

## John Paul II, *Fides et Ratio*, & the Christian Philosophy Debate

“We face a great challenge at the end of this millennium to move from *phenomenon* to *foundation*, a step as necessary as it is urgent. We cannot stop short at experience alone, even if experience does reveal the human being’s interiority and spirituality, speculative thinking must penetrate to the spiritual core and the ground from which it rises. Therefore, a philosophy which shuns metaphysics would be radically unsuited to the task of mediation in the understanding of Revelation.” (sec. 83)

Practical Wisdom	Interrogative Wisdom	Cruciform Wisdom
Proverbs (Sirach, Wisdom)	Job, Ecclesiastes	I Corinthians 1-2
Philosophy as an expression of practical wisdom about the world and humanity, including the understanding and skill in the sciences and humanities.	Philosophy also has its speculative limitations and can go terribly wrong in its conclusions, especially in refusing to be guided by Revelation.	Philosophy is corrected by and should aspire to the wisdom found in Christ.
Second (Neo-) Scholasticism	Fideism	Rationalism
Etienne Gilson Jacques Maritain	Maurice Bondel	Karl Barth Emile Bréhier Gabriel Marcel

### John Paul II’s Response

- Sec. 75—Philosophy has autonomy yet is not self-sufficient.
- Sec. 76—There is also a characteristically Christian approach to philosophy which is not reducible to the teaching of the Magisterium or to Dogmatic Theology.
- Sec. 76—Philosophical practice can gain from the faith a purification of the philosopher’s techniques and motivations. (cf. Maritain)
- Sec. 76—Philosophy has gained from (or strongly interacted with) Christianity on a number of key subjects—God as personal Creator, the nature of Being, the reality of sin, the problem of evil, human dignity, history as (revelatory) event. (cf. Gilson, also Vatican II)
- Sec. 77—Philosophy can act as an assistant to Theology, helping explore its claims and clarify them.
- Sec. 78—So, the thought of Thomas Aquinas is still relevant and an authentic model for philosophical research. (cf. Second Scholastics/ Vatican I)
- Sec. 79—Christian Revelation is the true point and end of encounter for philosophy. (cf. Blondel, Marcel)
- Sec. 80—Being (the Absolute), as well as theodicy, are encountered in Scripture, as well as the rejection of relativism, materialism, and pantheism. Philosophy’s fulfillment is fundamentally in Christ. (cf. De Lubac)
- Secs. 81-83—Philosophy needs to recover its search for metaphysical meaning and not be reduced to relativism and fragmentation. (cf. Gilson, Maritain, Blondel, De Lubac)

### Current Requirements and Tasks

<b>Concerns</b>	<b>A Way Forward</b>
1. Hermeneutics and phenomenology stopping short of the unity of truth (sec. 84)	1. The necessity of metaphysics as a continued emphasis (sec. 84)
2. An eclecticism that lacks coherence (sec. 86)	2. Dogmatic and moral theology must recognize the unity of truth (secs. 67-69, 85)
3. A relativist historicism (sec. 87)	3. Historical theology must dialogue with global cultures and traditions (sec. 92)
4. Scientism and technologism which rejects other venues for truth (sec.88)	4. Universal truths do not have to lead to oppression (sec. 92)
5. A pragmatism that is an anthropology of utility (sec. 89)	5. A theology of both Triune transcendence and kenotic immanence (sec. 93)
6. Nihilism that rejects human personhood and dignity (sec. 90)	6. A hermeneutic that addresses the contingent perspective of interpreters yet also recognizes the transcendent which is over all peoples and eras (secs.94-96)
7. A postmodernism that leads to a collapse of rational optimism (sec. 91)	7. A true philosophy of Being and of theological tradition (sec.97)
	8. A moral theology that recognizing conscience is nevertheless rooted in the Word of God (sec. 98)
	9. A kerygma that is actively preached as the call to conversion (sec. 99)

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“This unity of truth, natural and revealed, is embodied in a living and personal way in Christ, as the Apostle reminds us: ‘Truth is in Jesus’ (cf. Eph 4:21; Col 1:15-20). He is the *eternal Word* in whom all things were created, and his is the *incarnate Word* who in his entire person reveals the Father. What human reason seeks ‘without knowing it’ (cf. acts 17:23) can be found only through Christ: what is revealed in him is ‘the full truth’ (cf. John 1:14-16) of everything which was created in him and through him and which therefore in him finds its fulfillment (cf. Col 1:17).” (sec. 34)