

Overview:

Philosopher and Catholic theologian, Romano Guardini, brings to light the essential bond between the human person as embodied-spirit and the good itself. Through everyday situations and events, the human person enters into dialogue with the good. Guardini's expressive depiction of this encounter can help us see the greatness of the person and his or her responsibility in and for the world.

“The Good Speaks to Human Hearts”: Personal Freedom in Dialogue from the Ethic Lectures of Romano Guardini

By Christine Myers

In our time together today, I wish to present to you the contribution of Catholic priest, philosopher and theologian Romano Guardini on the question of the natural law.¹ The first point to mention is that Guardini did not extensively develop this term in his ethic.² He did, however, examine the relationship of the human person to truth and goodness which lie at the foundation of the moral life. It is these anthropological and metaphysical foundations that we want to examine in the little time that we have together today.

First, a few basic considerations of human nature will help us see the difficulty it poses for understanding the term “natural law”. On the one hand, human beings are integrated into the reality of the world and are to a great extent conditioned by genetic, cultural, and historical factors. When considering this dimension of human existence, one can lean toward seeing the human person as completely determined by natural and cultural forces. In this view, however, we lose sight of human freedom, which is just as fundamental to our human life as the influence of natural instincts and surrounding conditions. This freedom is seen clearly in our capacity to choose, to say yes and no. We see it in our capacity to take responsibility for our actions or to be held accountable. In the end, a denial of human freedom renders our personal experience, human relations and social life incomprehensible. A focus on this power to choose, to initiate our actions, and even to gain an upper hand on influences that come to us from our natural tendencies or culture, can however, lead us into an opposing error. We can come to see human beings as possessing an absolute freedom capable of complete self-determination. This position is held by existentialism, which proposes that there are no given norms for human freedom. This position does not give enough attention to the fact that human beings do not first of all will themselves into being, but find themselves or come to themselves within the fabric of a given reality. In freedom we are capable of making decisions that lead to our own harm or to our own flourishing – which indicates both that the human being has a nature and that this nature includes freedom.

From these first considerations, we see can see that the human person is in a unique situation, and a discussion of his “nature” involves more than an understanding of physiological or psychological functions. Guardini articulates the particularity of human nature in the following

¹ This essay draws exclusively from Guardini's ethical lectures given at Munich between 1950 and 1962. Unfortunately, this work is not available in English. The passages found here are the author's own translation. For the original text see: Romano Guardini, *Ethik: Vorlesungen an der Universität München (1950-1962)*, Vols. I and II. ed. Franz Heinrich (Mainz/Paderborn: Matthias-Grünwald/ Ferdinand Schöningh, 1993).

² The term natural law (*Naturrecht*) has only three entries in the index of the two volume *Ethik*.

terms. On the one hand, “the person has true determinations of essence (*Wesensbestimmungen*) in himself and stands within structures, which for their part come out of natural determinations.”³ On the other hand, “[these natural determinations] exist within the sphere of freedom, which can say yes or no to them, can influence one’s own life rightly or falsely, can build up this life or destroy it.”⁴ Guardini comments that this combination of being conditioned and being free means it is easy to oversimplify our understanding of human nature. It is easy to slip into a form of determinism which does not give due account of human freedom, or, on the other hand, to reject that human beings have a given nature in which freedom is ordered.

Guardini proposes a way forward by showing that the human person exists in a unique form of responsibility. The human person possesses freedom, but this freedom is that of one who has been entrusted – with himself, with others, with the natural world. Guardini will go so far as to say that the good and the truth itself have been entrusted to the care of the human person. In order to see this better, we must progress step by step through some basic metaphysical questions. Since our time is so short, we cannot discuss everything in great detail, but I hope to share with you the key points that will enable us to think together. We want to find our way to a fundamental aspect of our existence, or what Guardini terms an “*Urphänomen*” – in English “primordial phenomenon.”⁵ By this term, he indicates something foundational to reality itself, which cannot be derived from something else. The good and the truth are both “*Urphänomen*.” As such, they can only be recognized for what they are and explained in light of themselves. Guardini explains his use of the term “phenomenon,” which comes from the Greek word *phainesthai* meaning “to appear.” Far from meaning *mere* appearance as opposed to reality, he intends to speak of what shows itself, of what we can perceive with sight, hearing, and understanding.⁶ This means that our basic stance before concrete reality is one of confidence in the intelligibility of ordinary experiences.

First, Guardini will show us how the good itself and the truth itself are present in the various relative goods and truths with which we come into contact on a daily basis. This contact with the truth and the good is possible due to the corresponding anthropological configuration of the human being as rational and free. That is to say, the human being possesses the capacity to know what something is in itself and to relate to this other being according to its nature. Reason and freedom are indications of the existential reality of the human being as “spirit” or “person”. By these terms, Guardini intends to assert that the human being, unlike plants and animals, exists in and through a relation to truth itself and goodness itself. Human nature is therefore properly spiritual. This means on the one hand, that human beings are capable of standing over and against nature to understand and to fashion it. It also indicates, however, that the deepest meaning of this capacity lies at a profounder level than that of practical action. The human

³ „Der Mensch trägt echte Wesensbestimmungen in sich und steht in Ordnungen, die ihrerseits aus Wesensbestimmungen hervorgehen.“ Romano Guardini, *Ethik*, vol. 1, 10.

⁴ „Die stehen aber im Raum der Freiheit, die zu ihnen Ja oder Nein sagen, das eigene Leben richtig oder falsch beeinflussen, es aufbauen oder zerstören kann.“ *Ethik*, vol. 1, 10.

⁵ „Wenn wir nicht von Theorien, oder, noch schlimmer, von Konventionen ausgehen, sondern echte Erkenntnis vollziehen, dann antworten wir: Das Gute ist – eben das Gute. Man kann es nicht von Anderem her bestimmen, weiß aber aus ihm selbst heraus, was es ist... Das heißt: Das Gute ist ein Urphänomen. Urphänomene kann man nicht ableiten. ... Das Gute ist »es selbst«. Um es in seinem Wesenssinn zu erfassen, braucht man auf keine andere Gegebenheit zurückzugreifen. Ja man darf es gar nicht; denn sobald man von seinem Wesen berührt wird, weiß man, es ist jenes, das allen Gegebenheiten des Daseins ihren letzten Sinn gibt, nicht aber vermögen diese, es ihrerseits zu begründen.“ *Ethik*, vol. 1, 33.

⁶ *Ethik*, vol. 1, 13-14.

person exists in a constitutive relation to the truth and the good. The fulfillment of this personhood lies in the realization of the truth and the good.

We are all perhaps suffering from a little vertigo after scaling so quickly Guardini's ascent to an understanding of the human being as a "spirit" that exists in relation to the truth itself and the good itself. Let's come back down to our everyday experience to glimpse the presence of the good and the truth in ordinary situations. Guardini begins his discussion of the good by turning our attention to the experience of worth or value.⁷ An easily understood example of an experience of value is our assessment of an object's usefulness. If I want to take notes at a conference, then I find paper and a pen useful. This worth or value stems from the objects themselves – if the paper is not adequately clean, or if the pen is out of ink, then they no longer possess their value as instruments. Even at this lower level of value (usefulness), Guardini emphasizes the essential objective dimension of value. It is not my subjective assessment alone which counts, but rather, the qualities of the instrument. A genuine experience of worth or value is a response to the object itself.

Our first example dealt with something useful, but we could rise to a higher level of worth. Consider, for a moment, the value of jewelry. While the monetary value of the jewels may depend upon what someone is willing to pay for them, the jewelry has value primarily thanks to the inherent qualities of the jewels – their size, color, cut, and clarity. Another example is found in a priceless work of art. Its being "invaluable" stems from its uniqueness and beauty, or because it marks a new degree of mastery in painting, or a break-through in the expression of human existence – like the *Mona Lisa*, for instance. Finally, our experience of the worth or value of a thing calls forward in us a corresponding response. The *Mona Lisa*, for example, is carefully preserved and displayed in the Louvre. We owe to this experience of the worth-character of things our sense of life being "worth-while." "Worth" gives life flavor and color.

This experience of worth or value is a way of introducing us to the question of the good. Guardini explains that the good has all the characteristics of worth or value, but calls for a more intense engagement of the person. The good appears as that which should be done according to the demands made by the object and situation before us. The value or worth of an object sets certain conditions on our actions, but the good obliges us. If I want to create a beautiful and functional bookshelf without the help of *Ikea*, then I must follow certain guidelines in order for it to fulfill its function and give a nice appearance to my room. These guidelines correspond to the demands that the desired worth or value make upon me, but they are not morally obligatory. It is not the good itself which is being demanded of me. If, on the other hand, I sign a contract and promise to build a beautiful and functional bookshelf for my client, then I am morally obliged to fulfill it. When I buy a bookshelf at *Ikea*, I assume that all the parts are in the box and in good condition. If *Ikea* sells me a defective bookshelf, I normally have the right to take it back! In these two ordinary examples, we see a new dimension emerge: responsibility, obligation and trust make their appearance. The good obliges and calls forward an engagement of our freedom that involves fidelity.

Guardini states that the good corresponds to the deepest level of our existence, to our being persons. This relation of the person to the good is particularly evident in the case of failure to achieve a certain level of worth or value. A carpenter who possesses only a certain degree of natural talent signs a contract to build a kitchen cabinet set. He does his work conscientiously, fulfilling the guidelines to the best of his ability and builds the cabinets. The final result is not as

⁷ cf. *Ethik*, vol. 1, 13-22.

beautiful as another carpenter's work. That is, the cabinets he produces do not have the full worth they could have had, hypothetically speaking. Nevertheless, in accomplishing his task as agreed and to the best of his capacities, the carpenter has fulfilled the requirements of the good. In the fulfillment of the good, the person remains "in order," to use Guardini's phrasing.⁸ Here we see the distinction of the moral good with its absolute and universal character as opposed to the achievement of a particular kind of worth and its relative value. We can fail to attain the full value of our work due to a lack of talent, but nevertheless perform to the best of our ability, and thereby fulfill the demands of the good. On the other hand, we could obtain a high level of worth or quality, but pursue this value in doing harm to someone else, and in this way fail to do the good. With these considerations, Guardini draws an important distinction between the various kinds of particular values or worth that objects and actions can possess from the good itself which touches the deepest reality of the person. He says, "Each time a closer examination shows that these values manage to justify existence only to a certain point. They have only a hypothetical character [as we saw in the example of building an attractive bookshelf for oneself], because their fulfillment at that time involves only a particular area of the person's life and is only urgent when this area presses forward. The good, by contrast, touches existence as such, the person itself. That's why [the good] is of itself meaning-giving; it is absolute."⁹

What is this good that calls forward a moral obligation on our part? Guardini develops two classical understandings. The first responds that this good is the truth of a being, in so far as it enters into the realm of my action. Truth then crosses over from what something is in itself to how it should be treated or how it should be done. In these terms, the good is the "right thing" – the truth which is to be done. Guardini goes a step further and asks, why is the truth of a being binding? From where comes the absolute character of the good which demands to be done? He responds that this obliging character of the true and good comes from the fact that this being has been entrusted to me, and that I therefore bear a responsibility toward it. "First I compose simply a part of the world's reality; I stand within her laws and exercise therein particular functions; I also stand over and against the world, knowing, deciding, acting... To the degree that the power over nature which is necessary for my survival is obtained, my spirit receives freedom and room for deeper things, and I sense an exhortation which comes from the nature (*Wesen*) of things. The call comes from their meaning and says, 'It's not enough that you simply live! But then how should I live? In such a way, that the nature (*Wesen*) of things demands."¹⁰ This interior dialogue which Guardini narrates for us, and which reflects human conscience, is helped along by our social life and education. A common example today is the concern for the environment and the attempt to instill in society habits of recycling and waste-reduction. This is one example of the human attempt to live according to the "right thing" – to act in accord with the truth. The

⁸ *Ethik*, vol. 1, 30-31.

⁹ „Jedesmal zeigt aber die genauere Prüfung, daß diese Werte nur bis zu einem gewissen Punkt ausreichen, um das Dasein zu rechtfertigen. Sie haben nur hypothetischen Charakter, weil ihre Erfüllung jeweils nur einen bestimmten Bereich im Leben des Menschen angeht und nur dann dringlich wird, wenn dieser Bereich drängt. Das Gute hingegen betrifft die Existenz als solche, die Person einfachhin. Darum ist es sinngebend einfachhin; es ist unbedingt.“ *Ethik*, vol. 1, 35.

¹⁰ „Zunächst bilde ich einfach einen Teil der Weltwirklichkeit; stehe in ihren Gesetzen und übe darin bestimmte Funktionen aus...Ich trete aber auch der Welt gegenüber, erkennend, entscheidend, handelnd. ... Im Maße die lebensnotwendigsten Bemächtigungen aber durchgeführt sind, mein Geist Freiheit und Raum für Tieferes bekommt, empfinde ich eine Mahnung, die aus dem Wesen der Dinge, aus dem Anruf ihres Sinnes kommt, und sagt: Das geht nicht, daß du nur lebst! Wie soll ich aber leben? So, wie das Wesen der Dinge es verlangt.“ *Ethik*, vol. 1, 40-41.

human being and the world exist in this relation one to the other – the world is entrusted to the human being, and the human being experiences himself as one responsible.

Guardini assesses that this classical understanding of the good as the truth of a being insofar as it enters the realm of action has clarity, depth and strength. He proposes, however, that a second classical understanding of the good provides an essential compliment. In this second response to the question, “What is the good?” our attention is directed upward toward the good itself. His guide in this second pursuit of the good is Plato. If the first account seeks the presence of the good in particular situations as the truth that is to be done, Plato seeks to transcend the particular and raise his eyes toward the good itself. Guardini leads us into Plato’s vision by evoking the desire to be good.

What does it mean, when in a vivid hour, someone says, ‘I want to become good’? Obviously he or she means more than the desire to learn the essential demands of his or her situation, to understand correctly and fulfill the requirements of his or her career or relation to other people, etc. He means more than the desire to become capable of corresponding to his responsibility for the world ... Of course, it means all these things too; however, from within and above these he means something else, even ‘the good’ and ‘being-good’. Therein he or she senses something distinct in itself whose realization gives a degree of value (*Wertigkeit*) unique in itself. (*Unverwechselbar-Eigenes*) It is deep, wide, high, rich, strong, great, beautiful, appearing in multiple modalities and at the same time completely simple. In all of these it is itself and cannot be derived from any other value. He knows: I can become knowledgeable, competent, creative, powerful. I can enjoy life in the most diverse ways – but if I were not ‘good,’ than the final thing itself is missing.¹¹

Guardini calls to our attention the realization that without the existence of the good itself, the particular goods we seek in daily life would be thin and empty. The good is present in the particular values and worth we experience in the world, but is itself something which transcends them all. It is present, but is not exhausted, not contained by all its wide array of manifestations. The good is ever shining forth anew and calling forward a new response from our freedom.

In our world today we are not used to thinking in these terms, and it may strike us at first as a bit fanciful. However, when we contemplate the awe-inspiring beauty and profundity of reality – the vastness of the natural world with its splendors and astounding variety of living beings, the wonder that the birth of child awakes in its parents, or in particular, the beauty of a human person who has lived a “good life” in the highest meaning of the word, a Mother Theresa, for example – then Plato’s analogy of the good as a sun whose rays are refracted in all these particular beings does not seem so far fetched. In the particular manifestations of goodness in the world, the human person is touched by the good itself. “The love of the human person with his moral will is directed toward [the good itself],” explains Guardini, “so that he descends from the good itself to

¹¹ „Was meint ein Mensch, wenn er in einer lebendigen Stunde sagt: ich möchte gut werden? Offenbar doch mehr, als daß er lernen will, die Wesensforderung der jeweiligen Situation – des Berufes, der Beziehung zu anderen Menschen usw. – richtig zu erkennen und ihnen zu genügen. Er meint auch mehr, als daß er fähig werden will, seiner Weltverantwortung zu entsprechen. ... Natürlich meint er das alles auch; darüber hinaus aber etwas Anderes, eben »das Gute« und »das Gut-Sein«. Darin fühlt er etwas Unverwechselbar-Eigenes dessen Verwirklichung ihm eine unverwechselbar-eigene Wertigkeit gibt. Es ist tief, weit, hoch, reich, stark, groß, schön, in vielerlei Modalitäten erscheinend und zugleich ganz einfach. In alledem ist es es-selbst und kann auf keinen anderen Wert zurückgeführt werden. Er weiß: Ich kann wissend, tüchtig, schöpferisch, mächtig werden, kann Leben in den verschiedensten Weisen genießen – werde ich aber nicht »gut«, dann fehlt das Eigentlich-Letzte.“ *Ethik*, vol. 1, 46.

the individual images of value, tasks and accomplishments of life.“¹² The privileged center of this contact is the conscience where the good itself presses on the human spirit in an interior dialogue.

In response to the good come expressions of readiness, such as: I want to become good... I wish that human beings were good... the good should be done everywhere... The demand will always be felt; according to the ethical alertness of the individual, it will be more or less conscious and intense. This constant being-pushed by the good grounds the character of human beings as such, and receives its practical explanation in religious formulations, such as walking in the presence of God or of acting constantly in accord with the will of God.¹³

Since the good is itself infinite and simple, there is no direct way for the finite human being to directly actualize it. We always touch the good itself in and through the particular good – by acting in accord with the truth of being as it is entrusted to us. Guardini comments, “Here we stand before a problem which every ethic must face: How the indubitable absoluteness of the good in itself stands in relation to the equally indubitable relativity of its concrete interpretation.”¹⁴ To give complete Guardini’s response to this question, we must pick up his term “*phenomemon*,” and this time highlight another dimension, that of the relation between the interior depths of a being and its appearing. Those who are familiar with Goethe will recognize his concept of *Gestalt*. Guardini’s response to the question of the relation between the good itself and the particular good correlates with his definition of *phenomenon* – i.e. the appearing of the essence (*Wesen*) of a being (*Seiendem*), which essence is in itself hidden. The essence which truly appears in the outward form of each being, remains at the same time constantly reserved in itself and rooted in the eternal. In relation to the appearance of the good itself in the particular good, Guardini states, „[The particular good] always contains an absolute core (*Kern*); in it the eternal expresses itself...“¹⁵ Unfortunately, we cannot now develop all the elements of this metaphysical vision, which has its major point of reference in the Christian assimilation and transformation of Platonic thought. What we want to see for the moment, is the way in which the good and the true are present within concrete reality. Our experience of their presence and its demands leads us to a consideration of the conscience.

Guardini expresses our participation in the good through the analogy of an interior dialogue between the good and the depths of the person. Again, the image at first strikes us a bit fanciful; nevertheless, our experience of interior dialogue, of the working of our conscience when we have

¹² „Das Wort »höchst« meint also kein Superlativum, sondern ein Absolutum: den vollkommenen Wert einfachhin...Dann meint es aber auch, daß dieser Wert eben das Gute ist, es selbst. Auf es richtet sich die Liebe des sittlich gewillten Menschen, um dann von ihm zu den einzelnen Wertbildern, Aufgaben, Leistungen des Lebens herabzusteigen.“ *Ethik*, vol. 1, 48.

¹³ „Auf es antworten Äußerungen der Bereitschaft, wie: ich möchte gut werden... ich wünsche, die Menschen wären gut .. das Gute sollte überall geschehen... Die Forderung wird immer empfunden; je nach der ethischen Wachheit des Einzelnen mehr oder weniger bewußt und intensiv. Dieses beständige Gedrängtsein vom Guten begründet den Charakter des Menschen als solchen und erfährt in religiösen Formeln, wie der des Wandels in Gottes Gegenwart oder des beständigen Tuns von Gottes Willen seine praktische Verdeutlichung.“ *Ethik*, vol. 1,48-49.

¹⁴ *Ethik*, vol. 1, 36.

¹⁵ „Wir stehen hier vor einem Problem, dem jede Ethik sich zu stellen hat: wie sich die zweifellose Absolutheit des Guten an sich zur ebenso zweifellosen Relativität seiner konkreten Deutung verhalte.“ Immer enthält es den absoluten Kern; in ihm drückt sich das Ewige aus, das vom wachen Gefühl empfunden wird. Immer verdichtet es sich aber in relativen Formen; in ihnen drückt sich das aus, was Geschichte heißt, und ohne das keine Verwirklichung möglich ist.“ *Ethik*, vol. 1, 36.

a moral decision to make, actually suggests that this “conversation with the good” is a rather accurate analogy.

The good says to human hearts: will me; let me come into the world; realize me... The human being responds: Yes, I will it. But how should I do it? I can't take hold of you. From there comes no immediate answer. Then, however, someone comes and wants help and now the good speaks: I am, that you be helpful to this person! That means the infinitude and simplicity of the good must be broken open, particularized, named concretely, so that it might be realized in an act.¹⁶

By means of this contact with the good itself, which speaks its demands in the conscience, the particular truth and good of our everyday situations are realized. The good itself takes shape in the world, and the person itself is affirmed and developed. Since it is the deepest existential level of the human being which is engaged in this relation to the good, the accomplishment of the good means the actualization of one's proper nature.¹⁷

A completion of Guardini's vision requires us to go yet a step further, and this last step will bring us to both a summit and a new starting point. Guardini states that we could well ask, “Why is it that things have their own nature, their own truth?” “Why is it that I bear a responsibility toward the world?” His first response establishes us in a receptive disposition before reality. He answers: “It is simply so. Your human nature consists therein, that you are so. The nature of the world consists therein, that it places demands upon you.” Nevertheless, he acknowledges, “The question is not thereby given a final answer” and then shows us that we have reached a summit. “Why is the human being and the world so configured? The full answer will be found first through the step into the religious. We have here one place where ethics opens itself out to what is above it.”¹⁸ Guardini reminds us that the question of the existence of God, the divine nature, and the relation of God to the world and human life is implied in the philosophical pursuit of an understanding of human existence. In the Platonic vision recapitulated by Guardini, the good itself which transcends and illumines all beings is “the name for the philosophically understood divinity.”¹⁹ The final meaning of our human responsibility abides not only in man's relation to the particular good which is demanding of him each day, and not only in his relation to the good itself as that which illumines and gives meaning to all things. The final meaning of human responsibility lies in the human person's relation to God, who is the ultimate ground of reality. Guardini gives his final response to the question of why human nature bears this capacity to

¹⁶ „Das Gute sagt zum menschlichen Herzen: Wolle mich; laß mich in die Welt ein; verwirklich mich... Der Mensch antwortet: Ja, ich will. Aber wie soll ich dich tun? Ich kann dich ja nicht fassen! Daraus erfolgt unmittelbar keine Antwort. Dann aber kommt ein Jemand und will Hilfe, und nun spricht das Gute: Ich bin, daß du diesem behilflich seiest! Das heißt: Die Unendlichkeit und zugleich Einfachheit des Guten muß aufgebrochen, besondert, konkret benannt werden, damit sie in den Akt gelangen können.“ *Ethik*, vol. 1, 49.

¹⁷ *Ethik*, vol. 1, 55.

¹⁸ „Es ist einfach so. Dein Menschen wesen besteht darin, das du so bist; das Weltwesen darin, daß es dich so unter Forderung stellt. Damit ist die Frage aber noch nicht endgültig beantwortet. Warum ist das Menschsein, warum das Weltsein so geartet? Die volle Antwort wird erst durch den Schritt ins Religiöse gefunden. Wir haben hier eine jener Stellen, wo die Ethik sich über sich hinaus öffnet.“ *Ethik*, vol. 1, 42.

¹⁹ „Von Platon aber über Plotin zu Augustinus tritt immer deutlicher und stärker der religiöse Charakter des Guten hervor, in welchem dessen Transzendenz begründet ist. Das Gute ist bei Platon der Name für das philosophisch gefaßte Göttliche... Damit wird aber das Gute zum Urgrund der Welt... Bei Plotin ist es das Über-Seiende, aus dem die Welt hervorgeht. Bei Augustinus endlich jener Begriff, mit welchem er die absolute Seins- und Wertfülle des Gottes der Offenbarung dekend zu erfahren sucht.“ *Ethik*, vol. 1, 48.

know the truth and actualize the good from the perspective of Revelation. Revelation provides a penetrating light which permeates reality and opens new pathways for our understanding of our human nature. We will conclude with a citation from Guardini that carries us over the threshold from philosophy into theology, properly speaking.

The world is as it is and the human being stands in the relationship to it as was here described, because the originator of existence (*Daseins*), God, made it so. *Genesis* says, human beings are fashioned after God's image and likeness, and defines the essence of this image as the task and capability of ruling over the world. (*Gen. 1, 26-28; 2,15*) This lordship, however, which images the divine, is at the same time reverence and concern for its subjects; [it is] the will to keep its meaning and bring it to completion, and precisely in this way, [it is] responsibility.²⁰

²⁰ „Die Welt ist so, wie sie ist, und der Mensch steht zu ihr in dem Verhältnis, das beschrieben wurde, weil der Urheber des Daseins, Gott, es so geschaffen hat. Die Genesis sagt, der Mensch sei gebildet nach Gottes Bild und Gleichnis, und bestimmt das Wesen dieser Ebenbildlichkeit als Auftrag und Fähigkeit, über die Welt zu herrschen. (*Gen 1, 26-28; 2,15*) Eine Herrschaft aber, welche die göttliche ebenbildet, ist zugleich Ehrfurcht und Sorge für das Beherrschte; Wille, es in seinem Sinn zu halten und zu vollenden, und ebendamit Verantwortung.“ *Ethik*, vol. 1, 42.