

A SOUL FOR PROFESSIONAL WORK

NEW PERSPECTIVES OF CHRISTIAN THOUGHT 500 YEARS AFTER THE REFORM

**The future of work from Edith Stein's proposal
of the structure of a person**

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Introduction

Today's society is marked both by an individualist concept of men, propagated by the Protestant Reformation, and by the notion of the mass men, encouraged by historical materialism which gave the theoretical foundations to the Bolshevik Revolution. Nevertheless, even though these stances can be considered antagonistic, they are completely immersed in modern thought, in which -as Hegel affirms- «we entered, strictly ... in a philosophy of our and independent»¹. This new beginning or philosophy is characterized for putting certainty as a psychological act (self certainty), as a starting point of philosophical reflection, anchored in understanding that men will develop in modernity about himself and everything that surrounds him. This allows us to say that modernity is «the period par excellence where man is constituted as subject, where

¹ G.W.F. HEGEL, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, Vol. III. (translate by E. S. Haldane and F. H. Simson), Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co. Ltd., London 1996, p.224.

everything is understood in reference to him, everything acquires meaning, coherence and unity in reference to the self»².

With no intentions of making an exhaustive analysis of all the developments and nuances that this starting point originated in modern man's understanding of himself, it is important to highlight that both the tendencies of thought derived from the Protestant Reformation and historical materialism frame themselves in the modern way of understanding men, therefore consciousness is fundamental for both thought tendencies. Given such, in this article we intend to bring out how both stances have led the contemporary man to de-subjectivize himself from himself and from others, creating a culture where work structures, far from creating stability and harmony between individuals, have progressively generated structures of violence that nowadays mark our comprehension of work and its structures.

Alignment of consciousness in Lutheran thought

The influence from the Protestant Reformation in the making of capitalism historically derived from an individualist culture, before which -withholding any value judgment about Lutheran thought and the Protestant Reformation- we intend to evidence how the understanding of human action developed by Luther rests on a notion of individual consciousness.

Taking Luther's phrase «*Fides facit personam, persona facit opera*»³, we can highlight how Luther strictly marks a difference between being a man and being a person. Such distinction stems from his exegesis of Saint Paul's phrase «*totus homo caro est*», which Luther interprets by affirming that all men are flesh because man searches only for himself, in all. This is so because to create such exegesis, Luther bases his claims in his previous conception of man's will. He mainly explains his notion of human will in the dispute he has with Erasmus of Rotterdam on whether men are truly free to choose good or evil. In this debate, Luther distinguished between *voluntas* and *liberum*, denying *liberum* to men because of two main reasons: firstly because men are not God, therefore he cannot do what he pleases; secondly because all subject of love is possible in men, including God, therefore men are not entirely disinterested because he will

² Gabriel AMENGUAL, *Modernidad y crisis del sujeto: hacia la construcción del sujeto solidario*, Caparros Editores, Madrid 1998, p. 154.

³ Martin LUTHER, *Zirkulardisputation über das Große Abendmahl* en *Werke Dritische Gesamtausgabe*, Weimar, 1883 and below (hereinafter WA), vol. 39 I, p. 283.

always wish to fulfil his own wishes. So that in front of *liberum arbitrium*, Luther affirms that it is not possible and therefore a more accurate term would be *servum arbitrium*.

To understand *servum arbitrium*, Luther synthesizes it in the phrase «*Amor Deo non invenit, sed creat suum diligibile, amor hominis fit a suo diligibili*»⁴. For this reason, Luther thinks human will is not free but servant to men's desires, which takes Luther to conclude that the natural demand towards reasonable good serves men as a result of the natural concupiscence turned into *peccatum originale*; and this *servum arbitrium* is empirical evidence to conclude that men will always be searching for himself in everything.

Facing such perspective, from Luther's understanding, men will only do good for God's help. In other words, faith is the only thing left to men. Grace and nothing else is what pulls men out of sin, therefore a new perspective of virtuous action is proposed: «*Fides facit personam, persona facit opera*»⁵, considering that only faith makes reference to the act of being of a person, which through faith, se "full and satisfied", and is happy with divine justice". Instead, men with freedomless will, is reduced to the "exterior man", which through his action has no other thing before his eyes than necessity and the neighbour's interest"⁶.

After exposing the crucial point of Luther's understanding of human action, we can now comprehend why culture developed from this trail of thought, which puts as its core the alienations of men's consciousness from others; and it is understood why the Protestant Reformation encouraged -probably without intention- a culture rooted in a vision of men centered in self-perfection, where each individual searches his own, progressively forgetting others, common good, solidarity, etc.

Nonetheless, paradoxically speaking, this exacerbated individual consciousness has led liberal culture to massification. Max Horkheimer's posture could be summarized in two types of individualism: «individualism comprises individuality as self-consciousness, as an autonomous identity, of human beings responsible for their own destiny, involved with their society, in search of freedom and happiness. But individualism can also be understood as the atomization of multiple individuals, private beings in the twofold sense of the term: not interested in public

⁴ «The love of God does not find, but creates what he loves. The love of man is only given in the things he finds adorable». Cfr. H. BEINTKER et Al. (eds.), *Die reformatorischen Grundschriften*, Darmstadt 1932; vol 1, *probationis conclusionum*, XIII. p.54; C. STANGE (Ed.), *Die ältesten athischen Disputationen Luthers*, Leipzig 1932, p. 34.

⁵ WA 39 I, p. 283.

⁶ Cfr. Berthold WALD, *Die Handlungsbedeutung und der Personbegriff bei Martin Luther*, "Espiritu" LIX (2010) n° 139, 43-67.

matters that all concern and at the same time lack self-judgment; exercised in submission, absorbed in consumption, and whose only form of rebellion is always based on violence that is lost in mass, anonymity»⁷.

Alienated conscience in historical materialism

As it is known, the theoretical foundation the Bolshevik Revolution is historical materialism by Karl Marx. Contrary to the culture derived from the anthropological perception of the Protestant Reformation, understanding self-consciousness in regards to historical materialism will not be centered in the individual but in the collective. This is manifested in the importance Marx gives “class consciousness”, highlighting human action, or otherwise said, that which impulses cannot be understood from itself, but from being included in a collectivity, since collectivity is where it is truly developed. It is real in a collective. When Marx criticized young, Hegelian students, he affirmed «it is not consciousness of men that determines their existence, but their social existence that determines their consciousness», establishing a new relationship between theory and praxis. In his piece *The Poverty of Philosophy*, Marx argues the following: «Economic conditions had first transformed the mass of the people of the country into workers. The dominations of capital has created for this mass a common situation, common interest. This mass is thus already a class as against capital, but not yet for itself. In the struggle, of which we have pointed out only a few phases, this mass becomes united, and constitutes itself as a class for itself. The interests it defends become class interests. But the struggle of class against class is a a political struggle»⁸.

In his work *History and Class Consciousness*, Lukács emphasizes the importance of consciousness of class in Marx’s thought, specifically in the relationship between theory and praxis, noting how it is not individual human will which makes thought become reality, since «Only when consciousness stands in such a relation to reality can theory and practice be united. But for this to happen the emergence of consciousness must become the decisive step which the historical process must take towards its proper end (and end constituted process must take by the wills of men, but neither dependent on human whim, nor the product of human invention). The

⁷ Lidia GIROLA, *Anonimia e individualismo: del diagnóstico de la modernidad de Durkheim al pensamiento contemporáneo*, Antropos UAM-Azcapotzalco (Autores, Textos y Temas. Ciencias Sociales; 46), Barcelona-México 2005, p. 229

⁸ Karl MARX, *The Poverty of Philosophy*, in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 2^a ed., edited by Robert C. Tucker. W.W. Norton, New York 1978, pp. 218-220.

historical function of theory is to make this step a practical possibility»⁹. Therefore, class consciousness is the sense or direction that "totality" follows, that is, society in its dialectical process. Like Lukács clarifies: «This consciousness is, therefore, neither the sum nor the average of what is thought or felt by the single individuals who made up the class. And yet he historically significant actions of the class as a whole are determined in the last resort by this consciousness and not by the thought of the individual –and these actions can be understood only by reference to his consciousness»¹⁰.

So, consciousness is not something that every individual possesses, but rather it is the dialectical process that is materialized in praxis, or otherwise said, in the historical happening or events that are obviously material. Consequently, we can consider that “class consciousness” is the starting point of anthropological Marxist ideas, leaving aside individual consciousness as the prime motor of history, since human action becomes suppressed by “totality”. But the end that all human action aspires, which assumes the dialectical movement in its totality, is only achieved through class struggle, in the suppression of others because of difference, until reaching the homogenization of everything that could be a distinguishing factor. In other words, it leads to the eradication of all that makes men, individual.

Edith Stein’s proposal: consciousness of oneself, in and from the other

Facing the modern posture that Descartes initiated, as we know, Husserl accepted the importance of consciousness and all it entails. However, in his *Cartesian Meditations* he criticizes Descartes for denying the world’s thesis, which implies that we enclose consciousness in itself, denying every possibility of intentionality. Edith Stein takes over this starting point and specifically develops an understanding of human action from consciousness, which permits setting the groundwork of how the human person, from an ontic structure, is capable of “leaving oneself” to find himself in another.

The phenomenological starting point puts us *in* consciousness, which opens up the understanding of human action to the essential vision of its complexity, where human action is not one or various ‘active potencies’ that act, but it is the person *from* his ‘interiority’, *in* his

⁹ George LUKÁCS, *History and class Consciousness. Studies in Marxist Dialectics*, (translate by Rodney Livingstone), Cambridge, The Merlin Pres Ltd, Massachusetts 1971, pp. 3-4.

¹⁰ George LUKÁCS, *History and class Consciousness. Studies in Marxist Dialectics*, (translate by Rodney Livingstone), Cambridge, The Merlin Pres Ltd, Massachusetts 1971, p. 51.

integrity and complexity, that acts. The centrality of 'I' as *the entire flow of experience* is the point *in* (the one that is given) which human action is given and consequently in and from where his integrity is also given. Hence, putting oneself in consciousness means being in consciousness as an 'I', which helps us explain the unity body-psyche-spirit, a unity given by the 'I' as the source and origin of all the person's action. Whereby Edith Stein states: «I's free activity, that which is specifically personal, comes from the 'interiority' (inner), and in this way the real unity between the soul and spirit is manifested»¹¹.

The concept of 'I', as Husserl comprehends it, is inescapable since I am always in the presence of myself and it is that which gives action both its unity and its own identity¹². Moreover, in the first place, if we talk about action we have to refer to the original flow of consciousness, which is: «The original stream of consciousness is a pure becoming, the experience flows, and in continuous production a new one arises, without which one could ask "by which" what is being is produced. At no point in the current is the emergence of a phase from the other as a "being effected"; one flows out of the other and the original "where" lies in the dark»¹³.

In such way that all human action is based and comes from a *continuum* that is not divided in different phases. Taking all of this into account, we cannot separate the body's action from the psyche nor the spirit. In other words, we cannot separate the action from the spirit, from the action of the body because the entity that acts is the 'I'.

Now, if we consider this and only this polarity of 'I', it would mean that human action would be alienated from itself, it would be isolated in its solipsism. Nevertheless, as Edith Stein analyzes in her work *On the Problem of Empathy* the psychophysical individual is constituted as such in empathy, in a way that all his life, which is a life *in* consciousness, is fundamentally

¹¹«Wir haben ferner gesehen, daß die freie Ichtätigkeit, das spezifisch Persönliche, aus dem »Inneren« hervorgeht: Auch von dieser Seite bekundet sich die reale Einheit von Seele und Geist». Edith STEIN, *Potenz und Akt. Studien zu einer Philosophie des Seins* §177, Edith Stein Gesamtausgabe, Vol. 10, Eingeführt und bearbeitet von Hans Rainer Sepp, Herder, Freiburg-Basel-Wien 2005.

¹² Cfr. E. HUSSERL, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and a phenomenological Philosophy, Volume 2*, §29 [111], (translation Richard Rojcewics and André Schuwer), Kluwer, Dordrecht 1989.

¹³ «Der ursprüngliche Bewußtseinsstrom ist ein reines Werden, das Erleben strömt dahin, in stetiger Erzeugung reiht sich neues an, ohne daß man fragen könnte, »wodurch« das werdende erzeugt (= verursacht) werde. An keiner Stelle des Stromes ist das Hervorgehen einer Phase aus der anderen als ein »Bewirktwerden« aufzufassen; eine strömt aus der anderen hervor und das ursprüngliche »Woher« liegt im Dunkeln». (Edith STEIN, *Beiträge zur philosophischen Begründung der Psychologie und der Geisteswissenschaften*, § 7-8, Max Niemeyer Verlag, Tübingen 1970.

referred to another, since consciousness, just like Husserl understands it, is always intersubjective.

The constitution of the psychophysical individual from the otherness

First of all, it is important to say how the corporeal dimension of a human being is essential and inalienable for the constitution of the psychophysical individual, and consequently how it is implicated in the corporeality of the other for the constitution of the 'I', or in other words, of its identity. Contrasting with the concept of men aligned to the phenomenological approximation, it shows human action as a dynamic unity of body-psyche-spirit, highlighting how phenomenologically speaking, the psychophysical individual is realized as an individual that acts in himself and from himself in an entry-exit dynamism.

This entry-exit dynamism is manifested mainly because the subject, as it re-empathizes with other physical bodies, is capable of seeing himself as a physical body, in a way that his own body is given a mirror image, be it as a memory or as a fantasy. This is possible because as point zero is captured in the other, the 'I'-subject cannot leave his own point zero. However, it *can* move his own point zero with his physical body, giving rise to a displacement in fantasy¹⁴. Thus it is possible, through empathy, to have this transfer and therefore capture the originality of the other's experience.

The *in-out* dynamism that is manifested in the entry-exit dynamism shows an interior dimension in the subject, giving rise to a double movement: coming out of oneself and receiving in oneself. In this way we can affirm that another's action is presented to myself as something external to me, that for being a movement originated from itself I "presentificate" it. In other words, I make it current. It presents itself to my consciousness as something that also takes a stance in front of my subjectivity. Therefore it is through the empathic act that the subject captures the movement of another in origin. Otherwise said, it recognizes the other as another self, precisely because it recognizes it as the source of his own actions (the other's actions). That is to say, thanks to one's capacity to recognize the free movement of another and that the other also has a point zero of orientation that moves in space, we can affirm that in a pre-reflexive level the psychophysical individual is constituted in and from otherness.

¹⁴ Cfr. Edith STEIN, *On the Problem of empathy*, §5.f. [71], ICS Publication, Washington, D.C. 1989, p.63.

Given the above, from Edith Stein's Pure Psychology, the human subject is a psychophysical individual that is constituted as such from otherness. This is such because, the 'I' in its purest form keeps an identity in itself upon being the source of all its experiences. This auto-reference, without having to stop being himself, is what gives its identity in diversity, since contact with a strange other through the vast diversity of experiences, does not divide the 'I' nor does it make it relative, precisely because the 'I' always knows itself as an individual self.

In this way, the phenomenological analysis of the constitution of the psychophysical 'I', starting from a rigorous and detailed understanding of empathy, allows a comprehension of the relation *me-you* not as a relation between two opposites, but as a relation between reciprocating entities, that recognise each other because of both their commonalities and their differences. What follows from the reciprocity of the *me-you* relation will not imply a loss of identity facing the other. In fact, it is quite the opposite because it is in recognizing the other that each individual constitutes his own identity. Therefore it is very important to affirm that the reciprocity between the *you-me* relation is ontic and it will consequently give foundations to human community as a *common union in diversity*.

Spiritual life and the specific experience of man

The deed that imminently reflects the *me-you* relation is specifically the spiritual act. Which is why it is important to analyze which are the laws that govern spiritual life. In other words we need to investigate how spiritual life is manifested in a psychophysical individual, simultaneously bound to the laws that govern physical causation and are regulated by psychic causation. «Consciousness appeared not only as a causally conditioned occurrence, but also as object-constituting at the same time. Thus it stepped out of order of nature and faced it. Consciousness as a correlate of the object world is not nature, but spirit»¹⁵.

To understand human beings' life, it is necessary to consider that the 'I', that until now has lived in the flow of information, of which "he was in possession" without "looking at them", uncovers its spiritual gaze and directs it towards something that is presented to himself, becoming for him an "object". Directing his gaze towards that something (immanent data) is the *intentio*, that erects itself upon the basis of the immanent information/data¹⁶. However, there is a

¹⁵ Edith STEIN, *On the Problem of empathy* §1 [102], ICS Publication, Washington, D.C. 1989, p.91.

¹⁶ Cfr. Edith STEIN, *Beiträge zur philosophischen Begründung der Psychologie und der Geisteswissenschaften*, §34-35, Max Niemeyer Verlag, Tübing 1970.

difference between *the intentional relation*, that takes place when an object is given to me it is given to me when it is manifested to me in this way or another, adequately modifying the direction of the gaze therefore the manifestation of the object is given to me; I have the manifestation, but my gaze is directed towards the object, or my attention is directed towards the manifestation itself, etc.; and *the real relation* where the object D is with me in a real-causal relation, with me, with the 'I'-man, and so above all with the living body that is my living body, etc.¹⁷.

The radical difference is that the real relation comes unless things don't exist, instead the intentional relation remains. However, *intentio* (the way of directing oneself to immanent information) indicates a new category of experiences, in other words, a new category of units that are constituted in the flow¹⁸. The highest form of the spirit is the present that is practiced in intentional activity; intentionality, intelligibility and personality that are shown as specifically distinctive of spiritual life¹⁹.

Hence in the scope of human acts, we are presented with a new type of connection, where intentionality adopts a very peculiar character given that in the apprehension we no longer solely gaze at a set of information that is in continual flow, nor simply gaze at a succession of distinct apprehensions of single images. But we now have a: a) **Apprehension**: a "continuous apprehension", an **addition** of that which follows that which will come; b) **Synthesis**: a connection of singular apprehensions ; c) **Motivation**: a **moving set** of that which follows through that which precedes²⁰. For what Edith Stein can affirm *On the Problem on Empathy*: «Motivation in the lawfulness of spiritual life. The experiential context for spiritual subjects is an experienced (primordially and emphatically) totality of meaning and intelligible as such»²¹. All modes of spiritual behavior are "causal"²² connections through motivational relations. In this context, as it is noted, we are not reducing motivation to the field of free actions (voluntary), instead we are referring to motivation as the setting in movement in the field of intentional

¹⁷ Cfr. Edmund HUSSERL, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and a phenomenological Philosophy, Volume 2*, § 55. (translation Richard Rojcewics and André Schuwer) Kluwer, Dordrecht 1989.

¹⁸ Cfr. E. STEIN, *Beiträge zur philosophischen Begründung der Psychologie und der Geisteswissenschaften*, §34-35, Max Niemeyer Verlag, Tübing 1970.

¹⁹ Cfr. Edith STEIN, *Potenz und Akt. Studien zu einer Philosophie des Seins* § 1, Edith Stein Gesamtausgabe, Vol. 10, Eingeführt und bearbeitet von Hans Rainer Sepp, Herder, Freiburg-Basel-Wien 2005.

²⁰ Cfr. Edith STEIN, *Beiträge zur philosophischen Begründung der Psychologie und der Geisteswissenschaften*, §35, Max Niemeyer Verlag, Tübing 1970.

²¹ Edith STEIN, *On the Problem of empathy* §2 [107], ICS Publication, Washington, D.C. 1989, p.96.

²² Cf. Edith STEIN, *On the Problem of empathy* §2 [107], ICS Publication, Washington, D.C. 1989, p.96.

experience²³. This is such because the ‘I’ in spiritual life is the subject of intentionality, that is to say, not only do we have intentionality but it is given in a peculiar way.

Motivation is an experience that comes from another experience, which don’t simply pass one after the other like it happens in the flow of experiences, nor do they occur through associative unity. Rather, motivation is an experience that is given above the basis of another, for other’s wants. Motivational experiences phenomenologically come from and tend towards an objective thing. That is to say motivation is essentially intentional, which is why it always revolves around the ‘I’. In the acts where the movement is motivated by an intentional object and the ‘I’ is capable of accepting or rejecting a spontaneous take on a stance (take position), it is then that a free act is given. In other words, the ‘I’ is not only alive but it is also the owner of its own actions.

The spirit is always involved in the doing of the subject precisely because it presupposes a purpose, which implicates a significant difference in respect to the spontaneous take of a stance (take position), since, as we add the purpose, “wanting them” is missing. The effective beginning of an action is not simply given by the formulation of a purpose, the “fiat” that defines the beginning of an action and its movement is missing. The ‘fiat’ is the one that makes the step from purpose to action, possible. The motivation in the field of free actions has a more precise meaning, which understands the particular relation that exists between will’s motive and the act of will based in this same motive. It is essential for this relation to “belong” to a perceptive doing, conscious or recognized, for it to be embraced and recognized and therefore eventually have the request from which the perceptive doing comes from approved and finally, where the wanting and request are also approved²⁴.

Only one request of said genre can be transformed in real, voluntary causal and for this, also be transformed into a motive, that is to say, when the voluntary act is based upon the request and deduces it from the request itself. The voluntary act is a motive when «the “I” has no longer left the demand out of itself, and has merely acknowledged and endorsed it, but has admitted it into itself, incorporated it into itself, and then the will-act was carried out in accordance with the

²³ Cfr. Edmund HUSSERL, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and a phenomenological Philosophy, Volume 2*, § 56. (translation Richard Rojcewics and André Schuwer) Kluwer, Dordrecht 1989.

²⁴ Cfr. Edith STEIN, *Beiträge zur philosophischen Begründung der Psychologie und der Geisteswissenschaften*, §51-52, Max Niemeyer Verlag, Tübing 1970.

demand»²⁵ and therefore contains within itself the consciousness of what it wants. What characterizes the voluntary act is the fact that “it is not blind in itself”, and it contains in its essence consciousness of what it wants.

Work as a specifically personal action

After exposing the fundamental elements of human action that are deduced from ontic structure proposed by Edith Stein, we can establish the fundamental elements that would need to be included in the understanding of the work, so that it is really considered as an action of a person.

As we have considered, the notions of work that prevail today arise from the notion of consciousness as self-consciousness encloses the man in himself, marginalizing the individual from others to the degree of conceiving his perfection without regard to others, and even conceiving the others as mere means (utilitarianism), so the purpose of work will be self-perfection.

In opposition to liberalism, it has been exposed how historical materialism has also led to an alienation of the consciousness of the human being by separating man from himself, thus dissolving individual consciousness in the collective consciousness. This led to the understanding of work as an action that does not have its purpose in the subject who performs it, but in a collective end, so that the work of the individual will be a moment or a piece of historical success, which has only sense in the realization of the "totality".

Faced with both conceptions and after explaining the understanding of human action based on the ontic structure of the person proposed by Edith Stein, in view of a new conception of work, it is important to emphasize the essential elements of this personal structure and its action, so as to be able to formulate a notion of work that responds to the demands that are already envisioned in the near future.

²⁵ «Das Ich hat dann die Forderung nicht mehr außer sich stehen lassen und sie bloß anerkannt und gebilligt, sondern sie in sich hereingelassen, sie sich einverleibt, dann, sich darauf rückstützend den Willensakt in Übereinstimmung mit der Forderung vollzogen und sie damit vorläufig ideell erfüllt». (Edith STEIN, *Beiträge zur philosophischen Begründung der Psychologie und der Geisteswissenschaften*, §53-54, Max Niemeyer Verlag, Tübing 1970).

The key elements for a consideration of work as an action of the person would be:

- a) A work where one harmoniously unifies body, psyche and spirit. Although a work can prevail the activity of only one of the dimensions of the person, none can be left aside. So the work can not be "only intellectual," or "bodily only," or only "psychic." Any polarization of this type generates in the person a non-harmonious development of his personality and therefore that action will not contribute to the perfection of the person.
- b) A work from which the identity (being oneself) is constituted from the otherness (the being of the other). All work must necessarily seek the perfection of "the others." This not only in a social dimension, but in the concrete relationship between I-Thou, in order to establish the intersubjective relationships that make possible the creation of human communities.
- c) A free job. All work needs to be a motivated action, meaning that it originates in and from within the person. Motivated action is an act in which the rational is actively involved, so necessarily it will be a voluntary action, but mainly it will have to be an action that allows the person to "take a stand" in front of the world. Such "taking position" means that the work must be formulated as a purpose, which implies that it must always originate from a request, never from an imposition

Bearing in mind the needs of today's world: where new slavery occurs day by day as "forms of work", where the massed man seeks his "success" to have more consumer goods, where the other is only one means to satisfy our desires; it is of great importance not only to theorize but to put into practice forms of work that progressively generate a new culture of work.

As can be seen in the exposition of being human person proposed by Edith Stien, the donation dimension of the person is not something that can be superficially added to human action or to work structures. Therefore, in order to construct a culture of work in its donativist dimension or as a service, it will be necessary to continue to theorize about the human person, but also how to put into practice those key elements so that the man in his work «also *achieves fulfilment* as a human being and indeed, in a sense, becomes "more a human being» (*Laborem Exercens*, n. 9), and thus approach us with greater fidelity to the understanding of man as *imago*

Dei in which man «cannot fully find himself except through a sincere gift of himself» (*Gaudium et Spes*, n. 24).

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