); Kenneth Schmitz, *At The Center of the Human Drama: The Philosophical Anthropology of Karol Wojtyła/John Paul II* (Washington D.C.: CUA Press, 1993); Rocco Buttiglione, *Karol Wojtyła: The Thought of the Man Who Became Pope John Paul II* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing, 1997); Jaroslaw Kupczak, O.P., *Destined for Liberty: The Human Person in the Philosophy of Karol Wojtyła/John Paul II* (Washington D.C.: CUA Press, 2000).

⁶ Michael Waldstein has consistently argued that St. John of the Cross has played an important role in influencing the thought of Wojtyła. See his article "John Paul II: A Thomist Rooted in St. John of the Cross," *Faith & Reason*, Vol. 30, Nos. 3 & 4 (2005):195–218.; Introduction to Blessed Pope John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them: A Theology of the Body*, trans. Michael Waldstein (Boston, MA: Pauline Books and Media, 2006), 24–34.; and his Forthcoming *Logos of Nature and the Glory of Gift in John Paul II's Theology of the Body*. Unpublished Manuscript (2011): 161–200. Also see Pope John Paul II's dissertation on faith in the thought of St. John of the Cross, which was written under the direction of Father Reginald Garrigou La-Grange (1877-1965): *Faith According to Saint John of the Cross*, trans. Jordan Aumann, O.P. (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 1981).

⁷ Zizioulas' understanding of personhood, which is major theme of this essay, is influenced by the thought of the theologian Christos Yannaras (1935-) and the philosopher Martin Buber. Aristotle Papanikolaou, "Personhood and its exponents in twentieth-century Orthodox theology," In M.B. Cunningham and E. Theokritoff (eds.) *The Cambridge Companion to Orthodox Christian Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 258. The writings of Yannaras engage the thought of Heidegger, which in turn must have influenced Zizioulas in Heidegger.

part from their response to the Boethian definition of the person and their respective understanding of the relationship between grace and nature. Zizioulas ultimately argues that the West leads the Church away from an understanding of person found in communion and otherness towards an individual self.

Trinitarian Theology and Ontology

The foundation of Metropolitan John Zizioulas' thought is his Trinitarian theology. Specifically, Zizioulas highlights the importance of 'person' (*hypostasis*) in Trinitarian theology. Zizioulas argues that priority should be given to the Trinity of persons over the unity of three persons as one God. Zizioulas builds upon the foundation of the Cappadocians to distinguish between the *theologia* and *oikonomia* of the Trinity.⁸ As a result of his interpretation of the Cappadocians, Zizioulas is highly critical of the Trinitarian formula, as it has been consistently taught by the Western Church. Zizioulas accuses the West of a misrepresentation of Patristic thought. Zizioulas bases this on his argument that in the Trinitarian theology of the West, as developed by Augustine and Aquinas, priority is given to the substance over the person. Zizioulas opines that for the Greek Fathers, the 'ontological principle' of God 'does not consist in the one substance of God but in the *hypostasis*, that is, *the person of the Father*.'⁹ Zizioulas emphasizes this primacy of the person because it is the 'ultimate ontological category which makes something really *be*, is neither an impersonal and incommunicable "substance," nor a structure of communion existing by itself or imposed by necessity.'¹⁰

Zizioulas argues that an ontology of the person supersedes an ontology of being. Zizioulas contends that *the Father* is the very *cause* of being in God.¹¹ Zizioulas traces the primacy of the ontology of substance to Saint Augustine's Trinitarian theology. In his estimation

⁸ See Atahsias G. Melissaris, "The Challenge of Patristic Ontology in the Theology of Metropolitan John (Zizioulas) of Pergamon," In *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 44.1–4 (1999): 467–490.

⁹ John Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness: Further Studies in Personhood and the Church*, Edited by Paul McPartlan (London: T& T Clark, 2006), 40.

¹⁰ Zizioulas, *Being As Communion*, 18.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 17. For a full argument for the Father as Cause, see his *Communion and Otherness*, 113–154., where he fully articulates his position in light of his reading of the Cappadocians. For a critique of the ambiguity and inconsistency in Zizioulas regarding the *monarchia* of God the Father, see Thomas Weinandy, OFM Cap. "Zizioulas: The Trinity and Ecumenism," In *New Blackfriars* 83.979 (September 2002): 410–412. Also see Nonna Verna Harrison, "Zizioulas on Communion and Otherness," In *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 42.3–4 (1998): 278–284.

the Augustinian ontology of substance was faithfully adopted by Western theology and developed into this division in Dogmatic theology with a separate treatise on God's unified nature (*De Deo Uno*) and God as three Divine Persons (*De Deo Trino*).¹² In an attempt to preserve the *monarchia*, Zizioulas clearly argues that God is one because of the ontological priority of the Person of the Father.¹³ Further, Zizioulas rejects the dogmatic formulation of the Trinity as 'one being' and 'three persons' as unfaithful to the theological heritage, which originated in part from the Cappadocians.¹⁴

God is specifically the Person of the Father, for the Trinity has an ontological dependence on Him for granting it *hypostases*.¹⁵ In this regard, Zizioulas pushes the Greek notion of causation of the Father to imply a hierarchy within the Trinity, that grants the Father a primacy in ontology and seemingly the only active role. Zizioulas represents the teaching of the Cappadocians saying the 'Father is the agent of his own existence as Father and the existence of these other persons [the Son and the Holy Spirit].'¹⁶ Because there is 'one Father,' there are 'three persons.' Rejecting the Augustinian understanding of one being or substance in favor of the primacy of the Person of the Father will have further implications for the ontology of personhood in Zizioulas' thought.

The Trinitarian theology of Zizioulas will have a significant impact on his theological anthropology and ecclesiology. Zizioulas clearly claims:

There is no model for the proper relation between communion and otherness either for the Church or for the human being other than the Trinitarian God. If the Church wants to be faithful to her true self, she must try to mirror the communion and otherness that exists in the triune God. This fidelity is also a prerequisite for anyone to understand that the human being as made in the 'image of God.'¹⁷

The communion which forms the Church and which exists within the relationships of persons is rooted in the communion of Persons

¹² Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 34. This division has also been adopted by academic dogmatic manuals among Eastern Orthodox theologians. See C. Androutsos, *Dogmatics of the Orthodox Eastern Church* (in Greek) (Athens, 1907) and P. Trembelas, *Dogmatique de l'Église orthodoxe catholique*, vols. I-III, trans. Pierre Dumont OSB (Chevetogne, 1966–1968). Cf. Zizioulas, *The One and Many Studies on God, the Church, the World Today*. Edited by Father Gregory Edwards (Alhambra, CA: Sebastian Press, 2010), 4.

¹³ Aristotle Papanikolaou, *Being With God: Trinity, Apophaticism, and Divine-Human Communion* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006), 84.

¹⁴ Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 125.

¹⁵ Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 154.

¹⁶ Zizioulas, *Lectures in Christian Dogmatics*, Edited by Douglas K. Knight (London: T & T Clark, 2008), 61.

¹⁷ Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 4–5.

in God as Trinity. An individual person is ‘no person’ for Zizioulas; the person exists only in the freedom of love for another person in imitation of the God who is love as a communion of three Divine Persons.¹⁸ There is no person as an individual substance, just as there is no substance apart from relational Persons within the Trinity. Person and communion are interchangeable for Zizioulas.

Zizioulas: An Ontology of Personhood

One of the central motifs for Metropolitan Zizioulas is the incomprehensibility of the person apart from a communion of love. Freedom (*ek-stasis*) and love define the person as a person. The ontology of love is what differentiates the being of a person versus the being of depersonalized things or objects.¹⁹ Love bestows a name and identity upon the being such that he or she is a person. Zizioulas expresses this ontology of otherness with the phrase: ‘I am loved, therefore I am.’²⁰ Zizioulas is emphatic that ‘an “I” can exist only as long as it relates to a “thou” which affirms its existence and its otherness. If we isolate the “I” from the “thou” we lose not only its otherness but also its very being: it simply cannot be without the other.’²¹ This foundational idea in Zizioulas’ theology of personhood is developed from his Trinitarian Theology.

According to his Trinitarian theology, there is no individualistic substance as such in the Trinity. In his estimation, ‘The substance of God, “God,” has no ontological content, no true being, apart from communion.’²² Zizioulas rejects a conception of the person as an individual static substance. Personhood implies an ‘openness of being’ which he refers to as an *ek-stasis*. As a result of this *ek-stasis*, the Divine Persons of the Trinity are free from the necessity of nature and can orient themselves towards a relationship of communion.²³ Freedom is a fundamental characteristic of personhood. This freedom allows for a communion of persons. While there can be isolated individuals, persons exist *only* in communion. The supernatural communion is the union of the Divine Persons of the Trinity, whereas the communion that Christ has established in the midst of his people is

¹⁸ Ibid., 9–10.

¹⁹ Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 49. This ontology of love is very similar to the personalistic norm articulated by Karol Wojtyła in his work *Love and Responsibility*, trans. H. Willets (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1993), 40–44.

²⁰ Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 59.

²¹ Ibid., 9.

²² Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 17.

²³ Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 213. For an explication of Zizioulas’ thought on *ek-stasis*, see Papanikolaou, “Personhood and its Exponents in Twentieth-century Orthodox Theology,” 240–241.

found within the Church. Subsequently, for Zizioulas, persons exist first and foremost in *ecclesia*.

Men and women are brought into a communion as persons at the moment of their Baptism.²⁴ It is in the Church, that a man or woman becomes fully a person. Through Baptism, the individual receives an ‘ecclesial hypostasis.’ This ‘hypostatic constitution’ arises ‘out of the fact that his new birth [Baptism] from the womb of the Church has made him part of a network of relationships which transcends every exclusiveness.’²⁵ The person is now part of the Body of Christ wherein he or she must love all of her members. This call to love goes beyond a mere obedience to an obligatory law or commandment. A person has entered into communion with others through the grace of this rebirth in water and the Spirit. The communion achieved with God that is initiated in Baptism enables man to be a person made in the image of God.²⁶ Without this rebirth, the person remains alienated from his very self as a result of original sin. The *imago Dei* was distorted by the fall such that the *ekstasis* of the person is experienced as *apostasis* (distance) or *diastasis* (separation) between nature and personhood.²⁷ Only Baptism can restore the communion which sin has distorted.

Zizioulas’ critique of western culture is that it has exalted the individual above all. The roots of this individualism are present in the thought of Boethius and Saint Augustine.²⁸ For Zizioulas, the Boethian definition of the person as an individual substance of a rational nature and Augustine’s focus on consciousness contributed to the prevailing subjectivism. This conclusion is logical for Zizioulas, who defines relation as being.²⁹ The ‘ecclesial hypostasis’ is a remedy to mechanization wrought by secular humanism’s emphasis on the autonomous individual. The ecclesial life brings a person into a life of communion with others and *for* others. True freedom is realized in otherness for ‘one person is no person, freedom is not freedom *from* the other but freedom *for* the other. Freedom thus becomes identical with *love*. God is love because he is Trinity.’³⁰ Hence

²⁴ Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 56.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 57–58.

²⁶ Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 214.

²⁷ Edward Russell, “Reconsidering Relational Anthropology: A Critical Assessment of John Zizioulas’ Theological Anthropology,” *International Journal of Systematic Theology*, 5.2 (July 2003): 174.

²⁸ Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 1. For a contrary thesis that outlines an understanding of the person as an individual rational substance as consistent with the Patristic view and in contradistinction with the modern conception, see Gilles Emery, O.P., “The Dignity of Being a Substance: Person, Subsistence, and Nature,” In *Nova et Vetera* 9.4 (2011): 991–1001.

²⁹ Zizioulas, *Being and Communion*, 53.

³⁰ Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 9–10.

this existence *for* the other should shape how the *eros* and body is hypostasized.³¹ Otherwise, *eros* is reduced to mere lust or use, whereas the body becomes a thing or commodity. Depersonalization is rooted in a loss of an ontology of communion and otherness. The ultimate personalization occurs in the celebration of the Holy Eucharist. ‘What Baptism initiates, therefore, the Eucharist fulfills.’³² The Eucharist achieves full communion with God and this union between God and the person is meant to characterize the relationship that a person ought to have with the world – one of transforming union.³³

Only in and through Christ, is the nature of personhood fully revealed. Christ Himself is a Divine Person with two distinct natures: human and divine. The unity of the natural and supernatural found in Christ is further realized in other persons. The person is able to ‘express communion and otherness simultaneously.’³⁴ As a result of the Incarnation, the ‘*Logos* is present everywhere in creation through the particular *logoi* of beings.’³⁵ Every person reflects the image and likeness of God through the gift of creation. The Incarnate Word made flesh is the full revelation of God and what it means to be a human person. Father Paul McPartlan highlights the unified view of Metropolitan Zizioulas and Father Henri de Lubac concerning the full revelation of the human person in Christ. Zizioulas wrote that ‘the mystery of man reveals itself fully only in the light of Christ.’³⁶ De Lubac wrote ‘Christ completes the revelation of man to himself.’³⁷ This insight shared by both is indirectly re-echoed by the Second Vatican Council in *Gaudium et spes* no. 22: ‘Christ fully reveals man to himself.’ Subsequently, the Holy Eucharist as Christ’s Real Presence has both anthropological and ecclesiological implications.

³¹ Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 63.

³² Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 80.

³³ According to Papanikolaou, The concept of “person” is the key to understanding [Zizioulas’s] eucharistic ecclesiology which identifies the Church with the eucharistic assembly. Zizioulas [synthesizes] the eucharistic of Nicolas Afanasiev, which one can also detect in Georges Florovsky, with the theology of personhood initiated in Lossky.’ Papanikolaou, “Personhood and its Exponents in Twentieth-century Orthodox Theology,” 241.

³⁴ Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 29.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 32.

³⁶ Zizioulas, “Human Capacity and Human Incapacity,” *Scottish Journal of Theology* 28 (1975): 433 quoted in Paul McPartlan, *The Eucharist Makes the Church: Henri de Lubac and John Zizioulas in Dialogue* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1993) 140.

³⁷ Henri de Lubac, S.J., *Catholicism* (London: Burns & Oates, 1962), 187 quoted in McPartlan, 140.

Eucharistic Ecclesiology

In the life of the Church, communion and otherness are realized fully in the celebration of the Holy Eucharist.³⁸ Zizioulas outlines three dimensions of communion present in the Eucharist: (1) communion between God and the human person (2) communion among communicants, and (3) communion of creation as a whole with God.³⁹ For Zizioulas, the Eucharist is not a thing, but a living personification of God's love for humanity through which human beings 'can freely obtain otherness and uniqueness.'⁴⁰ The previous developments of the Zizioulas' Trinitarian theology and ontology of personhood culminate in his understanding of the Holy Eucharist as a sacramental realization of communion. The life of communion within the Trinity is actualized among the faithful through the Eucharist.⁴¹

The Holy Eucharist assists the person in realizing the love which he or she gives to others (*ekstasis*). 'The Eucharist calls humanity to relate the world to God; it *is* itself this offering to God, an *anaphora*.'⁴² The Christian life is an extension of the dynamic self-giving love that has been experienced in the Liturgy. Every member of the Body of Christ is meant to offer his or her entire self to others in love. In the estimation of Zizioulas, 'the Eucharist involves and reveals above all the grateful acknowledgement of the Other's existence and of our own existence as a gift of the Other. The essence of the Eucharistic ethos, therefore, is the affirmation of the Other and of every Other as a gift to be appreciated and to evoke gratitude.'⁴³ The Holy Eucharist actualizes the vertical communion of the faithful with God and the horizontal communion with other members of Christ's body the Church. Zizioulas re-echoes the sentiment of Henri de Lubac: 'The Eucharist makes the Church.' In Zizioulas own words the '*Church constitutes the Eucharist while being constituted by it*. Church and [the] Eucharist are interdependent; they coincide, and are even in some sense identical.'⁴⁴ Emphatically, Zizioulas states 'The body of Christ is not first the body of an individual Christ and *then* a community of the "many,"' but simultaneously both together. Thus

³⁸ Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 7.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 79.

⁴¹ Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 81.

⁴² Zizioulas, *The Eucharistic Communion and the World*, 36.

⁴³ Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 90.

⁴⁴ Zizioulas, *The One and the Many*, 68. "The early work on the Eucharist and ecclesiology is, however, key for understanding Zizioulas's own approach to personhood. The experience of God in the Eucharist is both the ground and the realization of human personhood." Papanikolaou, "Personhood and its exponents in twentieth-century Orthodox theology," 238.

you cannot have the body of the individual Christ (the One) without simultaneously including the community of the Church (the Many).⁴⁵

The Holy Eucharist enables the person to realize his call to authentic freedom in the truth. Communion liberates the person from the trap of individualism and a self-centered ego.⁴⁶ The Eucharist brings the person into communion with God and subsequently with other members of the Body of Christ. This Communion extends even further with all of creation. This 'Eucharistic conception of truth can free the person from his lust to dominate nature, making him aware that the Christ-truth exists for the life of the whole cosmos, and that the deification which Christ brings... extends to 'all creation' and not just to humanity.'⁴⁷ The proper stewardship that the person exercises in relation to the rest of the created order is built upon the foundation that he has with Christ in and through Holy Communion. Just as the nature of bread and wine are transformed in the supernatural Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of Christ all things can and must be transfigured through Christ's grace. The human person in Christ serves as the means of sanctifying the temporal order.

Wojtyla: A Western Theological Anthropology

Pope Saint John Paul II (Karol Wojtyla) was first and foremost a philosopher. His theological writings issued during his papacy reflect his understanding of the human person developed in his philosophical thought. His writings before and after the Council resonate with the themes articulated by *Gaudium et spes* nos. 22 and 24. Christ fully reveals the mystery of the person and his vocation is realized fully in a gift of self in imitation of the selfless love experienced within the Trinity. The philosophical anthropology of Karol Wojtyla, which he first developed in Poland as a priest and then as bishop, found its maturity and full development in the theological anthropology of his papal writings.

While some scholars have argued that Wojtyla is a Phenomenologist, he is clearly a Thomist interested in integrating insights from modern philosophy, particularly in the subjective aspects of the human person.⁴⁸ Specifically he engages in what he has coined

⁴⁵ Zizioulas, *Eucharistic Communion and the World*, 104.

⁴⁶ Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 63–64.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 120.

⁴⁸ Nevertheless, Wojtyla's philosophical work was enriched by the phenomenological method. As he reflects upon the gift of his priestly ministry, Wojtyla (as Blessed Pope John Paul II) writes 'My previous Aristotelian-Thomistic formation was enriched by the phenomenological method, and this made it possible for me to undertake a number of

‘Thomistic personalism.’⁴⁹ In the system of Saint Thomas, the person (*persona*) has a theological, not a philosophical function. Wojtyła argues that this is supported by the fact that Saint Thomas uses the word ‘person’ in his treatises concerning the Trinity and the Incarnation.⁵⁰ Wojtyła recognizes Thomas’ use of the Boethian definition of the person as “an individual substance of a rational nature.” In contrast to the view of Zizioulas, Wojtyła sees the Boethian understanding of the person as a ‘subsistent subject of existence and action’ and not simply an impersonal rational nature.⁵¹ The modern conception of the person finds its roots in the ‘hypostatization of consciousness,’ which is consequent of Cartesian dualism.⁵² The Cartesian split of the person into an extended substance (the body) on the one hand and a thinking substance (the soul) on the other is the foundation of this said ‘hypostatization.’ Zizioulas would have his readers believe that this is rooted in the West’s adaptation of the Boethian definition of the person. The Thomistic understanding of being a person, which is built on the foundation of Boethius, is further developed by Wojtyła’s dialogue with modern philosophy.

The strength of the Thomistic definition is that it preserves the objective nature of the person, yet its weakness in Wojtyła’s estimation is that it lacks a full development of his subjective nature. Nevertheless, the danger of a pure subjective notion of the person as

creative studies. I am thinking above all of my book *The Acting Person*. In this way I took part in the contemporary movement of philosophical personalism, and my studies were able to bear fruit in my pastoral work’ (*Gift and Mystery: On the Fiftieth Anniversary of My Priestly Ordination* (New York: Doubleday Books, 1996), 93–94). At the same time, the phenomenology (as understood by Edmund Husserl and Max Scheler) has its limitations. According to Wojtyła, the ‘Christian thinker, especially the theologian, who makes use of phenomenological experience in his work, cannot be a Phenomenologist’ (Wojtyła, *Scheler*, 196), quoted in Michael Maria Waldstein. *Logos of Nature and the Glory of Gift in John Paul II’s Theology of the Body* (Unpublished Manuscript, 2011), 402.

⁴⁹ See Karol Wojtyła, “Thomistic Personalism,” In Karol Wojtyła, *Person and Community: Selected Essays*, trans. Theresa Sandok, OSM. (New York: Peter Lang, 1993), 165–175. “Thomistic personalism stresses the metaphysical distinction between individuality and personality.” Jacques Maritain, *The Person and the Common Good The Person and the Common Good*, trans. John J. Fitzgerald (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1996), 13: For an outline of the history of personalism and the main ideas that are characteristic of Thomistic Personalism, see Thomas D. Williams, *Who is My Neighbor?: Personalism and the Foundations of Human Rights* (Washington, D.C.: CUA Press, 2005), especially 105–145. Also see Norris Clarke, S.J. “The Integration of Personalism and Thomistic Metaphysics in Twenty-First Century Thomism,” In Norris Clarke, S.J., *The Creative Retrieval of Saint Thomas Aquinas: Essays in Thomistic Philosophy, New and Old* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2009), 226–231.

⁵⁰ Wojtyła, “Thomistic Personalism,” 166.

⁵¹ Wojtyła, “Thomistic Personalism,” 167.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 169.

“pure consciousness” leads to an annihilation of the subject.⁵³ Objectively, the person is someone that acts in his rational nature in and through the body. The realist vision of St. Thomas guards against the reductionist view in that it safeguards the hylemorphic unity of the person as body and soul. Wojtyła deepens the Thomistic vision in his analysis of the philosophical adage: *operari sequitur esse* (‘action follows being’). For Wojtyła, action is not only determined by being, action reveals the being of the person as a subject of the activity.⁵⁴ According to Wojtyła, ‘Through action, my own *I* is fully manifested for my *I*’s consciousness.’⁵⁵ Consequently, the person is also formed by his or her actions. Hence, Wojtyła suggests that it is more accurate to adopt the language of *actus personae* over the traditional *actus humanus* as the former emphasizes the formation of person through action.⁵⁶ The self-determination of the person presupposes self-consciousness, self-governance, and self-possession according to Wojtyła. For Wojtyła, unlike the thought of Zizioulas, persons exist in themselves.⁵⁷

The most common ground between the two thinkers is an understanding of the person as directed towards a communion of persons. The great commandment of love prescribed by Christ is a clarion call for the person to embrace the ‘task of actually participating in the humanity of others, of experiencing the other as an *I*, as a person.’⁵⁸ The fullest relationship between persons as an *I* and *thou* are based on mutual respect for the other as a person based on a common good.⁵⁹ While the *I-thou* relationship can become an intimate *we* relationship, especially in marriage, Wojtyła is emphatic that the *I* retains his or her individual identity.⁶⁰

Wojtyła’s anthropology allows for a wider understanding of the person apart from communion. While the person is fully realized in the *communio personarum*, transcendence is achieved by the individual *I* apart from this participation. On this point, there is an insurmountable gap between Wojtyła and Zizioulas, because the latter completely rejects the Boethian presupposition. For Zizioulas, the

⁵³ Wojtyła, “The Person: Subject and Community,” found in Karol Wojtyła, *Person and Community: Selected Essays*, Trans. Theresa Sandok, OSM (New York: Peter Lang, 1993), 220 and 222.

⁵⁴ Wojtyła, “The Person: Subject and Community,” 223.

⁵⁵ “Participation and Alienation,” In Karol Wojtyła, *Person and Community: Selected Essays*, Trans. Theresa Sandok, OSM. (New York: Peter Lang, 1993), 198.

⁵⁶ Wojtyła, “The Person: Subject and Community,” 228.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 227.

⁵⁸ Wojtyła “Participation and Alienation,” found in Karol Wojtyła, *Person and Community: Selected Essays*, trans. Theresa Sandok, OSM. (New York: Peter Lang, 1993), 203.

⁵⁹ Wojtyła, “The Person: Subject and Community,” 245–246.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 247–248.

person has no identity apart from grace and otherness. This amounts to a rejection of nature and any notion of an individual. This is a logical consequence of Zizioulas Trinitarian theology that rejects a notion of substance or essence apart from person. A fuller reading of the Cappadocian tradition suggests that one must maintain both the essentialism and personalism of Trinity together.⁶¹ Another area where Wojtyla and Zizioulas converge is the Eucharistic implications for the individual person and the whole Church. According to Saint Augustine, Christ says to each communicant: 'I am your food, but instead of my being changed into you, it is you who will be transformed into me.'⁶² Each person becomes one with and in Christ's Eucharistic presence. This sacrament achieves a nuptial union between the person and Christ and further cements the bond within the whole Body of Christ the Church. Wojtyla, writing as Pope John Paul II in *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, affirms a Eucharistic ecclesiology: 'Incorporation into Christ, which is brought about by Baptism is constantly renewed and consolidated by sharing in the Eucharistic Sacrifice.'⁶³ The communion, which is a sacramental reality for each member of the body of Christ, implies that the person must morally live in communion with other people, particularly through a gift of self in love.

Theological Anthropologies Directed Towards Communion

While it would be accurate to describe Wojtyla as a Personalistic Thomist, Zizioulas rejects any intellectual association with the Personalist thinkers.⁶⁴ Zizioulas emphatically critiques the Personalism

⁶¹ The prescient Trinitarian theology of Gilles Emery, O.P. highlights the hermeneutical key to work through the superficial opposition of 'essentialism' and 'personalism,' the 'law of *redoublement*.' This 'law of *redoublement*' is derived from Saint Basil the Great who maintains that one must maintain the connection is *proper* to each person of Trinity and what is *common* to them. According to Emery to address the Trinitarian mystery, 'it is necessary always to employ two words, two formulas, in a reflection in two modes that joins here the substantial (essential) aspect and the distinction of persons (relative properties).' Emery, "Essential or Personalism in the Treatise on God in Saint Thomas Aquinas," trans. Matthew Levering, *The Thomist* 64 (2000): 534. This tension is neglected by Zizioulas, who argues repeatedly that 'person' precedes 'substance.'

⁶² Augustine, *Confessions* 7, 10, 16; cf. Avery Cardinal Dulles, "A Eucharistic Church: the Vision of John Paul II," found in his *Church and Society: The Laurence J. McGinley Lectures 1988–2007* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008), 444.

⁶³ No. 22. Quoted by Charles Morerod, O.P., "John Paul II's Ecclesiology and St. Thomas Aquinas," In *John Paul II & St. Thomas Aquinas*, Michael Dauphinais & Matthew Levering (eds.) (Naples, FL: Sapientia Press, 2006), 62.

⁶⁴ Personalism includes a diverse group of thinkers including Max Scheler, Martin Buber, Charles Peguy, Jacques Maritain, Gabriel Marcel, Peter Wüst, Dietrich von Hildebrand, Romano Guardini, Theodor Haecker, Armando Carlini, Michele

espoused by thinkers such as Jacques Maritain and Emmanuel Mounier. In Zizioulas estimation, French personalism is ‘so influenced by Thomism that it ultimately subjugates the personal to the generality of nature or essence, leaving room only for a sociological aspect of the person.’⁶⁵ Zizioulas rejects any conception of an individual natural person. The person has no prior being as a unique individual. It seems that Zizioulas would argue that a person receives his uniqueness, his being from a relation with another. ‘Being is a gift of the Other, and it is this very gift that constitutes love; if love does not grant or “cause” a unique identity, it is not true love; it is self-love, a sort of narcissism in disguise.’⁶⁶ For Zizioulas, the person finds freedom in communion with another.⁶⁷ A similar thought is found in the full development of Wojtyła’s theological anthropology in his papal work, which has become known as the *Theology of the Body*:

[M]an became the image of God not only through his humanity, but also through the communion of persons (*communio personarum*), which man and woman form from the very beginning. The function of the image is that of mirroring the one who is the model [God as Trinity], of reproducing its own prototype [the unity of man and woman as a *communio personarum*]. Man becomes an image of God not so much in the moment of solitude as in the moment of communion.⁶⁸

While there are differing sources, which have influenced the respective thinkers, both Zizioulas and Wojtyła understand the person as directed towards a communion, as a complete fulfillment of his or her human nature.

Gaudium et spes no. 22 clearly envisions a theological anthropology rooted in Christology. The full realization of the *imago Dei* within in each person is embodied by Christ. For Zizioulas, ‘The person you love as unique cannot maintain his ontological uniqueness, cannot be truly unique, if death overcomes him in the end. He can be truly unique only in [Christ] who has conquered death.’⁶⁹ Once again Zizioulas clearly favors a theological anthropology which seems to highlight the limits of nature. Death, which is a consequence of the fall of mankind, highlights the need for the human person to

Federico Sciacca, and Carlo Arata. See Kenneth Schmitz, “The Solidarity of Personalism and the Metaphysics of Existential Act,” In Kenneth L. Schmitz, *The Texture of Being: Essays in First Philosophy*, Paul O’Herron (ed.) (Washington, D.C.: CUA Press, 2007), 133–134 n. 4.

⁶⁵ Zizioulas, *The One and the Many*, 20.

⁶⁶ Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 89.

⁶⁷ Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 122.

⁶⁸ Blessed Pope John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them: A Theology of the Body*, 9:3.

⁶⁹ Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 79.

find his uniqueness in the New Adam that brought the hope and promise of eternal life in the face of sin's effects. Wojtyła develops man's subjective search for his identity in his first encyclical, *Redemptor Hominis*: 'Man cannot live without love. He remains a being that is incomprehensible for himself, his life is senseless, if love is not revealed to him, if he does not encounter love, if he does not experience it and make it his own, if he does not participate intimately in it.'⁷⁰ This revelation of love is found only in the person of Christ. According to Wojtyła, '[The person] must, so to speak, enter into Him with all his own self, he must 'appropriate' and assimilate the whole of the reality of the Incarnation and Redemption in order to find himself.'⁷¹ For both Wojtyła and Zizioulas, the human person in his own nature is limited to find his self. Zizioulas argues that the person only acquires his natural identity through communion with God.⁷² Only Jesus Christ allows the person to be able to fully participate in that communion in light of the Incarnation and the Redemption. The human person is able to enter into Christ's life through self-gift. As an *ekstasis*, the human person, in imitation of God's love, seeks relationships outside of Himself.⁷³ The Christocentric anthropology of *Gaudium et spes* no. 22 finds its complimentary fulfillment in *Gaudium et spes* no. 24.

The full context of *Gaudium et spes* no. 24 reveals a theological anthropology that is rooted in Trinitarian theology in addition to Christology. In *Gaudium et spes* no. 24, the Second Vatican Council teaches:

Indeed, the Lord Jesus, when He prays to the Father, "that all may be one . . . as we are one" (John 17:21–22) and thus offers vistas closed to human reason, indicates a certain likeness between the union of the divine Persons and the union of God's sons in Truth and Love. This likeness shows that man, who is the only creature on earth God willed for itself, cannot fully find himself except through a sincere gift of self (cf. Luke 17:33).

The latter theme of the person fully finding himself through a 'sincere gift of self' is present in the writings of both Zizioulas and Wojtyła. Zizioulas constantly reiterates the theme that a person is only a person in communion, freedom, and love. Consequently, the person is found only in the communion of the Church. The major point which separates Zizioulas from western (and eastern) theologians is the idea that the person can exist as an individual. As the 'only creature on earth' who 'God willed for itself,' the person can image God in the

⁷⁰ *Redemptor hominis*, no. 10.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 243.

⁷³ Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 91.

unique faculties of the intellect and the will. The full expression of those faculties (and hence the person) is found in a loving gift of self of one person to another. God is one in nature and three in persons. Relational persons seem to precede nature in the theology of Zizioulas. Some would argue that Zizioulas precludes nature with his ontology of personhood.⁷⁴ Wojtyla recognizes the person exists in his rational nature. Because of the rational powers of the intellect and the will, the human person is ‘capable of self-determination and self-possession: the human being is a being capable of existing and acting “for itself,” that is capable of a certain *autoteleology*, which means capable not only of determining its own ends but also of becoming an end for itself.’⁷⁵ Yet, while the human person is a world in himself or herself, Wojtyla affirms that human persons have a likeness with God through their capacity for communion with others.⁷⁶ The gift of self, which results in communion, presupposes the rational nature of the person.

The theological ‘grace builds on nature’ summarizes the difference between Wojtyla and Zizioulas. While Wojtyla affirms this axiom in his theological anthropology, Zizioulas’ view would be aptly defined by the phrase ‘grace replaces nature.’ Zizioulas’ presuppositions in his Trinitarian theology led to these conclusions in his anthropology. Not only does Zizioulas reject the Boethian and Augustinian understanding of the person and the Trinity, he seems to undermine an authentic reading of the Cappadocians.⁷⁷ Whereas Wojtyla affirms the adage that ‘action follows being,’ Zizioulas seems to assert that ‘action is being.’ There is much overlap between Wojtyla and Zizioulas in their conclusions about the human person as a communion and the call to self-giving love. The surprising lacuna in Zizioulas is the lack of development of his ontology of communion in the theology of marriage and/or the family. The strength of Wojtyla’s visions is that he is able to successfully draw out the implications of this communion anthropology for the domestic church. Nevertheless, with both thinkers, scholars can affirm the centrality of Trinity and Christology

⁷⁴ See Nicholas Loudovikos, “Person instead of Grace and Dictated Otherness: John Zizioulas’ Final Theological Position,” *The Heythrop Journal* 52.4 (2011): 684–699.

⁷⁵ Wojtyla, “Family as Communion of Persons,” found in Karol Wojtyla, *Person and Community: Selected Essays*, trans. Theresa Sandok, OSM. (New York: Peter Lang, 1993), 317.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 318.

⁷⁷ See Lewis Ayres, *Nicaea and its Legacy: An Approach to Fourth-Century Trinitarian Theology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004). Also see Matthew Levering, *Scripture and Metaphysics: Aquinas and the Renewal of Trinitarian Theology* (Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 197–235. Levering analyzes the work of Zizioulas in comparison with the writings of Norris W. Clarke, S.J., and Reinhard Hütter. Levering’s close reading of these contemporary thinkers is compared to the thought of St. Thomas Aquinas to make his final analysis clear.

in developing theological anthropology. God as a Trinity of Persons and Christ as a Divine Person with two distinct natures fully reveal the call of each person to give of oneself in love to others. In a cultural milieu, characterized by a crisis of identity among many peoples because they no longer acknowledge God's existence or relevance, Wojtyla and Zizioulas offer a redirection for all of humanity towards God in whom everyone can find the true meaning of life and love.

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