

The Integrating Function of Virtue

ABSTRACT

The article presents the problem of virtue as a factor integrating human activity and improving his involvement in social life. After the presentation of the concept of virtue, forms of the integrating function of virtue will be indicated in terms of the coherence of the activities of a person and his involvement in the life of the family and the wider community. Virtue is an important element of social capital understood as a system of values that enables the use and the improvement of cooperation between people.

KEYWORDS: virtue; values; social capital; moral theology.

Moral skill, also known as virtue, concerns the spiritual endowment of a person and indicates the ability to achieve optimal agency by a person who wants to work on himself. People often experience a rift between plans and decisions and actual behavior that they do not quite like. Therefore, they make the effort to subordinate the power of the will and the heart to reason in

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order to express their attitude in a coherent and unambiguous way. Virtue helps to integrate all human dynamisms through their proper recognition and the ability to coordinate them in the service of the greater good. It is similar in the social dimension, where various social entities need to be integrated in terms of concern for the unity of action. The unification around values helps to achieve the synchronization of the efforts of individual participants in social life.

1. THE CONCEPT OF VIRTUE

Man, having a certain potential of his personality, is aware of the need to get to know and master it, in order to be able to decide freely about himself and achieve his goals. The consistency of human attitude is not something easy, however, because a person discovers various forces within himself, which, like opposing vectors, push him into various forms of behavior, which are not always compatible with the acting subject's initial intention. Therefore, there is a need for moral skill that will integrate all dynamisms present in man and make him able to possess himself and use himself autonomously in order to achieve his humanity optimally. This process requires getting to know oneself and accepting both one's abilities and possibilities, as well as one's weaknesses and limitations.²

The correct diagnosis of one's own condition is the starting point for the further development of a person. However, it is not enough to achieve the goals set if these goals are not properly determined, defined and operationalized. It is therefore necessary to create a coherent image of oneself both in terms of owned assets and liabilities, and in terms of development perspectives deter-

² See A. Zadroga, *Współczesne ujęcia etyki biznesu* (Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL, 2009), 38–39.

mined by the adopted ideal of one's own humanity. Although it is difficult to develop a lifetime plan for one's own growth in all aspects of life, each person has a philosophy of life that indicates goals and motivations, and suggests a strategy of behavior. This philosophy of life may be the fruit of one's own creative ambitions, or it arises as a result of adopting certain personal patterns in the process of imitation, and sometimes it is even the fruit of manipulation. However, there is always a margin of human freedom in adopting a specific tactic of behavior, which may be creative and developmental, or may become a path to regression and increasing enslavement.

One of the ways of reaching the consistency of the ideal held with everyday behavior is the ability to rational self-control, known as virtue. Virtue is the moral skill that a person acquires by developing his natural talents. It takes the form of conscious action through which a person controls himself and creates his own image. This means that he has an ideal that he sets oneself and takes steps to implement it. Thus, the dynamics of virtue includes getting to know oneself and one's own abilities, as well as discerning the forms of activating one's potential. By virtue, man becomes good as a man. Through it, he confirms his own freedom and the ability to self-determination. Virtue is a permanent attitude, a permanent disposition, and a habitual attribute of mind and will that regulates deeds, orders feelings, and guides behavior in accordance with reason and faith.³ Living in accordance with the virtues is a guarantee of maintaining moral order and the true promotion of human life. Acting against virtue leads to destruction and degradation of the person.

Virtue is a human personal endowment of a dynamic nature, which allows the realization of the possibilities written in the na-

³ See *Katechizm Kościoła Katolickiego* (Poznań: Pallottinum, 1994), no. 1804.

ture of a person.⁴ Perceived as an endeavor to achieve the moral skill of the subject and, at the same time, the state of accomplishment of this intention, virtue is the basis of perceiving the world through the prism of moral values that ensure harmonious development. The moral skill of the human person can be defined as “acquired and lasting quality that affects the subject itself.”⁵

Although founding our life on virtue does not ensure our undisturbed linear development in the moral dimension; it allows us to see the challenges that may arise in the implementation of human ideals. Virtue, in fact, presupposes man’s realization of the desired ideal state, towards which man should strive. Thus, it sets certain requirements on the person and provides a criterion for assessing the achievements to date.

Integral understanding of virtue is rooted in the truth about the creation of man by God, in which man is perceived as a being perfectly endowed in the act of creation and at the same time constantly developing. The category of *creatio continua* used in theology, assuming the constant assistance of God in the existence and development of man, assumes some initial stage understood as the starting point, which, in cooperation with grace, is multiplied thanks to the free decision of man striving for perfection. The improvement of a person is achieved through his internal effort to work on himself, in which the internal dynamisms are triggered leading to the achievement of personal fullness. Virtue is therefore a peculiar personal human endowment of a dynamic nature, which makes it possible to update the possibilities stored in nature.

In the personalistic understanding of virtue, the dynamism pushing a person to develop cannot be equated with virtue, as it must be accepted and taken up by a person who cooperates with

⁴ See A. Dylus, “Cnota,” in *Słownik teologiczny*, ed. A. Zuberbier (Katowice: Księgarnia świętego Jacka, 1998), 95–97.

⁵ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I-II, q. 34, a. 2, ad 1.

grace. Man is a free subject who surpasses the dynamisms present in him and, not succumbing to determinisms, chooses values from the palette of possibilities himself, achieving happiness or destroying the chance for development. This means that virtue is not what directs man, but is a tool that the personal subject uses for his own improvement. At the same time, through the acquisition and development of virtues, man gains the ability to achieve his goals efficiently, because he is able to integrate various vectors of his own potentiality.⁶

Virtue understood as a moral skill means the internal ability to mobilize oneself in such a way that leads to the realization of shared and wanted values. In the structure of each skill, it is necessary to distinguish an intellectual element that allows for the perception and understanding of the requirements of one's own development, and a volitional element, in the form of a will, which makes it possible to make decisions about taking action.⁷ An important element of virtue are also emotions that allow one to enjoy the desired good and constitute a kind of reward for achieving values. Virtue is therefore a conscious action through which man has control over himself and creates his image both in terms of its design and implementation in practice. There is a place in virtue to overcome oneself and to activate the ability to transform the world.

The feature of moral skill manifested in the form of virtue is constancy and the ability to engage all spiritual powers of a person, which lead to effectiveness in action and the ability to resist adversities. Virtue allows people to do their best and activates the layers of good in a them, thanks to which they are able to exceed themselves. As a result, virtue releases in man his dormant potential opportunities and makes him an independent

⁶ See John Paul II, *Encyclical Veritatis splendor* (Vatican: LEV, 1993), no. 48.

⁷ See S. Witek, "Cnota," in *Encyklopedia katolicka* (Lublin: Towarzystwo Naukowe KUL, 1979), 3:521–23.

creator of his fate and ensures freedom from external conditions. It should be emphasized that the virtues belong to realities “which are undoubtedly a good not only of Christian, but also of *human morality and moral culture* [...]. Hand in hand with moral permissiveness is the crisis of truth in interpersonal relations, the lack of responsibility for the word, a purely utilitarian attitude towards man, the loss of the true common good and the ease with which it becomes alienated.”⁸

In the perspective of the Christian faith, virtue not only acquires a new horizon of perfection in the form of a model shown in the person of Christ, but also reveals a completely new reality of virtue as an element of human cooperation with God. This cooperation, understood as the perfection of the work of creation, is based on a reality of redemption, rooted not only in Christ’s Paschal Mystery, but also in the Incarnation itself, as a radical exposition of the values of human nature. The Christ-centered dimension of aretology exceeds only the exemplary aspect of the relationship with Christ, i.e. the striving to imitate the example shown in Jesus of Nazareth,⁹ but it goes back to the ontology itself, in which man can understand himself in Christ as a child of God enabled to participate in God’s life. For he is a son in the Son with the capacity for dialogue and cooperation.¹⁰

On this level, virtue can be enriched by combining it with the gifts of the Holy Spirit, enabling one to perform activities that go beyond the mere reach of man. The gift of counsel, wisdom and fortitude, and above all the supernatural gift of love which is a fruit of the Holy Spirit, make man open to the source of

⁸ John Paul II, Encyclical *Dives in misericordia* (Vatican: LEV, 1980), no. 12.

⁹ See T. Zadykowicz, “Maryja wzorem cnót teologicznych,” *Salvatoris Mater* 19, nos. 1–4 (2017): 92–93.

¹⁰ See idem, “*Sequela Christi et imitatio hominis*”. *Paradygmat naśladowania we współczesnej refleksji teologicznomoralnej – źródła perspektywy* (Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL, 2011), 406–7.

God's power and be able to do the things he carries in his heart as a sublime vocation to do the truth in love. "The penetration of man with God's action leads to such an intensification of the action of the Holy Spirit that it becomes something more than the very life of virtues. Friendship with God, which opens man to the gift of the Holy Spirit, makes him experience a new source of action, revealing its uniqueness by enabling the extraordinary deeds of a Christian."¹¹

The contemporary confusion of the world, born of the loss of the perspective of eternity, influences the perception of life as something passing and temporal. At the same time, such thinking activates the mechanism of rejecting the acceptance of faith as something that can give a person the strength to implement his projects. The radical separation of the ethics and practice of social life frees specific political and technical solutions from their moral value considered in the aspect of good and evil. Rejection of the axiology of the actions taken in favor of their usefulness means that only the measurable benefit counts, which is temporary and short-sighted.¹²

Without taking into account the intrinsic value of the things considered in the final perspective, the chance of their proper location in worldliness is lost, because there are no sufficient criteria for their adequate assessment.¹³ Human actions, not considered in terms of their moral value, cannot be entirely predictable, because their placement in the narrow perspective of mortal life does not allow one to see far-reaching consequences. The fruits of wrong

¹¹ A. Derdziuk, *Teologia moralna w służbie wiary Kościoła* (Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL, 2010), 178.

¹² See J. Nagórny, "Wierzyć, ale jaki z tego pożytek?" in *Ks. Janusz Nagórny. Z wiary miłość i nadzieja*, ed. K. Jeżyna, J. Gocko, and W. Rzepa (Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL, 2011), 123–24.

¹³ See R. Biel, *Kościół Wielkiej Soboty. Paschalna wizja Kościoła w ujęciu kardynała Kurta Kocha* (Tarnów: Biblos, 2012), 290–91.

choices resulting from being infected with evil, by disturbing the integral perception of the person and disrupting the social order, bring destruction as a consequence and are unable to contribute to building human happiness.

In this context, it is worth quoting the words of Pope Benedict XVI, who said during an ecumenical prayer service in the former Augustinian Convent in Erfurt on September 23, 2011: “Does man need God, or can we do quite well without him? When, in the first phase of God’s absence, his light continues to illumine and sustain the order of human existence, it appears that things can also function quite well without God. But the more the world withdraws from God, the clearer it becomes that man, in his hubris of power, in his emptiness of heart and in his longing for satisfaction and happiness, increasingly loses his life.”¹⁴

Moral laws are characterized by the fact that although they are inevitable and act consistently, they are more difficult to notice than the laws of physics, because their consequences sometimes appear only over time and can be attributed to various causes. The hermeneutics of reality adopted by non-believers may not take into account the shaping of human behavior by moral norms, ascribing them to physical, psychological or sociological factors. However, this does not change the truth that man, being the subject of his actions, acts according to his internal endowment in the form of moral skills. A virtuous man is far more capable of lofty activities than the one who does not possess virtues and does not work on his character.

¹⁴ Benedict XVI, “Przemówienie podczas nabożeństwa ekumenicznego” (23 Sept. 2011), *L’Osservatore Romano*, Polish edition, 32, no. 12 (2011): 23.

2. VIRTUE AS A FACTOR INTEGRATING A PERSON'S ACTIVITY IN THE COMMUNITY

Man as a relational being creates social bonds with others by discovering mutual dependence on people and positive building of planes for everyday existence and creative activity.¹⁵ By receiving the gift of life through the mediation of parents transferring their gametes to a new being, a human being in the process of his development becomes aware of the ontic and existential dependence on the act of conception, adoption and upbringing. Experiencing good on the material, emotional, cultural and spiritual level makes a person aware of being included in the circle of mutual exchange, in which he first becomes a recipient, then the communicator and an author of his own response. That is why it is important to achieve personal maturity, thanks to which man appreciates the good received and encourage to freely join the circle of giving.

Man, reaching his fullness, but only through a sincere gift of himself,¹⁶ must become aware of the vocation to love, which implies the ability to perceive this love and accept it, and to multiply in the form of service to others. In this case, virtue means the openness of heart which, through generosity, extends to receiving the good offered, and through humility, it does not refuse to accept it.¹⁷ A gift, which is always a task in some way, calls for an adequate response in the form of an act, hence its acceptance presupposes readiness to act and releases the latent dynamics of the person. By humbly recognizing one's ontic state as a creature who receives the gift of life and action, man does not usurp the at-

¹⁵ See J. Gocko and K. Kołtun, "'Trzy dobre uczynki' w ujęciu teologii moralnej społecznej," *Seminare* 34 (2013), 46.

¹⁶ See Vatican II, "Konstytucja duszpasterska o Kościele w świecie współczesnym," in *Konstytucje, deklaracje, dekrety* (Poznań: Pallottinum, 1986), no. 24, p. 555.

¹⁷ See Benedict XVI, Encyclical *Deus Caritas est* (Vatican: LEV, 2005), no. 7.

tributes of divinity and does not appropriate the complete agency of his actions. It is not about limiting the freedom of a person, but showing his connections with other people, which make the initiative and methodology of autonomously undertaken activities themselves, without ceasing to be freely chosen by the person, are shaped in the relational conditions of his life.

The necessity to provide an existential answer to the received gifts prompts a person to develop moral skills as a specific tool that he uses to take action. As Rev. Franciszek Blachnicki said, it is about having yourself in giving.¹⁸ Man who wishes to give himself to others, must be able to surrender his body and spirit to the accepted idea, which will be able to integrate the dynamisms of his personality. The tool of integration is a virtue that indicates a goal and at the same time inspires a specific range of activities. It means, therefore, making the effort to work on oneself, which aims to develop specific mechanisms and methods of action. Once they fall within the scope of the normal repertoire of behavior and become habits, they cannot be regarded as a mechanical mode of action, but always remain personal acts undertaken with consciousness and freedom. Since virtue is not something automatic in man, because it is always the fruit of a conscious decision involving the whole person at the beginning and during its manifestation in deeds.

Virtue becomes, therefore, a special binder of human relationships when it provides a person with conditions for establishing existential bonds with others and shapes a personal way of experiencing and responding to emerging challenges. By pointing to different levels of the skill that characterizes a person, one can discern a gradation of importance and sublimity of various planes of life organized by virtue. Rev. Stanisław Witek, distinguishing

¹⁸ See F. Blachnicki, "Tajemnica wielka – w Chrystusie i w Kościele. Charyzmat maryjny Ruchu Światło – Życie," in F. Blachnicki, *Charyzmat Światło-Życie. Teksty podstawowe* (Lublin: Światło – Życie, 1996), 55.

between values, claimed that “there is as much value as there are objectively different areas of existence and activity.”¹⁹ The moralist from Lublin proposed a hierarchical setting of values, among which he first enumerated the physical values of possession and existence, then he pointed to personal values in terms of feeling, knowing and acting. The next place is occupied by the values of collective life in terms of organization and community, and at the top, there are spiritual values in the form of personal perfection and religious holiness.²⁰ The relation of man to the material world, to other people and to God should therefore be an element of conscious choice and should be characterized by constancy and consistency. A person acquires these qualities by developing virtues in himself.

The interconnection of virtues means that one depends on the other and cannot be used interchangeably, nor can they change their position in their hierarchy. The virtues standing at the lowest level in the hierarchy condition the functioning of the highest skills. At the same time, however, the virtues at the peak of human personal development have a directive meaning for the entire human attitude. Pope Benedict XVI, on his pilgrimage to Germany in 2011, stated: “We observe that this relativism exerts more and more influence on human relationships and on society. This is reflected, among other things, in the inconstancy and fragmentation of many people’s lives and in an exaggerated individualism. Many no longer seem capable of any form of self-denial or of making a sacrifice for others. Even the altruistic commitment to the common good, in the social and cultural sphere or on behalf of the needy, is in decline. Others are now quite incapable of committing themselves unreservedly to a single partner. People can hardly find the courage now to promise to be faithful for a whole

¹⁹ S. Witek, *Chrześcijańska wizja moralności* (Poznań: Księgarnia św. Wojciecha, 1982), 98.

²⁰ See *ibid.*, 98–99.

lifetime; the courage to make a decision and say: now I belong entirely to you, or to take a firm stand for fidelity and truthfulness and sincerely to seek a solution to their problems.”²¹ The inability, or rather the reluctance and inability of man to control himself, manifest in the social dimension, causing the disturbance of interpersonal relations based on faithfulness and willingness to sacrifice.

3. VIRTUE AS A FACTOR OF SOCIAL CAPITAL

The concept of social capital is very broad and ambiguous, therefore, depending on the starting point, it is associated with human capital as a factor facilitating its use and facilitating cooperation between people, or as an attribute of the individual ensuring the possibility of obtaining benefits within social structures.²² Classical concepts indicate the potentiality of a person, which can be activated thanks to certain conditions marked by mutual trust, the ability to cooperate and networking based on the awareness of mutual dependencies and co-responsibility for the decisions made.²³ In the perspective of the development of social capital, it is important to appreciate the person as the basic subject of social life and his proper functioning in the form of respecting the norms rooted in conscience and shared and strengthened by the community. In the very concept of social capital, it is therefore necessary to indicate the need for a system of moral norms constituting the anchorage and the space of security for a person,

²¹ Benedict XVI, “Przemówienie podczas spotkania z członkami Prezydium Centralnego Komitetu Katolików Niemieckich” (24 Sept. 2011), *L’Osservatore Romano*, Polish edition, 32, no. 12 (2011): 32.

²² See T. Kaźmierczak, “Kapitał społeczny a rozwój społeczno-ekonomiczny – przegląd podejść,” in *Kapitał społeczny. Ekonomia społeczna*, ed. T. Kaźmierczak and M. Rymśza (Warszawa: Instytut Spraw Publicznych, 2007), 46.

²³ See *ibid.*, 44.

which can be based on the solid foundation of social consent in the scope of the evaluation of actions.

The system of organizing social cooperation should take into account the optimal development of a person as a free and conscious being. This was recalled by Pope Benedict XVI, who said that “[t]he economy needs ethics in order to function correctly – not any ethics whatsoever, but an ethics which is people-centred.”²⁴ Failure to pay attention to the nature of a person and the creation of social life institutions that are inappropriate to that nature causes contamination of the systemic system with an anthropological error which has catastrophic consequences for individuals and communities.²⁵

Virtue constitutes social capital by the fact that it triggers specific mechanisms in a person enabling him to engage in the realization of the common good. The Christian approach to virtue places it in the perspective of the grace of redemption, which enables man to act in an integral and coherent manner in accordance with the eternal plan of God. This links moral skills in a special way with the supernatural faith that opens the human heart to a gift from Christ. While recalling the words of Saint John Paul II: “The Church has never denied that also a non-believer can be honest and noble. Anyone can easily find out about it”, it must be emphasized that in the field of morality “it is faith that provides the deepest possible justification for it.”²⁶

Virtue constitutes social capital not directly, but only indirectly, because pragmatism and utilitarianism cannot be put first in its dynamics. The physiognomy of virtue emphasizes the readiness

²⁴ Benedict XVI, *Caritas in veritate* (Vatican: LEV, 2009), no. 45; see more in A. Zadroga, “Personalistyczna koncepcja moralności gospodarczej w ujęciu Jana Pawła II i Benedykta XVI w kontekście współczesnego kryzysu ekonomicznego,” *Roczniki Teologii Moralne* 59 (2012): 211–21.

²⁵ See John Paul II, Encyclical *Centesimus annus* (Vatican: LEV, 1991), no. 17.

²⁶ John Paul II, *Przekroczyć próg nadziei* (Lublin: Wydawnictwa KUL, 1994), 142.

of a virtuous person to transcend himself in the pursuit of making himself a selfless gift. Virtue provides the foundation in the form of adequate motivation and access to a source of power, and determines the shape of development and ensures consistency of action. Due to moral skills, people think and act as well as achieving their goals and acts better as well as achieves his goals more effectively. By being happy, they are able to make others happy, because virtue causes "ease, self-mastery, and joy in leading a morally good life".²⁷

At the basis of the hierarchy of moral virtues are virtues known as cardinal, which become a kind of hinge enabling the realization of other virtues. Prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance form a coherent quadriga of attitudes that condition the ability to control oneself and act responsibly for the benefit of others. Embracing the personal and social dimensions, the cardinal virtues regulate the most important planes of thinking and acting and indicate the direction of searching for optimal responses to the challenges facing the person.

A prudent person who distinguishes ends from means, gives things their proper measure, resulting from a well-established hierarchy of values. While seeing the common good, a person is able to engage in its implementation through cooperation with others, because he is convinced that in this way he fulfills his humanity. Prudence makes it possible to properly recognize both one's abilities and desires as well as social challenges and their mutual synchronization leading to the development of a person and the implementation of his mission in the world.²⁸

A man who is guided by the virtue of justice gives what is due to everyone and avoids dishonesty, striving for equal treatment of all members of the community. He takes actions being aware of

²⁷ *Katechizm*, no. 1804.

²⁸ See P. Bortkiewicz, "Roztropność," in *Jan Paweł II. Encyklopedia nauczania moralnego*, ed. J. Nagórny and K. Jeżyna (Radom: Polwen, 2005), 469.

the need to take into account the requirements of the law, which he treats not as burdensome obstacles to success, but as a rational ordering of life aimed at ensuring balance and proper respect for all participants of social life.²⁹ Justice cannot be confused with flattening equality, because then one does not recognize the differences between individuals who have different conditions, merits and needs.

Fortitude is understood as the courage through which a person is ready to take on difficult challenges and as perseverance meaning the ability to persist faithfully in the fulfillment of accepted commitments. Thanks to the virtue of fortitude, one acts wisely, not so much without feeling fear as by showing the ability to overcome it. Consistency in demanding a lot from oneself contributes to personal development and creates the conditions for fruitful commitment to the community. A courageous man is not afraid of toil and willingly undertakes duties, although he knows that they involve some effort and he has to take into account unexpected situations.

The cardinal virtue of temperance helps man to control his reflexes regarding the needs of the body. It has its positive effect in the form of reasonable moderation in using the goods of this world.³⁰ People who are guided by temperance are able to define rationally their needs and satisfy them in an appropriate way, both in terms of the quantity, time and intensity of sensations. By respecting the rights of others, temperate individuals are able to make sacrifices that secure the common good and create space for the development of others. In controlling their body, people guided by temperance do not negate temporal values, but point to their proper place in meeting their needs. The ability to self-possess in

²⁹ See M. Pokrywka, "Rodzina 'szkołą cnót społecznych'," *Roczniki Teologii Moralnej* 4 (2012): 149–65.

³⁰ See T. Sikorski, "Umiarkowanie," in *Słownik teologiczny*, ed. A. Zuberbier (Katowice: Księgarnia świętego Jacka, 1998), 613.

giving, achieved through exercise and asceticism, makes people available and willing to cooperate.

While every virtue has its own social dimension due to the fact that a person's behavior influences the shape of social life, there are some virtues which, due to their scope of influence, can be called social. The catalog of social virtues includes justice, love and the love of truth. They result in other specific attitudes in the form of fidelity, truthfulness, honesty and solidarity. Patriotism and respect for other people are also social virtues. Similarly, the virtue of temperance applies not only to moderating one's own needs, but also includes the ability to perceive other participants in social life.

Although social virtues belong to the moral and not strictly legal order, they significantly support social life, as they become the basis for citizens' cooperation as subjects of social life. "The moral character of development and its necessary promotion are emphasized when the most rigorous respect is given to all the demands deriving from the order of *truth and good* proper to the human person."³¹ Thus, the preservation of the legal order and social principles, which include freedom, subsidiarity and solidarity, is based on virtues.³² In fact, where there is a lack of individual skills in the form of virtues, there is a need for increasing involvement of state services in law enforcement. Where the conscience dies, the more the operation of the law extends, which replaces the individual's internal choice of good with the obligation to undertake specific behavior enforced by the law. As a matter of fact, releasing oneself from being guided by conscience acting through acquired moral skills results in the detailed specification of the law regulating even the smallest areas of human behavior.

³¹ John Paul II, Encyclical *Sollicitudo rei socialis* (Vatican: LEV, 1987), no. 33.

³² See Cz. Strzeszewski, *Katolicka nauka społeczna* (Lublin: Wydawnictwa KUL, 2003), 513.

Among the virtues that are especially directed at serving one's neighbor and respecting the principles governing the life of the human community, there are derivatives of the virtues of justice and, at the same time, love of one's neighbor, among which courtesy and availability are of the utmost importance.³³ In turn, the virtue of kindness and the ability to cooperate with others facilitates the formation of a team and contributes to the development of bonds of camaraderie and friendship that facilitate mutual relations. One of the manifestations of concern for the common good, resulting from justice, is the honest payment of taxes.³⁴ It is not only the conviction that the duty is a legal necessity that matters, but also a conscientious approach to it. The correct functioning of social mechanisms is always based on the free and responsible behavior of people who implement these mechanisms.³⁵ The awareness of belonging to one community of the nation and the sense of shared responsibility for all people is a manifestation of solidarity-based thinking, which, from the inside, encourages one to reliably fulfill the obligations legally imposed by the state.

The underlying intrinsic motivation behind such behavior is subjected to a well-formed conscience. Man focused on achieving virtue strives to improve the country's economy by influencing social and economic changes,³⁶ and strives to select an appropriate political representation. By remaining honest and solid, he

³³ See A. Derdziuk, *Aretologia w podręcznikach moralistów kapucyńskich w okresie między Soborem Watykańskim I a Watykańskim II* (Wydawnictwa KUL, 2001), 463.

³⁴ See A. Zadroga, "Podatki z perspektywy katolickiej nauki społecznej," *Annales. Etyka w życiu gospodarczym* 16 (2013): 159–69.

³⁵ See H. Skorowski, "Spór o prawa człowieka," in *Spór o człowieka – spór o przyszłość świata. Od bł. Jana XXIII do Jana Pawła II*, ed. J. Nagórny and J. Gocko (Lublin: Sekcja Polskich Teologów Moralistów, 2004), 150–51.

³⁶ See A. Zadroga, "Zaangażowanie katolików świeckich w świecie ekonomii," *Forum teologiczne* 11 (2010): 83–95.

knows that in this way he contributes to the best promotion of the desired values and at the same time ensures economic growth.

Virtue also helps one to abide by the law. The feeling of belonging to the state and local community, which is treated as one's own, increases the responsibility for its fate. The awareness of interdependence with others suggests honesty to rational people, because they are aware, while remaining in a circle of various connections, they will one day bear the consequences of their inappropriate behavior. By rising above the short-sighted tactics of dishonesty, a virtuous person realizes that history holds account of betrayals and wrongs, and rewards those who cultivate good and justice.

Belonging to a national community based on properly understood patriotism prompts one to care for the development of the native community and to contribute to the multiplication of intellectual and economic potential of our country.³⁷ For the fruitful assurance of economic sovereignty, which is a tool for freedom and independence of the country, the virtue of patriotism is needed, which goes beyond pure economic pragmatics. In the case of war, patriotism leads to the readiness to shed one's blood for the Fatherland, which is opposed to the pure calculation of profits and losses, and refers to the spiritual and symbolic dimension.

The highest expression of responsibility for the common good is love, which inspires man and spurs him to joyful service for his neighbor. Love, which is the perfect fulfillment of the law, is not limited to obeying the law but also fully satisfies the expectations of man who wants to feel like a protagonist of his own actions. The satisfaction that comes from a deep inner conviction that one is needed and expected gives one strength and makes one motivated to serve the ideals that inspire him. While being aware of belonging to a community and experiencing participa-

³⁷ See J. Gocko, "Globalizacja," in *Jan Paweł II. Encyklopedia nauczania moralnego*, ed. J. Nagórny and K. Jeżyna (Radom: Polwen, 2005), 215–16.

tion in the greater history of the human community, man driven by love does not alienate himself, but even more so confirms his perpetration of the acts he has chosen voluntarily and consistently continues in their implementation. Love is therefore the greatest social capital, being at the same time a motive for action and a reward for the one who loves.

Being conscious that social capital aims to build an efficient democracy by creating a climate of trust that fosters increased civic involvement, it should be emphasized that only an individual guided by virtues, i.e. permanent and fully internalized values, is able to cooperate with others effectively and over the long-term.³⁸ By taking joint action to solve problems effectively, a person should have the virtue of prudence and fortitude as well as the love that affirms themselves and the world they live in. Without wasting energy on unproductive disputes and conflicts, a virtuous person, internally integrated by the truth, is able to cooperate with others and contribute to the growth of the common good.³⁹

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³⁸ See A. Zadroga, "Katolicy w biznesie – postawa i posłannictwo," in *Wiara i biznes*, ed. M. Leśniak and P. Król (Kraków: Duszpasterstwo Przedsiębiorców i Pracodawców Talent, 2014), 39–56.

³⁹ See A. Rymcza, "Klasyczne koncepcje kapitału społecznego," in *Kapitał społeczny. Ekonomia społeczna*, ed. T. Kaźmierczak and M. Rymcza (Warsaw: Instytut Spraw Publicznych, 2007), 30–34.

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