'FIDES ET RATIO': A PROCESS RESPONSE

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Abstract

The Catholic encyclical document *Fides et Ratio* strongly supports the link between faith and reason, and endorses the tradition of using philosophy, with specific reference to metaphysics, to express, develop and defend theological doctrines. In this paper I will develop the implications of this document by referral to the process philosophy of Whitehead and Hartshorne. I will elaborate what I call 'philosophy in context', 'context' interpreted in two distinct but related meanings: first, as the *concreteness of life* as providing the starting point of philosophical reflection, and second, as a *unifying vision*. These two understandings are connected in the claim that philosophising is intimately connected with metaphysical thinking.

Introduction

Reason has been subjected to much criticism from various quarters, including philosophy itself. In contrast, the document *Fides et Ratio*—and more recently, the Lecture by Pope Benedict XVI at Regensburg—affirms and defends its significance for religious belief. Strongly supporting the link between faith and reason, the encyclical endorses the tradition of using philosophy, with specific reference to metaphysics, to express, develop and defend theological doctrines. It also discusses the importance of metaphysics for one's philosophical outlook in life.

In this paper I will offer some observations on the relationship between the Catholic tradition and philosophy and make some comments on the suggestions for the future as presented in the encyclical *Fides et*

Ratio.[1] Then I will provide a response that has been influenced by the process philosophers, A.N. Whitehead and Charles Hartshorne. I set out and elaborate what I call 'philosophy in context', 'context' interpreted in two distinct but related meanings. 'Philosophy in context' first of all means the concreteness of life as providing the starting point of philosophical reflection. But 'philosophy in context' is also understood as referring to some kind of a unifying vision or at least the need to recognise its significance. These two understandings are connected in the claim that philosophising is intimately connected with metaphysical thinking.

Support of Philosophy

Given the interest shown in this encyclical in philosophy itself as well as its recognised importance for theology, one cannot but accept that such a situation will lead—as indeed it has done so—to promoting philosophical pursuits.[2] With any pursuit, no matter in what discipline, the volume and quality of support, material or otherwise, go a long way towards advancing it. This advantage is compounded when the pursuit serves a certain goal—in the case of philosophy, its special service to theology—because, though secondary, the benefits may be important enough to stimulate more interest in the subject.[3] Both history and actual results can confirm the developments in philosophy which have occurred because of the Catholic tradition.

But the Catholic Church's patronage of philosophical research and the link between philosophy and theology have led some to question the *kind* of philosophy that has resulted.[4] It might even make one compare the situation to the suspect beneficence of patrons that artists enjoy. Centuries ago, the Athenian stranger in Plato's *Laws* had bemoaned the practice in Italy and Sicily of leaving the judgment of poets in the hands of the spectators. Such a practice spelled the destruction of the poets since they were in the habit of composing their poems to suit the taste of the judges. Or one may have serious reservations with a philosophy that has been endorsed by a Church body in the same way that there are those who frown upon any corporate sponsorships for various activities. The suspicion is not just about the motives but extends also to the end-prod-

uct. Similarly, a philosophy that meets with the approval of ecclesiastical bodies runs the risk of being isolated or largely ignored. Worse, it could be dismissed as being subservient and therefore lacking in integrity.

The papal document which we are examining has addressed this criticism. But it is worth adding that the criticism itself seems to be founded on a certain questionable assumption; namely, that philosophical thinking occurs or should occur in a vacuum. It does not. The act of philosophising always takes place in a specific context, and every philosopher brings into it personal as well as communal presuppositions and assumptions. In addition, one's motives as well as intended goals always colour one's pursuit of the truth, whether one does this in the religious or non-religious context. Autonomy is never absolute, nor is freedom of thinking. The encouragement and support of the Catholic Church of philosophy do not in themselves constitute restrictions that would prevent it from attaining standards which would be possible without them. We need to distinguish perception or isolated cases from the total reality. My point is not to deny that philosophical research has at times become parochial because of the Catholic Church's attempt to oversee it, but rather to reject the claim that such cases constitute a general adverse effect on philosophical thinking.

The criticism is also grounded in another suspect assumption; namely, that philosophy must be *entirely* accountable to its own standards, methods and terms. Hence, any association with faith would be seen as an unacceptable crossing of boundaries.[5] Again, the encyclical provides a response to this point. But perhaps it is not out of place to note that in alerting us to the demands of faith on philosophy,[6] we are actually being reminded that human experience in its reality, which includes a certain awareness of transcendence, is much wider than its conceptual or its intellectual expression.[7] Thus, no philosophical conception can exhaust experience, simply because its expression is merely one, albeit probably the most important, feature of the human reality.[8] In distancing philosophy from faith, some philosophers mistake the important *conceptual* distinction between reason and faith for the reality of human experience.[9] Moreover, this criticism takes a rather narrow interpretation of human rationality to be the exercise of reason whereas the latter arises from, is grounded in, and serves human rationality. The two are not the same. This means that philosophy, which employs reason, must be more open to its wider

base which gives us more access to the truth than what human reason can achieve.[10]

In *Fides et Ratio* John Paul II draws our attention to an important relevant consideration. He distinguishes between philosophy as a system and philosophy as human aspiration: "Every philosophical *system,* while it should always be respected in its wholeness, without any instrumentalization, must still recognize the primacy of philosophical *enquiry*, from which it stems and which it ought loyally to serve."[11] And he contextualises that comment by observing the changed role of philosophy itself in modern culture. "From universal wisdom and learning, it has been gradually reduced to one of the many fields of human knowing; indeed in some ways it has been consigned to a wholly marginal role"[12] In other words, it seems to have forgotten the wider basis.

Faith and Reason

On the issue of the relationship between faith and reason itself, the encyclical traces and comments on Christianity's early encounter with philosophy and shows its acceptance of the positive role of reason in the development of the Christian faith.[13] St. Paul, for instance, entered into discussion with certain Epicurean and Stoic philosophers. His action was an acknowledgment that it was possible to have natural knowledge of God. He also affirmed the belief that the voice of conscience is present in every human being. The Fathers of the Church on their part regarded the rational analysis provided by philosophical thinking as helpful in purifying the concept of divinity.

The Pope points out that to claim that the first Christians were not interested in philosophical thinking is therefore not true. Admittedly, their first and foremost concern was the proclamation of the good news. But they certainly did not ignore the task of deepening the understanding of faith and its motivations. He cites Justin, for whom Christianity is 'the only sure and profitable philosophy', and Clement of Alexandria who regarded the Gospel as 'the true philosophy' and who turned to Greek philosophy for the defense of the Christian faith. An even more robust example that he mentions is St. Augustine. In Augustine's work one can see the first great

synthesis of philosophy and theology, which the Pope describes as 'a great unity of knowledge, grounded in the thought of the Bible, confirmed and sustained by a depth of speculative thinking'. Furthermore, in the Pope's mind, the ways in which the Fathers engaged with philosophy was not limited to transposing the truths of faith into philosophical categories. Rather, their intensity in living the content of their faith led them to the deepest forms of speculation. Philosophy enabled them to disclose more completely what was merely implicit and preliminary in their faith. Moving ahead in time, the Pope then reminds us of Anselm's concept of *intellectus fidei*: faith is to be understood with the help of reason while reason at its summit acknowledges the significance of faith.

Considerable attention is given to what the Pope describes as 'the enduring originality of Thomas Aquinas'. In Aquinas there is harmony of faith and reason. Both are gifts from God, so there can be no contradiction between them. Aquinas is said to exemplify the Christian believer who seeks truth wherever it might be found, thus demonstrating its universality. Moreover, Aquinas saw how faith itself can enrich reason. He maintains that through the work of the Holy Spirit, knowledge matures into wisdom. This kind of wisdom is higher than philosophical wisdom, which is based upon the capacity of the intellect to explore reality. It is also distinct from theological wisdom, which has its source in Revelation and which explores the content of faith. The wisdom that comes from the Holy Spirit is explained as presupposing faith but eventually formulating, with the use of reason, its right judgment on the basis of the truth of faith itself.

On further reflection, however, I find that the interpretation of the relationship between faith and reason adopted by the encyclical leaves one with a number of philosophical concerns. Its understanding of faith is still rather too intellectualised and its interpretation of the function of reason in relation to faith, despite disclaimers and modifications, still gives reason a rather subservient role. Moreover, one could question the conception of truth that the document takes for granted. The document merges the understanding of truth set out in Vatican I (truth as eternal and timeless) with that of Vatican II (the historicity of truth), two understandings which are not, at first glance, compatible. In addition, any attempt to reconcile two distinct and autonomous realities—and in this context faith and reason are so regarded—begs the question: what is it that enables us to

harmonise them, is it faith or is it reason? The document gives faith priority yet interprets and justifies that status and the attempted reconciliation philosophically.

Another Look at the Relationship between Faith and Reason

In the hope of furthering the discussion of this topic, I would like to suggest that one could view faith as an awareness of transcendence. It is an implicit human experience that can be made explicit in various ways. A religious context is one such way. But it is the exercise of human reasoning that enables us to interpret it in a certain way whether religiously or not. In other words, there is more unity and continuity between faith and reason despite their respective qualities.

Let me try to develop this suggestion a little further.[14] The exercise of reason within the context of faith is actually a process which involves the stages of *rejection, recognition, re-adjustment* and *response*. By describing it in this way it is possible to liken our efforts to develop our faith, which is called for by the encyclical, to the work done by the early Christians. Furthermore, it means that this task is a continuous challenge and that the use of reason is not being restricted to the philosophical discipline.

An early stage in making explicit our experience of transcendence and in arriving at a satisfactory conceptuality or doctrine is the *rejection* of alternatives. To some extent, it may be a matter of being clearer as to what something is not, rather than of what something is. In the case of the first Christians who had the important task of formulating Christian doctrine which was faithful to what had been experienced by the believing community, they had to weed out at the same time doctrines which could not be considered part of the Christian experience. The encyclical notes that adoption of philosophy by the early Church was cautious. Paul himself warned against esoteric speculation, while other writers, especially Ireneus and Tertullian resisted the temptation to subordinate Revelation to philosophy.[15] Moreover, the early Christians rejected the customary belief in 'gods' since 'god' was used by the popular religious cults of the day. When these Christians spoke of their God, they did not want their concept of God to be associated with the gods of popular religion.[16] Reject-

ing something, even within the context of religious faith, does not necessarily mean 'being negative'. It could, in effect, be a genuine search for something better. The philosophical questions we ask about our faith, even if they sometimes lead to rejecting accepted beliefs, could be a healthy step towards a deeper understanding and appreciation of our faith.

The next stage in this process is that of *recognising* or becoming aware of the value of a particular conceptualisation. Here there is partial acceptance, and some similarities are noted. This stage in the process of describing God's reality, for example, reveals the reasons why the early Church opted in favour of a particular philosophical framework, that of Stoic philosophy, in its attempts to conceptualise its faith-experience. The first Christians belonged to the Greco-Roman world and were concerned to speak to it. They wanted to convey the Christian message to their neighbours. Greek philosophy was an excellent medium then. Moreover, they wanted to show the reasonableness of Christianity and the ability of Christian teachings to withstand a thorough examination by philosophy. Philosophy, understood as a search for truth, was critical of the mythical interpretation of reality. There was a parallel, therefore, between the philosophers' task and that of the first Christians. Both wanted to differentiate their beliefs from those of popular religions which they regarded as superstitious. The early Christians furthermore found that philosophical categories helped them understand Christian revelation even more deeply than had been possible with biblical images. Philosophy met the need to achieve greater clarification of terms and ideas. Aquinas found much in Aristotelian philosophy to help him clarify, deepen and defend Christian beliefs. On this point, however, one could ask whether a different conceptuality, compared to what the early Church and Aquinas found helpful, would not be better suited to meet the needs of our faith today. It is for this reason that I am suggesting that we search for other conceptualities. Process thought is a good example.

One does not simply take over a favoured formulation. There is need for the third stage: that of *re-adjustment*. One has to reshape what one has recognised as helpful. Thus, there is adaptation prior to adoption, transformation before acceptance.[17] Despite aligning itself with philosophy (thereby rejecting popular religion) the early Church did not com-

pletely identify its teachings with those of the philosophers either. For example, the philosophers' God, in spite of its acceptability as the ground of all being, did not have any religious significance. This God was absolute perfection and the culmination of one's intellectual pursuit, but one could neither pray to nor establish a personal relationship with this God. Thus, some transformation was called for. But one wonders how satisfactory the early Church's transformation of philosophical ideas was, particularly in its conception of God. One suspects that the present demand for more relevant and adequate concepts of God harks back to this period in Christian history.

The fourth stage, that of *response,* is the acceptance of the transformed conceptuality. It is really a further development. But it should not be regarded as a final stage if by that is meant that no improvement can be expected.[18] As time goes by, certain intellectual expressions or formulations of our faith can become irrelevant or even misleading. Thus, the search for newer formulations is in reality an attempt to recover what has been obscured.[19] The dissatisfaction felt by some with the conceptuality worked out by the early Church has led to calls for more appropriate and contemporary expressions of the same Christian experience of the faith and of God.

To recall what had been stated previously, as far as the relationship between faith and reason is concerned, I would rather refer to it as "the exercise of reason within the context of religious faith", because the starting-point for reflections, whether one is a theist or a secular, is the common starting-point of any thinking being: our own humanity and our experience of it as we interact with one another. What distinguishes the theist is that the use of reason is done within the context of religious faith. Religious beliefs, therefore, are an acknowledgement of and an articulation of that specific context. It is a context that of course can be challenged insofar as the theist makes claims. But challenge and dispute by anyone who does not operate from the same context is possible only because there is a common starting-point that I have just referred to.

This understanding of the relationship between faith and reason is thus different from *fides quaerens intellectum* because in that interpretation religious faith is already the starting point. Nor should this understanding be described as *intellectus quaerens fidem* because for me it is

experience rather than an intellectual act that grounds the intellectual process. Philosophy thus is not regarded as *ancilla fidei*, nor are reason and faith symbolised as the "the two wings" (as are described in the encyclical). Instead I regard the same human experience as occurring in *different contexts*, one of which is described as "religious". I will explain my use of "context" a little later.

Future Tasks for Philosophy

The encyclical refers to future tasks for philosophy, thus re-affirming its solid support for its continued study and development. Such support will no doubt stimulate further scholarship and teaching of this subject. Aside from individual interests in specific issues or school of thought, the shape of such philosophical research will also be influenced by the response to official guidance or directives.

John Paul II in *Fides et Ratio* outlines what he considers to be the current requirements and tasks for philosophy. Although addressed specifically to Catholic thinkers, he has a wider audience in mind. The context in which he presents his suggestions is the acknowledged relationship between faith and reason, and for this reason he turns to the Christian vision as expressed in Sacred Scripture. For philosophers, it is probably neither the source nor even the vision itself but the possibility of having a vision (a metaphysical as well as an epistemological issue) that will be of interest. And here John Paul touches on an issue that should indeed concern contemporary philosophers—even if it runs counter to much of the work that is being presently done in philosophy. Noting the fragmentation of knowledge in various fields, including philosophy, and its consequences, one of which is the crisis of meaning, he speaks of the need for philosophers to retain and develop a vision of reality.[20] He wants us to recover what he calls "the sapiential dimension" of the pursuit of truth, reminding us that "a philosophy which no longer asks the meaning of life would be in grave danger of reducing reason to merely accessory functions, with no real passion for the search for truth."[21] The encyclical bemoans the loss of

metaphysical thinking that characterises much of contemporary philosophy, and in doing so illustrates well what had been averted to earlier; namely, that the Magisterium does more than just point out lacunae but also sparks off a renewal, and in this case, in the study of metaphysics. John Paul provides us with the reason: "If I insist so strongly on the metaphysical element, it is because I am convinced that it is the path to be taken in order to move beyond the crisis pervading large sectors of philosophy at the moment, and thus to correct certain mistaken modes of behaviour now widespread in our society."[22] It is a call worth heeding.[23]

Another issue touched upon by the encyclical that hopefully will be pursued by those engaged in philosophical pursuits, is the nature and status of human reason. According to John Paul II, this is "one of the tasks which Christian thought will have to take up through the next millennium of the Christian era."[24] Given the fact that this is the very tool of philosophers, it should be of interest to contemporary philosophy, particularly since its capabilities have been largely curtailed by—of all people—philosophers themselves.[25] Variations of Kant's criticisms abound in the writings of many contemporary philosophers. In contrast, the encyclical states emphatically the conviction that humans can arrive, having been endowed with reason, at a unified and organic vision of knowledge.[26] Since in some ways the future of philosophy is very much linked to our claims regarding reason's capabilities,[27] this topic certainly merits much closer attention.

John Paul's own words on this matter are worth quoting in full:

> I appeal to *philosophers,* and to all *teachers of philosophy*, asking them to have the courage to recover, in the flow of an enduringly valid philosophical tradition, the range of authentic wisdom and truth—metaphysical truth included—which is proper to philosophical enquiry. They should be open to the impelling questions which arise from the word of God and they should be strong enough to shape their thought and discussion in response to that challenge. Let them always strive for truth, alert to the good which truth contains. Then they will be able to formulate the genuine ethics which humanity needs so urgently at this particular time. The Church follows the work of philosophers with interest and appre-

ciation; and they should rest assured of her respect for the rightful autonomy of their discipline. I would want especially to encourage believers working in the philosophical field to illuminate the range of human activity by the exercise of reason which grows more penetrating and assured because of the support it receives from faith.[28]

Philosophy in Context

As the quotation above shows, *Fides et Ratio* does not limit itself to a discussion on the relationship between faith and reason. It undertakes to set out a certain understanding of philosophy. Drawing from the insights of process thought, I should now like to provide a further response to the encyclical regarding its conception of philosophy and of metaphysical thinking by pointing to the need to regard philosophy as "in context".

The detaching of philosophy from its main *context*—basically, the concerns of everyday life—can be detrimental. Not only does it deviate from the origins of philosophy, but it loses much of the value of this truly human act. It can also lead to isolation from other academic disciplines, whereas continual dialogue with these can be an advantage not only to these disciplines but also to philosophy itself. It must be added, however, that fortunately there have been others who pursue 'philosophy in context'. A.N. Whitehead's description of speculative philosophy as like the flight of an airplane provides an appropriate imagery: it starts from the ground, soars up into the rarefied atmosphere and lands back on the ground.

I need to explain further in what sense I have used the term "context" here since that word is sometimes interpreted differently by other philosophers, particularly by those influenced by Wittgenstein's philosophy. What it does not mean is that the act of philosophising is fenced in by one's subjective experiences such that one finds it impossible to transcend them. Rather, I take it to mean—and use the term accordingly—that the act of philosophising takes place in what process philosophers calls 'the

concreteness of life'. These are specific life-situations, but they are not completely subjective nor are they entirely particular instances, such that one does not see any resemblance to other situations. The concreteness of life serves as the starting points for our reflections.

"Context" as used here also refers to some kind of a unifying vision or at least the need to recognise its significance.[29] The specific life-situations on which the act of philosophising is based serve as pointers because it is through these specific situations that we become somewhat aware of a larger picture. In fact, we can only recognise them as specific because there seems to be a broader background against which they are set. Whitehead's analogy of "seeing the wood by means of the trees" can be helpful here.[30] It is the trees that we initially encounter, but it is also they which enable us to become aware of the wood. In seeing the wood, we have gone beyond merely noticing the trees. We may even see them in a different light because we see them against the backdrop of the wood. Similarly, the larger picture or the vision, that are opened up by the various contexts in which we philosophise, can enlighten us when we look again at the specific situations, including those that have set us off initially on our philosophical pursuits. Or as T.S. Eliot put it: "…we arrive where we started/And know the place for the first time."

These two understandings of "context" are connected in the claim that philosophising is intimately connected with metaphysical thinking. As a philosophical discipline, metaphysics has been severely criticised by many contemporary philosophers. I believe, however, that the negativity towards metaphysics is really toward certain metaphysical systems. The metaphysical spirit which stirred the ancients in their search for true wisdom—and which I suspect has not really been abandoned by many of its critics, including those in the postmodern mode—should direct us towards a different route in metaphysical thinking, for example, that mapped out by A.N. Whitehead and Charles Hartshorne.

"Context" is being used then in two distinct but related meanings: (1) the concreteness of our human experience as the basis for our philosophical reflections; and (2) a unifying vision that underlies our response to that experience. The question that inevitably arises is how something concrete (or detailed) can be reconciled with what is essentially abstract (or general). In insisting that philosophy is always in context, am I there-

fore claiming that philosophy is at all times both concrete and abstract? That would be a correct conclusion except that as these terms apply, they refer to different dimensions of the philosophical act. Insofar as philosophical thinking emerges out of the concreteness of life, it is concrete. It is based on and grounded in the day-to-day questions—whether it is the challenge of suffering or what ethical course of action to take—which need to be addressed as we live our lives and carry on our daily routine. But philosophical thinking, if it is not to be a superficial or an ad hoc response, must address those questions against a more general framework that helps to provide a sharper focus. This is the abstract dimension since it is general and comprehensive. There is something about human nature that is not fully satisfied with mere instances or selected examples. It is for this reason that, despite several contemporary criticisms of metaphysics, I have linked the second meaning of "context" with metaphysical thinking.

The human desire for some continuity, comprehensiveness, and unity in our understanding of reality, and in our attempts to make sense of it, is what I believe drives us to metaphysics. Admittedly, certain metaphysical developments do not satisfy us. But it is regrettable that in some quarters, the mention of "metaphysics" is enough to elicit or provoke criticism. In this regard, I agree with H.O. Mounce when he writes that it is not the word "metaphysics" that is important but what it represents. As he puts it:

> It is to be hoped that we do not see the end of metaphysics in its traditional sense…. But we can dispense with the word in its modern usage…. Simply to use it, in its modern sense, is to misrepresent what it purports to classify and simultaneously to enforce the categories of the post-Kantian or positivist worldview. So by all means let us see the end of 'metaphysics'. But let us retain what it used to mean, for that is simply the activity of philosophy itself.[31]

I had earlier indicated that philosophy and its close association with rationality are also in need of some further scrutiny. Rationality, at least in much of the western tradition, has been understood in almost exclusively intellectual terms. Reasoning and indeed philosophising are recognised as an exercise of the intellect—with the consequent neglect of

the other facets of the human act, e.g. the imagination, in our philosophical pursuits. It is not surprising therefore that philosophy is being studied as distinct from theology or from literature. I accept that there are good reasons for maintaining and upholding this distinction, but the strict separation can be quite detrimental. To some extent it has impoverished the development of philosophy. It seems to me that this can be traced back to equating rationality with reason (in the intellectual sense). As Whitehead and Hartshorne have done in their philosophies, we need in our philosophical thinking to incorporate the imagination, faith and scientific insights (among others) in our quest for wisdom.

For only in this way can we truly advance towards the truth.

ENDNOTES

[1] For a more extended discussion, see my *Religion, Reason and God* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang Publishers, 2004).

[2] This was repeated by Pope Benedict XVI in his lecture on "Faith, Reason and the University" at the University of Regensburg, 12 September 2006.

[3] One can perhaps draw a parallel here with the teaching of philosophy courses in a core curriculum. In my experience of teaching these courses in the USA to non-philosophy students (who need these courses to graduate), a number of students have become quite interested in the subject even to the extent of switching their major or taking a minor in philosophy. Another is the incentive to achieve highest merit (in salaries of American academics) and the receipt of grants, both of which can lead to greater scholarship in philosophy.

[4] I have limited my exploration to the relationship between philosophy and theology. *Fides et Ratio* also discusses the relationship between philosophy and culture, cf. par. 100. It is important to bear in mind too that Catholic tradition has always held that philosophy plays an important role in enabling theists and secularists to engage in dialogue with each other.

[5] This strict separation between disciplines runs throughout the academic curricula, and is fortunately being countered by interdisciplinary studies.

[6] "The truths of faith makes certain demands which philosophy must respect whenever it engages theology," *Fides et Ratio,* par. 77.

[7] It would be instructive to compare this point with what some contemporary European philosophers have become aware in their philosophical thinking; namely, the need to incorporate the imagination.

[8] See my "Concretizing Concrete Experience" in *Religion, Reason and God*, 141-158.

[9] The separation of reason and faith, or philosophy and religion, is more evident in Western compared to Asian thought. I believe that the task is not to re-think but to reconstruct the relationship between reason and faith in more holistic ways. Cf. my "Faith and Reason: a Process View" in *Religion, Reason and God*, 1-9. To

me, the reality is the one human experience, interpreted and acknowledged differently by the religious believer and by the humanist. Faith thus is awareness *and* acknowledgement of transcendence. Religious faith develops when that takes place within the context of a religious community.

[10] This is, of course, an epistemological question which gives rise to the debate between rationalism and empiricism. The point I am making does not side with either but is inclusive of both.

[11] *Fides et Ratio*, par. 4. In a certain sense, such an observation could well be expressed in Shakespeare's words: "There are more things in heaven and on earth than are dreamt of in your philosophy"!

[12] *Fides et Ratio*, par. 47.

[13] See the Introduction. Also, cf. André Cloots and Santiago Sia (eds.), *Framing a Vision of the World: Essays in Philosophy, Science and Religion*, Louvain Philosophical Studies 14 (Leuven University Press, 1999).

[14] *Ibid.*, par. 81. In *Veritatis Splendor*, he refers to the crisis of truth and its consequences.

[15] *Ibid.* par. 83.

[16] In response to this call a major conference, "Metaphysics in the Third Millennium International Conference," was held in Rome in September 2000.

[17] *Ibid.*, par. 85.

[18] There is a certain irony here when one takes into account that the tool being called into question is the very one used to question it! The same observation can probably be made of those who reject metaphysics. One wonders whether they are merely substituting one kind of metaphysical thinking for another. Or sometimes the debate develops into a linguistic one: what one means by "metaphysics".

[19] John Paul refers to this topic also in more specific terms: "How can one reconcile the absoluteness and universality of truth with the unavoidable historical and cultural conditioning of the formulas which express that truth?" *Fides et Ratio*, par. 95. On this point I believe that the metaphysics developed by the philosophers Alfred North Whitehead and Charles Hartshorne has much to offer with its distinction between the abstract and the concrete.

[20] It seems to me that an even more crucial issue is re-thinking the Western conception of reason. This also seems to me to have been what Pope Benedict XVI means by "broadening our concept of reason and its application." Cf. his Lecture on "Faith, Reason and the University" although what he is referring to is the positivistic (rather than the intellectualistic) conception of reason.

[21] *Fides et Ratio*, par. 106.

[22] A.N. Whitehead in *Adventures of Ideas* (Cambridge University Press, 1942), 125-126, notes the important role that philosophy plays in human civilisations in providing "that sense of importance which nerves all civilized effort," for it is the lack of a "coordinating philosophy of life" that has doomed civilizations. He

issues a call to re-create and re-enact a vision of the world. Cf. also André Cloots and Santiago Sia (eds.), *Framing a Vision of the World: Essays in Philosophy, Science and Religion*, Louvain Philosophical Studies 14 (Leuven University Press, 1999).

[23] I discuss this quotation further in "Seeing the Wood by Means of the Trees: a View on Education and Philosophy," *Process Papers: Proceedings of the Association for Process Philosophy of Education,* No. 10 (March 2006).

[24] H.O. Mounce, "The End of Metaphysics," *New Blackfriars* (September 2005), 527.