

The Principle of Graduality as an Important Part of Christian Conjugal Love

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Abstract. *This Contribution discusses ethical principle of graduality (the principle of gradual growth) as one of the ways, with which one can progress towards the achievement of ethical ideals in the application of the problematic situations of the spouses with family planning. This principle essentially means that moral norm commits objectively, but concrete individuals are able to respect it on different degrees according to their abilities. Here we want to point out the approach of the magistrate and the popes as well as various specialists to this difficult problem of human growth to know and observe the moral natural laws.*

Keywords: *principle of graduality, gradual growth, family planning, ethics.*

As one of the ways in which one can proceed to the fulfilment of ethical ideals, especially in the field of sexual ethics, the principle of graduality, i.e. the principle of gradual growth (sometimes referred to as the law of succession), is proposed in Catholic moral theology. This term also appears in official documents of the Church, such as for ex. in Article 34 of the Encyclical of John Paul II *Familiaris consortio* (FC), and he passed into this encyclical with part of the text from the homily of John Paul II to the conclusion of the Synod of Bishops of 1980 *On the roles of the Christian family in today's world*.¹ It is also located in Art. 9 of the 1997 Pontifical Council for the Family document - *A guide for confessors on some moral issues concerning married life*.²

The principle of graduality is mentioned in these documents of the Magisterium (but also in the works of theologians³) especially in connection with the regulation of conception in marriage and the difficulties of

¹ John Paul II: *Homily At The End Of The Fifth Synod Of Bishops*, 8 (25. Okt. 1980). In: Aas 72 (1980), P. 1083, https://Www.Vatican.Va/Content/John-Paul-Ii/It/Homilies/1980/Documents/Hf_Jp-Ii_Hom_19801025_Conclusionone-Sinodo.Html, Accessed 12. 05. 2021.

² Pontifical Council For The Family, *Vademecum For Confessors Concerning Some Aspects Of The Morality Of Conjugal Life*, 1997. In: http://Www.Vatican.Va/Roman_Curia/Pontifical_Councils/Family/Documents/Rc_Pc_Family_Doc_12021997_Vademecum_En.Html accessed 12. 07. 2021.

³ For Ex.: B. Honings, „Christian Conscience And Humanae Vitae,” In: Tettamanzi, D. (Edit.): *Natural Family Planning, Nature`S Way – God`S Way*, New York, St. John's University Press, 1980; Possible First Edition (January 1, 1980), p. 204; J. Skoblík, *Přehled Křesťanské Etiky*. Praha, Karolinum 1997, p. 209.

accepting the doctrine of natural methods of family planning as the only ethically correct option (see HV 14-15).⁴

This is also mentioned in the above encyclical *Familiaris consortio*, which specifically states: „Married people too are called upon to progress unceasingly in their moral life, with the support of a sincere and active desire to gain ever better knowledge of the values enshrined in and fostered by the law of God. They must also be supported by an upright and generous willingness to embody these values in their concrete decisions. They cannot however look on the law as merely an ideal to be achieved in the future: they must consider it as a command of Christ the Lord to overcome difficulties with constancy. "And so what is known as 'the law of gradualness' or step-by-step advance cannot be identified with 'gradualness of the law,' as if there were different degrees or forms of precept in God's law for different individuals and situations. In God's plan, all husbands and wives are called in marriage to holiness, and this lofty vocation is fulfilled to the extent that the human person is able to respond to God's command with serene confidence in God's grace and in his or her own will."⁵

John Paul II however, it clearly shows that this is not a denial of unchanging norms that apply equally to all people as some one-sided interpreters of autonomous morality do. Piegsa emphasizes here that God's commandments cannot be seen as "target commandments" in the sense of an unattainable ideal (FC 34).⁶

Shortly before the publication of the *Familiaris consortio*, Piegsa adds, Cardinal Ratzinger wrote on the subject of "graduality": with this idea of "graduality" he is re-acquiring and concretizing the motive of "being on the road" for moral knowledge and practice. It is said that the whole Christian

⁴ Paul Vi: Encyclical Letter *Humanae Vitae* (Hv), 1968, https://www.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-vi_enc_25071968_humanae-vitae.html (12.07. 2021). The Very Popular Message Of The Würzburg Synod Of German Bishops (Christlich Gelebte Ehe Und Familie, Beschluss Der Synode Der Bistümer In Der Bundesrepublik Deutschland 1975) Reads: "The Method Used Must Not Mentally Injure Any Of The Partners Or Limit His Ability To Love." This Message In The 1980s Appealed To Many Christians Of Various Denominations, Cf. Lüscher K., Böckle F., Familie, In: Böckle F., Kaufmann F.-X., Rahner K., Welte B., *Christlicher Glaube In Moderner Gesellschaft*, Herder, Freiburg Im Breisgau 1981, Tome 7, P. 141.

⁵ John Paul II, *Apostolic Exhortation Familiaris Consortio Of Pope John Paul II To The Episcopate To The Clergy And To The Faithful Of The Whole Catholic Church On The Role Of The Christian Family In The Modern World*, 34 (Fc) https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_19811122_familiaris-consortio.html (12.07. 2021).

⁶ Cf. J. Piegsa, *Mjf: Der Mensch- Das Moralische Lebewesen. Wahrheit Und Treue. Die Würde Menschlichen Lebens, Das Lebensrecht Und Der Lebensschutz, Geschlechtlichkeit Als Gabe Und Aufgabe*, Tome Iii, Eos Erzabtei St. Otilien, 1998, P. 212.

path is conversion. However, the conversion takes place in far-reaching steps.⁷

Honings states that Italian bishops, addressing the same problem in their statement shortly after the issuance of the *Humanae vitae*, state that the couple should not feel depressed due to their falls. The Church, whose duty it is to teach good in its entirety and perfection, realizes that there is a law of advancement in action and that a person can advance, albeit still after imperfect degrees, but striving to reach for them and move towards the ideal. Similarly, the bishops of France taught that the encyclical *Humanae vitae* encourages us to chart a path. However, man progresses on the path of holiness with patient steps, sometimes falling, sometimes getting up. Every day is a small struggle, supported by hope, and every existence is mixed with good and evil. What is important, however, concludes Honings, is, despite this ambiguity in the understanding of life and love, the advance towards sincere fidelity to the truth.⁸ So what does this principle of graduality, stated and recognized by ecclesiastical documents, mean?

According to Klimeš, the essence of this principle is already indicated in the New Testament in Luke: „Likewise, no one pours new wine into old wineskins. Otherwise, the new wine will burst the skins, and it will be spilled, and the skins will be ruined. Rather, new wine must be poured into fresh wineskins” (Lk 5: 36-37). Thus, a new person and his Christian maturity are also needed to receive and carry out the new teachings. On the subjective and practical level, however, adulthood, characterized by the fulfilment of God's will in everything, is reached gradually - step by step.⁹

In the modern Austrian moral theological Dictionary, there is a very brief mention of graduality. It is stated here that graduality indicates the fragmentation of moral commandments. However, the authors of the dictionary immediately add that a specific question of use can be e.g. much less universally applicable than the commandment of love. Furthermore, the authors state that by this term we also mean various subjective approaches to a certain commandment, which man, e.g. it is not able to adhere perfectly,

⁷ Kard. Ratzinger J. (Archbishop Of Munich And Freising), *Brief An Die Priester, Diakone Und An Alle Im Pastoralen Dienst Stehenden*. Munich 8.12.1980, P. 9 (Cf. Kommentar 'Kardinal Ratzinger: Nachtrag Zur Bischofsynode', In: Herder Korrespondenz 35 (1981), P. 57-60. Piegsa Adds, However, That The Importance Of The Law Of Graduality Has Not Been Recognized In This Commentary, Cf. J. Piegsa, *Msf: Der Mensch- Das Moralische Lebewesen. Wahrheit Und Treue. Die Würde Menschlichen Lebens, Das Lebensrecht Und Der Lebensschutz. Geschlechtlichkeit Als Gabe Und Aufgabe*, p. 213, Note 389.

⁸ Cf. B. Honings, „Christian Conscience And *Humanae Vitae*,” in D. Tettamanzi, (edit.), *Natural Family Planning. Nature'S Way – God'S Way*, St. John's University Press, 1980; Possible First Edition (January 1, 1980), P. 204.

⁹ Cf. J. Klimeš, „Zamyšlení Nad *Vademecum Pro Zpovědníky*,” in *Teologické Texty (Zb.)*, 8 (1997), no. 6, p. 210.

but nevertheless retains the intention to adhere to them more or less broadly. The authors also note other principles and terms related to graduality: *the principle of double effect, good, decision, conscience, wisdom, norm, value*. At the same time, however, they do not mention any other study literature on this term of graduality.¹⁰ Still, see the direction they want to alert us to. Conscience, its formation and the need to make a decision with prudence play a fairly important role here.

On the other hand, several modern publications on sexual ethics completely ignore the term graduality.¹¹ And this applies not only to the so-called liberal, progressive moralists, but to the surprise of many conservatives.¹² In a detailed examination, we will realize the walls that divide the individual theological schools and even the walls between the official Vatican documents of the popes and many theologians. As we will state later, it is precisely in the case of the term graduality that this is an attempt by John Paul II to introduce it into official documents. Compared to FC, this attempt has a waiting period of almost 8 years at L'Osservatore Romano and a 14-year waiting period until the release of EV.

The correct statement of St. Bishop Augustine also contributes to the correct understanding of the principle of graduality, aptly saying that God does not command any impossible things, but admonishes him to do what he can, ask for what you cannot, and helps you to do it. he could.¹³

Indications of this principle can also be seen in the redemptorist Bernard Häring, who developed respect for subjective (according to Alfonso of Liguori¹⁴) and insurmountable ignorance in moral deeds into the theory of distinction between moral theology and pastoral counselling. Although

¹⁰ H. Rotter, G. Virt, *Neuer Lexikon Der Christlichen Moral*. Tyrolia Verlag, Innsbruck, Wien, 1990, p. 311.

¹¹ For Ex. B. Fraling (Sexualethik) Or G. Denzler (Forbidden Delight), *And The Same Lthk*, (Lexikon Für Die Theologie Und Kirche).

¹² Cf. A. Laun, *Aktuelleprobleme Der Moralthologie*, Wien, Herder, 1991. And H. Even Weber, *Spezielle Moralthologie*, Graz, Styria, 1999 And K. H. Peschke, *Křesťanská Etika*, Prague, Vyšehrad, 1999. On The Slovak Side E.G. Mráz M. Sj, *Špeciálna Morálna Teológia. Dekalóg, Prikázania Iv, Vi, Viii., Ix., X*, Bratislava, Aloisianum, 1996. Even Slovak Protestants Called The Encyclical Letter Hv "Moral Hypocrisy", Cf. I. Kišš, *Social Ethics*, Bratislava, Comenius University, 2006, p. 168.

¹³ Cf. Augustinus, A.: *De Natura Et Gratia* (C. 43, N. 50). In: [Http://www.augustinus.it/Latino/Natura_Grazia/Index.Htm](http://www.augustinus.it/Latino/Natura_Grazia/Index.Htm) (12.07.2021); Cf. Denzinger, H. J. D. *Enchiridion Symbolorum, Definitionum Et Declarationum De Rebus Fidei Et Morum* (Ds), Sess. Vi, Excuse Decree *Cum Hoc Tempore*, Cap. 11, 1536; Cf. Can. 18:), [Http://Patristica.Net/Denzinger/](http://Patristica.Net/Denzinger/), accessed 12. 07. 2021.

¹⁴ Cf. Ch. E. Curran, *The Catholic Moral Tradition Today. A Synthesis*, Georgetown University Press, Washington, 1999, p. 192 – 193. Professor Charles E. Curran Is Still Considered A Rather Controversial Catholic Moralists, But His Works Significantly Advocate Many Aspects Of Christian Ethics.

insurmountable ignorance may refer to the realm of lack of knowledge, in the light of modern psychology, a similar approach applies to the existential status of the whole person.

It is Curran who states that the principle of graduality owes most to the teachings of Alfonso of Liguori, whose great contribution was the introduction of "reconciliation" into moral theology after the struggles of rigorists with laxists and probabiliorists with probabilists in the 17th and 18th centuries. Alfonso's research led him primarily to a case study and discussion of individual cases, while his great contribution was associated with distinguishing the primacy of the subjective field without denying the reality of the objective field in morality. A significant controversy in his time concerned the possibility of insurmountable ignorance of natural law. Could a person be ignorant of the requirements of natural law and sinless at the same time? Rigorists rejected the possibility of insurmountable ignorance of natural law, but Alfonso, with his recognition of the role of the subject, defended the possibility that a person may be ignorant in several distant aspects of natural law without any guilt or criminal responsibility. Alfonso, according to Curran, also surpassed St. Thomas Aquinas by teaching that an evil deed committed in insurmountable ignorance is not morally attributable, and may even be good and meritorious. Its penetration into the primacy of the subjective was gradually developed by theologians into the "principle of graduality."

Häring insists on the need for growth for all Christians, as all are called to holiness, but there is also an understanding of obstacles. An individual may be existentially incapable of meeting the requirements of objective morality at a certain time and under certain conditions. In doing everything an individual can exist existentially and while remaining in a state of openness to greater and better fulfilment of moral requirements, human action is formally good, even though we can materially evaluate it as evil. Pastoral counselling deals with the individual in his existential situation and thus differs from moral theology.¹⁵

According to Klimeš, the principle of graduality is actually a recognition and designation of the fact that not all people are morally or

¹⁵ Cf. *Ibidem*, p. 193. Curran, Whose Interpretation Of Hv Is Not Sympathetic To Bishop Laun (A. Laun, *Aktuelleprobleme Der Moralthologie*, p. 75), It Also States That The Encyclical *Humanae Vitae* Implicitly Suggests This Difference In Articles 19-31, Recognizing That Those Who Use Contraception May Not Always Be Subjectively Guilty. This Is How The Letters Of The Above-Mentioned Episcopal Conferences Actually Think. The Author Also Cites The Statement Of The Synod Of Bishops Of 1980, Which Recognizes The Principle Of Graduality, But Recalls That There Can Be No False Dichotomy Between The Teaching Of The Church And Pastoral Practice, Cf. Ch. E. Curran, *The Catholic Moral Tradition Today. A Synthesis*, p. 193.

physically able to fulfil the requirements of God's commandments, even though these requirements apply equally to all people. On the one hand, the real possibilities of the people are respected here, and on the other hand, relativism is avoided at the same time.¹⁶ The Latin word *gradus* means degree - and thus the principle of graduality denotes the empirically observable fact that man matures in his life in stages and should reach the full fulfilment of moral order and thus a full life according to God's will. Thus, at the individual stages of one's development, one has the possibility and the obligation to satisfy certain requirements, but on the other hand, there are such requirements which, due to one's condition, one is unable to satisfy. E.g. a certain bad habit may not be overcome at a given moment.¹⁷ This principle is therefore based on the fact - concludes Klimeš - that sometimes a person in his current situation is unable to fully respond to God's call, but that over time, with increasing perfection, he acquires the ability to fully realize and accept the ideals required of God.¹⁸

Skoblík gives a similar definition: the principle of graduality, according to which he teaches that the moral norm is objectively binding, but specific individuals can respect it to varying degrees.¹⁹ However, this must not be interpreted as a denial of immutable norms, although there is a tension between objective duties and subjective abilities.

John Paul II states possible obstacles: “Decisions that go against life sometimes arise from difficult or even tragic situations of profound suffering, loneliness, a total lack of economic prospects, depression and anxiety about the future. Such circumstances can mitigate even to a notable degree subjective responsibility and the consequent culpability of those who make these choices which in themselves are evil. But today the problem goes far beyond the necessary recognition of these personal situations. It is a problem which exists at the cultural, social and political level, where it reveals its more sinister and disturbing aspect in the tendency, ever more widely shared, to interpret the above crimes against life as legitimate expressions of individual freedom, to be acknowledged and protected as actual rights.”²⁰

¹⁶ Cf. J. Klimeš: *Princíp Graduality V Psychologickém Poradenství*. In: [Http://Klimes.Mysteria.Cz/Clanky/Teologie/Graduali.Htm](http://Klimes.Mysteria.Cz/Clanky/Teologie/Graduali.Htm), accessed 28. 10. 2009.

¹⁷ Cf. *Ibidem*.

¹⁸ Cf. J. Klimeš, “Zamyšlení Nad Vademecum Pro Zpovědníky,” in: *Teologické Texty*, 8 (1997), no. 6, p. 210.

¹⁹ Cf. J. Skoblík, *Přehled Křesťanské Etiky*, Praha, Vyšehrad, p. 209.

²⁰ John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Evangelium Vitae* (Ev), 18, https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_25031995_evangelium-vitae.html accessed 12. 07. 2021.

According to Honings, re-applying the principle of graduality to married life, spouses are required to "set a goal" in the first place. This is followed by the path to this goal, with the spouses taking steps that are possible for them in a particular situation. Ultimately, the characterization of the spouses' progress does not lie in their weaknesses or falls, or even in the difficulties of overcoming the path, but rather in perseverance in their efforts to advance on God's path.²¹ Skoblík adds that although this progress would take a long time, the decisive factor for the couple is that they want to be on the road to fulfil the commitment (with the help of prayer, the sacraments ...).²² Husbands who honestly claim that they are now unable to use natural family planning should not be blamed for sin, but rather be encouraged to trust in their own progress, which God knows above all.²³

Auer adds to the Margo of the principle of graduality, i.e. gradual progress, that in the ethical questions of marriage, what is experienced at the end should not be put into play at the beginning - the sacrament and the institutional nature of marriage. It should start with what one experiences first - a loving partnership. Then, as if "by itself", there is a chance of true graduality.²⁴

Kevin T. Kelly in his book *Divorce and Second Marriage* states that the principle (even the law) of graduality applies to the kind of dilemmatic situation in which two focus points must be left, even though they cannot be aligned with each other in the present. The first point of focus (we can call it *universal focus*) is the general value or law that concerns human persons in general, rejects the individual and is regardless of his individual situation. The second focus point (*particular focus*) includes the ability of the individual at his level, in the history of his personal development, as well as characteristic manifestations in his particular situation, which may have a special human character. The principle of graduality is oriented towards the growing convergence (or arrangement) of particular and universal focus, although it accepts that particular focus will be decisive when the individual makes his free choice "here, now and in this" specific situation.

Despite this explanation, however, decisions will always contain something unsatisfactory, as neither the particular nor the universal focus will ever be exactly the same. The principle of graduality thus recognizes that

²¹ Cf. B. Honings, „Christian Conscience And Humanae Vitae,” p. 204.

²² This Principle Was Named *Optio Fundamentalis* At The Ii Vatican Council, And One Of Its Zealous Disseminators Was Jacques Maritain, See I.-M. Szaniszló, *Úvod Do Základnej Katolíckej Morálnej Teológie I.*, Košice, Kňazský Seminár Sv. Karola Boromejského, 2008, P. 167.

²³ Cf. J. Skoblík, *Přehled Křesťanské Etiky*, Praha, Vyšehrad, p. 210.

²⁴ Cf. A. Auer, „K Etické Diskusi O Sexualitě A Manželství,” in *Teologické Texty*, 12 (2001), no. 5, p. 178.

this process of balancing takes time. We could also point out the old school definition of *ens* and *essentie*: *ens* is what it is and *essentie* is what it should be.

In the case of certain individuals or in some particular conditions, the individual may not be open to greater than particular performance. He may never be able to achieve certain values, only gradually, if there is a change in the situation in which he has to live his life. However, this may even be beyond his control and may never occur. Kelly concludes that this discrepancy between the two focus points could be roughly what some moral theologians consider "non-moral evil." This is like their way of stating that the two focus points do not coincide completely.

Nevertheless, it should be emphasized that the principle of graduality must not be limited to the subjective field of inner personal growth. The personal sphere cannot be separated from its social context.²⁵ Kelly also notes that John Paul II. in the above-mentioned Article 34 of the Encyclical *Familiaris consortio*, rightly warns against the abuse of the principle of graduality, which would take away all creative tension from a humanly unsatisfactory situation (one that is not properly achieved) by declaring that each situation is virtually independent and has its own law, would be tantamount to an extreme situational ethic.

According to Kelly, the principle of graduality is basically the statement that people can start from where they are - from the state in which they are. This is where they have to make their key decision and where they will include their current level of growth at all levels - emotional, psychological, intellectual, moral and spiritual. What is required of them is not some superhuman decision beyond their current abilities, but a decision that is made correctly according to their ability and capabilities, that is, it gives reasonable importance to the most important values to the extent that they see them. In addition, the obligation to start "from where you are" involves starting from their current interpersonal and social situation.²⁶

One of the esteemed basic moral laws says that no one can be tested beyond his means. Finally, let us try to emphasize once again the ideas of John Paul II from FC 32, where it is said that artificial conception is in itself a moral disorder (*intrinsece malum*), as it contradicts the mutual donation of spouses. Nevertheless, as Piegsa points out, the 1989 L'Osservatore Romano²⁷ contains a position which was later taken over in the Encyclical

²⁵ Cf. K. T. Kelly, *Divorce & Second Marriage. Facing The Challenge*, Kansas City, Sheed & Ward 1997, p. 51 – 52.

²⁶ Cf. *Ibidem.*, p. 52.

²⁷ Sich Am Göttlichen Gesetz Ausrichten. Die Moralische Norm Von 'Humanae Vitae' Und Der Pastorale Auftrag, In: L'Osservatore Romano 16.02.1989 (German Version 24. 02. 1989, P. 1 R. 6), Cf. J. Piegsa, *Msf: Der Mensch- Das Moralische Lebewesen. Wahrheit Und*

letter *Evangelium vitae*, which says that the Christian moral tradition has always emphasized the difference between *objective disorder* and subjective guilt. Thus, not only intentions and motives, but also different life situations and, above all, all reasons that may affect conscience or freedom of will (“*the Christian tradition has always emphasized the difference between objective disorder and subjective guilt ... it is legitimate to take into account various factors and aspects of a particular act of a person, and thus not only his intentions and motives, but also various life situations and, in the first place, all causes that could affect his conscience and his freedom of will*”²⁸). John Paul II he himself draws attention to the distinction between method and ethics of action (this is not a technique, but ethics²⁹), and yet a method separate from its own ethical dimension is often practiced functionally, even directly utilitarianly.³⁰

Piegsa points out that it is important to realize here that, in contrast to situational ethics, which emphasizes the subjective situation in particular, there remains a balanced view of what this decision will cause and what it will not cause. This decision cannot change an "internal mess" to an "order", but can nevertheless affect the responsibility of the person acting to varying degrees. The quote in question is thus a rejection not only of situational ethics, but also of its opposite extreme, which in some cases - referred to as a moral disorder in itself (*intrinsece malum*) - does not recognize the reasons that reduce guilt. That is why the term "law of graduality" (gradual growth) has developed in both moral and pastoral theology, and even in some Magisterium instructions.³¹ Nevertheless, this law cannot be confused with the so-called "The graduality of law".³²

In 2008, on the 40th anniversary of HV, many theologians, bishops, and experts returned to the problems of marital sexuality. Surprisingly, none of them (according to our research) dealt with the principle of graduality. Nevertheless, the term used by Benedict XVI. in his address to the participants in the international congress at the Pontifical Lateran University

Treue. Die Würde Menschlichen Lebens, Das Lebensrecht Und Der Lebensschutz. Geschlechtlichkeit Als Gabe Und Aufgabe, p. 210-211.

²⁸ J. Piegsa, *Msf: Der Mensch- Das Moralische Lebewesen. Wahrheit Und Treue. Die Würde Menschlichen Lebens, Das Lebensrecht Und Der Lebensschutz. Geschlechtlichkeit Als Gabe Und Aufgabe*.

²⁹ Cf. Ján Pavol Ii., *Ako Muža A Ženu Ich Stvoril*, Metodicko-Pedagogické Centrum V Bratislave 2007, P. 338.

³⁰ Cf. *Ako muž a ženu ich stvoril*, p. 340.

³¹ Cf. J. Piegsa, *Msf: Der Mensch- Das Moralische Lebewesen. Wahrheit Und Treue. Die Würde Menschlichen Lebens, Das Lebensrecht Und Der Lebensschutz. Geschlechtlichkeit Als Gabe Und Aufgabe*, p. 211.

³² Cf. Fc 34.

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on May 10, 2008, "sexual education"³³ and finally the term "path to growth to virtue"³⁴ could be very close in its content and use to the term graduality.³⁵ Finally, let us quote the words of Benedict XVI from his speech for the conference on the 20th anniversary of HV in October 2008: "*Technology cannot replace the maturation of freedom when love is at stake ... Reason needs a heart here.*"³⁶

Finally, I would like to recall the grasp of the subject during the pontificate of Pope Francis and especially his encyclical focused on the family called *Amoris laetitia*.³⁷ In the first place, Pope Francis is in the complete integrity of the thought of John Paul II. and his exhortation by the *Familiaris Consortio*.³⁸ Of course, his path, called "divine pedagogy," seeks to help many who have difficulty on the path to holiness, but he does not oppose moral laws.³⁹

³³ Human Life International Österreich, Europäische Ärzteaktion, *Humanae Vitae. Der Glanz Der Wahrheit*, Wien, Immaculata Verlag 2008, p. 121. It Is Interesting That None Of The Other Important Theologians In This Collection Even Came Close To This Term (Possibly The Concept Of Ethics Of Activities Of P. Townley, Svd, Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 66). This Also Applies To Another Important Austrian Publication On The Anniversary: Casetti Ch., Prügl M., *Geheimnis Ehelicher Liebe. Humanae Vitae- 40 Jahre Danach*. Referat Für Ehe Und Familie, Salzburg, Erzdiözese Salzburg, 2008.

³⁴ Cf. Benedikt Xvi., "Humanae Vitae: Aktualität Und Prophetische Bedeutung, Botschaft Von Papst Benedikt Xvi," *An Den Internationalen Kongress Der Humanae Vitae*, Rome 3.-4. Oktobra 2008, p. 136.

³⁵ Psychological, Sociological and Pastoral Tasks Of Spouses' Development Could Also Be Added Here After O.H. Pesch, F.-X. Kaufmann, K.H. Mandel, „Ehe”, in F. Böckle, F.-X. Kaufmann, K. Rahner, B. Welte, *Christlicher Glaube In Moderner Gesellschaft*, Herder, Freiburg Im Breisgau 1981, Tome 7, p. 68.

³⁶ Cf.: *Benedikt Xvi*, p. 139.

³⁷ These Ideas Come From The Lecture „De La Loi De Gradualité À La Pédagogie Divine“ At A Colloquium On The Occasion Of The 8th Anniversary Of The Pontificate Of Pope Francis Under The Title „Dix Regards Prospectifs Sur Huit Années De Pontificat“ Held In The Form Of A Video Conference On 16 March 2021 By Anne-Solen Kerdraon, Responsible For The Specialty Of Moral Theology At The Institut Catholique Paris, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jsw0signf58> accessed 12. 07. 2021.

³⁸ Pope Francis, Encyclical Letter *Amoris Laetitia*, 122/ 151/ 295/ 300/ 317/ https://www.vatican.va/content/dam/francesco/pdf/apost_exhortations/document_s/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20160319_amoris-laetitia_en.pdf accessed 12. 07. 2021.

³⁹ Bordeyne Ph., « *Pédagogie Divine* » Et « *Loi De Gradualité* » : Un Accent Majeur Du Synode De 2014 Sur La Famille, https://diocese92.fr/Documents/Pdf/Pedagogie_Divine_Et_Loi_De_Gradualite_-_Nanterre.Pdf (12.07.2021). Complete Article For A Visit On Fino C. (Ed.), *La Pédagogie Divine*, Paris, Coll. "Théologie À L'université", Ddb, 2015.