

# *Pope Benedict XVI on Authentic Human Progress and Bioethics*

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*Abstract.* Western society is steadily inundated by technology. Pope Benedict XVI has presented a positive but cautious analysis of biotechnological development. Within the context of man's yearning for love and truth, Benedict explicates a vision of authentic human progress that recognizes that the *telos* of technical progress in biomedicine is the good of the human person. He criticizes the "consensus model" of bioethics, which is prevalent in our cultural technopoly, because it leaves science unfettered and emphasizes arbitrary consensus at the cost of an ethical evaluation, which honors the dignity of the person and the rights of man. Benedict XVI proposes a bioethical model which is open to God, is consistent with natural law, and views the human person as its *telos*. *National Catholic Bioethics Quarterly* 11.4 (Winter 2011): 669–678.

Human beings have increasingly directed the gift of reason toward technological advances. As such, we live in a society that is steadily inundated and dominated by technology. Undoubtedly with this in mind, Pope Benedict XVI has explicated a positive but cautious approach to technological development. He views technology as a "profoundly human reality" and a good because it is an expression of our

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freedom that we possess as stewards of the material order.<sup>1</sup> In principle, technology allows man to express his creative genius, harness the created order, and ensure the development of peoples. Technology has the capacity to propel us toward becoming more fully human. It allows us to realize our ambition to overcome limitations and to pursue our aspirations. Benedict believes that technological advances often represent an unfolding of God's providence.<sup>2</sup> However, he sounds a cautionary note as he emphasizes that the origin and very reason for the existence of technology is the human person, the *imago dei*: "the primary capital to be safeguarded and valued is man, the human person in his or her integrity."<sup>3</sup> As such, "technology is never merely technology" but has as its point of reference the good of the human person.<sup>4</sup> Insofar as technology upholds the dignity of the person, promotes the common good, and fosters genuine stewardship of freedom, it is a good.<sup>5</sup>

Technology, then, is not an unqualified good in itself. Neither is it sufficient unto itself. Society, nonetheless, has a tendency to both place too great a trust in technology and heed only the technical questions of how to accomplish this or that goal, ignoring the limitations that should be placed on technological developments—limits that are necessary to ensure the authentic development of persons. Benedict states that "man cannot place in science and technology so radical and unconditional a trust as to believe that scientific and technological progress can explain everything and completely fulfill all his existential and spiritual needs."<sup>6</sup> Such a radical trust that does not adequately consider whether a technology ought to be pursued often

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<sup>1</sup> See Benedict XVI, *Caritas in veritate* (June 29, 2009), n. 69.

<sup>2</sup> "If we think, for example, of how modern science, by predicting natural phenomena, has contributed to the protection of the environment, the progress of developing nations, the fight against epidemics, and an increase in life expectancy, it becomes clear that there is no conflict between God's providence and human enterprise. Indeed, we could say that the work of predicting, controlling and governing nature . . . is itself a part of the Creator's plan." Benedict XVI, Address to the Members of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences (November 6, 2006).

<sup>3</sup> *Caritas in veritate*, n. 25. See also Benedict XVI, Address to Participants in the Twenty-fifth International Conference Organized by the Pontifical Council for Health Care Workers (November 15, 2010): "It is on the divine image imprinted in our brother and sister that the most exalted dignity of every person is founded."

<sup>4</sup> *Caritas in veritate*, n. 69.

<sup>5</sup> It should be emphasized that a loving and truthful development will bring about the common good—properly understood as "the good of 'all of us,' made up of individuals, families and intermediate groups who together constitute society." *Ibid.*, n. 69. Note that the common good does not mean that the good of the individual is subordinate to some social good, as presupposed in debates concerning embryonic stem cell research, torture of terrorists, and nuclear warfare. The human person is primary and never an instrumental good of the state or of society.

<sup>6</sup> Benedict XVI, Address to the Pontifical Academy of Sciences (November 6, 2006). See also his Address to the Members of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences (October 28, 2010). In this address, Pope Benedict laments the extreme fear of all technology as well as the naïve assumption that science can build a utopia.

results in disaster. Whatever the motives, scientists tend to absolutize the obligation to pursue, without hindrances, what is technically possible. Benedict laments this situation: “Truth has come to be seen as coinciding with the possible. But when the sole criterion of truth is efficiency and utility, development is automatically denied. True development does not consist primarily in ‘doing.’ The key to development is a mind capable of thinking in technological terms and grasping the fully human meaning of human activities, within the context of the holistic meaning of the individual’s being.”<sup>7</sup> Although advances in technology will always engage our imagination and foster hope, an authentic development, freely pursued, will allow us to evaluate potential technologies in a morally responsible way.<sup>8</sup>

Here we encounter an important question: why is it that serious ethical considerations seem to so rarely enter into the picture? According to Benedict, one of the “foundations of the modern age” is the notion that redemption can be accomplished through the application of science.<sup>9</sup> At the same time, faith is relegated to nothing more than a private matter, as superstitious, or as irrelevant within the public square. With these two presuppositions, modern man loses the heavenward gaze of faith and then devolves into “faith in progress,” a faith which is thought to be capable of bringing about a new world through reliance on reason alone.<sup>10</sup> With faith in progress, human beings have increasingly directed reason toward technological advances with scant reference to the transcendent.<sup>11</sup> If technology is to serve man in love and in truth, God cannot be ignored or excused from the conversation. When God is excluded from the discourse, when love is not the guiding light of development, and when an authentic humanism is ignored, we run the risk of technology becoming a god—that inevitably will violate the rights of man.

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<sup>7</sup>*Caritas in veritate*, n. 70.

<sup>8</sup>“Technology is highly attractive because it draws us out of our physical limitations and broadens our horizon. *But human freedom is authentic only when it responds to the fascination of technology with decisions that are the fruit of moral responsibility.*” *Ibid.*, n. 70, original emphasis.

<sup>9</sup>Benedict XVI, *Spe salvi* (November 30, 2007), n. 16. Benedict argues that a presupposition of the modern age is that dominion over the created order can be accomplished through the power of humanity alone—God need not apply. By use of his freedom and reason, man can, without God, regain control over and master the created order. The obvious problem with this self-understanding from a theological standpoint is that it merely perpetuates the very sin of Adam that led to humanity’s losing dominion over the created order in the first place. In the end, it perpetuates the slavery and suffering that followed humanity’s rejection of God’s order.

<sup>10</sup>Benedict illustrates that the foundations for such an exaltation of progress are found in the work of Francis Bacon. See *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup>One of Benedict’s primary motivations for forming the Pontifical Council for Promoting the New Evangelization was this blindness and “the troubling loss of the sense of the sacred” in conjunction with “advances in science and technology” which have “profoundly altered our way of looking at the world.” Benedict XVI, *Ubicumque et semper* (September 21, 2010).

Benedict emphasizes in *Caritas in veritate* that “without God man neither knows which way to go, nor even understands who he is. . . . By himself he cannot establish an authentic humanism.”<sup>12</sup> However, the trajectory of the modern age is to pursue a radical secularism in which it becomes necessary to reject God, because within a technopoly, “progress is the overcoming of all forms of dependency—it is progress toward perfect freedom,” which becomes merely a promise to reach my potential and become more fully myself.<sup>13</sup> Those who are influenced by utilitarianism, materialism, and rationalism presume that a new community of peace, prosperity, and fullness can be accomplished by excluding faith from the discussion. Faith, after all, is a form of dependence—the supposed enemy of progress.

But Benedict XVI says that the hope that salvation will come from scientific progress “asks too much of science; this kind of hope is deceptive. Science can contribute greatly to making the world and mankind more human. Yet it can also destroy mankind and the world unless it is steered by forces that lie outside it.”<sup>14</sup> For this reason, in *Caritas in veritate*, the Holy Father cautions that while progress may be an authentic and genuine expression of freedom, a technical worldview can draw us away from “solid humanistic principles” and can hold “us back from encountering being and truth.”<sup>15</sup> Modern man, it seems, has too often mindlessly assimilated technological advancements simply because they seem to bring about progress and the promise of a utopia. But such a pragmatic, permissive, and lazy approach is harmful to the person because technology cannot be its own guide and measure. As Benedict stresses in *Spe salvi*, “We have all witnessed the way in which progress, in the wrong hands, can become and has indeed become a terrifying progress in evil. If technical progress is not matched by corresponding progress in man’s ethical formation, in man’s inner growth . . . , then it is not progress at all, but a threat for man and for the world.”<sup>16</sup>

Technology can accomplish great things, but an authentic progress recognizes that God’s “love alone gives us the possibility of soberly persevering day by day . . . in a world which by its very nature is imperfect.”<sup>17</sup> Perhaps then, and in light of this imperfect world, the most essential progress that we ought to pursue is the progress in our capacity to love. Authentic technological development will foster *caritas* in the world. This is essential because “Love is the light—and in the end, the only

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<sup>12</sup>*Caritas in veritate*, n. 78.

<sup>13</sup>*Spe salvi*, n. 18.

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*, n. 25

<sup>15</sup>*Caritas in veritate*, nn. 71 and 70.

<sup>16</sup>*Spe salvi*, n. 22. Progress in ethical formation, at a minimum, must be in keeping with natural law. To reach our fullest potential, the Christian must also constantly seek virtue and holiness; being made “right with God” through faith and works is essential for the “inner growth” characteristic of the saint. Natural law does not make us holy—virtue does—but there is no virtuous man who does not act in accord with his nature.

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*, n 31.

light—that can always illuminate a world grown dim and give us the courage needed to keep living and working.”<sup>18</sup>

### **The Role of the Church in Bioethics Today**

The Church does not arrogate to herself the expertise to offer the technical solutions that aid in development and progress. The fundamental mission of the Church is to overcome the truncated visions of the human person that are so prevalent today by “guiding people’s consciences towards goodness, solidarity and peace.”<sup>19</sup> She does so by diagnosing the ailments within bioethics today, as well as by prescribing remedies that cherish the dignity of and respect the fundamental rights of each person.

Benedict is deeply concerned by the status of bioethics today. This concern arises from the manifold implications that rapid development of biotechnology and medicine have for man and the prevailing cultural permissiveness toward any scientific progress. Too often in bioethics, authentic human rights remain fragile and are violated because man has lost sight of an authentic humanism. Rights that spring from our nature are ignored while lesser rights and “rights” pulled out of thin air are exalted. The threat to inalienable rights is exacerbated by a cultural “technopoly” in which technological know-how is held in such high regard that we are essentially expected to “take note of technological possibilities” and nothing more.<sup>20</sup> The Pope notes that the rapidity of progress in science can “make it very difficult to discern whether they [scientific advances] are compatible with the truths about man and the world that God has revealed.”<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, in many influential corners the claim is that science ought to be unfettered—if we can do it and it can be rationalized, we ought to do it.<sup>22</sup> While technology is truly fascinating, we must evaluate it in a fashion that is truly responsible.<sup>23</sup>

In the face of a crisis of moral formation, and gazing upon the intellectual and political landscape, Benedict bemoans that the approach to bioethics increasingly “strives to replace truth with a consensus that is fragile and easy to manipulate.”<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>18</sup>Benedict XVI, *Deus caritas est* (December 25, 2005), n. 39.

<sup>19</sup>Address to Pontifical Academy of Sciences (2006).

<sup>20</sup>*Caritas in veritate*, n. 75.

<sup>21</sup>Benedict XVI, Address to the Participants of the Plenary Assembly of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (February 10, 2006).

<sup>22</sup>For example, when debating embryonic stem cell research, Senator Arlen Specter stated, “My own view is that science ought to be unfettered and that every possible alternative ought to be explored.” Congresswoman Diane DeGette said, “It’s terribly wrong for any politician to be trying to pick and choose one type of ethical research over another” simply assuming the moral liceity of embryonic stem cell research. Sheryl Gay Stolberg, “Method Equalizes Stem Cell Debate,” *New York Times*, November 21, 2007; and Richard M. Doerflinger, “Washington Insider,” *National Catholic Bioethics Quarterly* 8.1 (Spring 2008): 24.

<sup>23</sup>*Caritas in veritate*, n. 70.

<sup>24</sup>Benedict XVI, Address to the Members of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith on the Occasion of the Plenary Assembly (January 15, 2010).

Today, bioethics—which in many corners has simply become the handmaid of science—has the tendency to label almost anything as good as long as the necessary verbal gymnastics and slight-of-hand are done to sway voters or create consensus in the public square. Rather than plumbing the depths of the truth concerning man, the aim of bioethics has increasingly become manipulation of public opinion or pursuit of the lowest common denominator. Guided by a “positivist conception of law” and “ethical relativism,” rather than by genuine truth-seeking dialogue, bioethics done in the public square is equated with legislation, court decisions, and opinion polls.<sup>25</sup> Tools for fostering consensus and shaping public opinion include employment of euphemisms (“therapeutic cloning,” “reproductive health,” “family planning services,” “terminal sedation,” “selective reduction of pregnancy,” “aid in dying”) and the arbitrary declaration of ambiguous rights (“right to die,” “right to not suffer,” “right to sexual freedom,” “right to privacy”). Two examples of the fallout from this model is that the inalienable and universal right to life can be disposed of for the sake of “privacy,” as seen with abortion, and the “right to reproductive health” increasingly trumps a Catholic hospital’s or a physician’s inalienable right to freedom of conscience and religion.<sup>26</sup>

The consensus model is the approach of many prominent figures today. Seeking to move toward a consensus model of bioethics was most certainly the aim of President Obama when he disbanded the President’s Council on Bioethics and subsequently formed the Presidential Commission for the Study of Bioethical Issues.<sup>27</sup> Here we see the prescience of Benedict, who recognizes that models of consensus ultimately become will-to-power, leading to the oppression of the weak and vulnerable. The consensus model gives science the license to eventually do whatever it wills regardless of the human cost. Indeed, the consensus model has forced pragmatic and utilitarian ideologies on modern man, leading to a “state of bewilderment and confusion.”<sup>28</sup> This is observed with nearly every issue faced today: abortion, physician assisted suicide, prenatal diagnosis when it amounts to a death sentence, contraception, in

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<sup>25</sup>Benedict XVI, Address to Members of the International Theological Commission (October 5, 2007). Consider also his Address to Participants in the Plenary Session of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences (October 28, 2010), which stressed the need for an approach to the sciences that is intimately tied to “philosophical reflection.” If the sciences are to bring about genuine human development, the search for scientific truth will also coincide with a love of truth about the human person including his or her spiritual dimension, natural law, and virtue.

<sup>26</sup>“The Church has always affirmed that fundamental rights . . . are to be upheld and accorded universal recognition because they are inherent in the very nature of man who is created in the image and likeness of God. . . . The right to life and the right to freedom of conscience and religion as being at the centre of those rights that spring from human nature itself. . . . If this solid ethical and political basis is ignored, human rights remain fragile since they are deprived of their sound foundation.” Benedict XVI, Address to Participants in the Fifteenth Plenary Session of the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences (May 4, 2009).

<sup>27</sup>See Gilbert Meilaender, “On Bioethics in Public,” *New Atlantis* 26 (Fall 2009–Winter 2010): 39–59.

<sup>28</sup>Address to International Theological Commission (2007).

vitro fertilization, etc.<sup>29</sup> Modern man must realize that “when faced with new and insistent challenges, it is a mistake to fall back on a pragmatic approach, limited to determining ‘common ground,’ minimal in content and weak in its effect.”<sup>30</sup> Rapid development, paired with the exclusion of transcendent realities, make for a perfect storm in which humanity is threatened by its own devices. In short, in our moment of greatest technological advancement, Western society is increasingly reliant upon the consensus model of bioethics which leaves science unfettered and unchecked.

To remedy the prevalence of such an impoverished vision of bioethics, Benedict has consistently argued that bioethics must be open to God, must be consistent with natural law, and must recognize the human person as its *telos*. First, the Pope emphasizes that the world of bioethics tends to reveal a lack of receptivity toward God, which leads to an accompanying divorce of reason from the transcendent and to the closing of reason “within immanence.”<sup>31</sup> The urgency of this first point was expressed well in Benedict’s 2009 Christmas homily: “The mentality of today’s world, the whole range of our experience is inclined to deaden our receptivity for God, to make us ‘tone deaf’ toward him.”<sup>32</sup> Our tone-deafness ultimately destroys the human person. We become consumed with ourselves and thus consume ourselves. Bioethics is a discipline that ought to use the gift of human reason to pursue the human good. Recalling that a “humanism which excludes God is an inhuman humanism,” we must constantly seek to purify our bioethical reasoning by allowing it to be raised to encounter God’s revelation of Himself.<sup>33</sup> To truly flourish, creation must be aware of the Creator. But too often science and bioethics reject this fact, claiming for science the mantle of creator, savior, and redeemer. In *Jesus of Nazareth*, Benedict offers a particularly apropos reflection on the fourth petition of the Our Father: “Give us this day, our daily bread.” He writes that our dependence on God is “opposed to the temptation that comes to us through our pride to give ourselves life purely through our own power. Such pride makes man violent and cold. It ends up destroying the earth. It cannot be otherwise, because it is contrary to the truth that we human beings are oriented toward self-transcendence and that we become great and free and truly ourselves only when we open up to God.”<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>29</sup>See Benedict XVI, Address to Participants in the Twenty-fifth International Conference Organized by the Pontifical Council for Health Care Workers (November 15, 2010).

<sup>30</sup>Address to the Members of the General Assembly of the United Nations (April 18, 2008).

<sup>31</sup>*Caritas in veritate*, n. 74.

<sup>32</sup>Benedict XVI, homily (December 24, 2009), printed in *Origins* 39.30 (January 7, 2010).

<sup>33</sup>*Caritas in veritate*, n. 78. See also his Address to the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences (May 4, 2009): “Human reason must undergo constant purification by faith, insofar as it is always in danger of a certain ethical blindness caused by disordered passions and sin; and, on the other hand, insofar as human rights need to be re-appropriated by every generation and by each individual, and insofar as human freedom—which proceeds by a succession of free choices—is always fragile.”

<sup>34</sup>Benedict XVI, *Jesus of Nazareth* (New York: Double Day, 2007), 151.

Second, if man will pursue what is good, true, and beautiful when evaluating technological progress, then his standard will be that law which is common to all humanity. The natural law, Benedict suggests, can be a “catalyzing source of consensus between people of different cultures and religions and permits them to overcome differences.”<sup>35</sup> This is so because natural law is “written” into our very being and is thus common to all human persons. Arguments based in natural law are accessible and reasonable for all who are truly open-minded. The natural law is the norm upon which we can and ought to build a consensus rooted not in ideological platforms, as follow from the consensus model, but in a common humanity. Benedict emphasizes that “combining bioethics and the natural moral law makes it possible to ensure as best we can, the necessary and unavoidable reference to that dignity which human life intrinsically possesses from its first moment until its natural end.”<sup>36</sup>

In *Ubicumque et semper*, Benedict stresses that the Church’s ability to evangelize the world and ensure the good of the person has been hampered by a “troubling loss of . . . reference to a natural moral law.”<sup>37</sup> Indeed, the Pope has frequently emphasized that history shows the ill effects of ethical models that disregard natural law and transcendental realities. Going forward, man deserves a progress in both the technological and ethical realms. As Benedict has emphasized, “the future of humanity . . . must be the fruit of a deeper consensus based on the acknowledgement of universal truths grounded in reasoned reflection on the postulates of our common humanity.”<sup>38</sup> The danger posed to modern man by the permissiveness and will-to-power of the consensus model is avoided by the natural moral law, which “makes it possible to ward off” the dangers we encounter in the rapid development within biotechnology, because it fosters a genuine consensus grounded in a shared humanity.<sup>39</sup> Reference to, and appreciation of, natural law must be recovered. Only then will the inviolable dignity of each human person be respected by technological developments.

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<sup>35</sup>Benedict XVI, Address to Participants in the General Assembly of the Pontifical Academy for Life (February 13, 2010). E. Christian Brugger has emphasized that prior to ascending to the papacy, Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger questioned the efficacy of appeals to natural law in a milieu that is distrustful of reason and denies a “common nature.” However, as Pope, Benedict has regularly appealed to the natural law when engaging the secular world. While analysis of this shift is beyond the scope of this paper, I simply take note of this discrepancy between the thought of Ratzinger the theologian and that of Benedict, the pontiff. See Brugger’s “The Moral Theology of Benedict XVI: On Freedom, Natural Law, and Political Morality,” in *The Thought of Joseph Ratzinger Pope Benedict XVI*, ed. Kenneth D. Whitehead (Chicago: University of Scranton Press, 2009), 239–251.

<sup>36</sup>Address to General Assembly of the Pontifical Academy for Life (2010).

<sup>37</sup>*Ubicumque et semper* (September 21, 2010).

<sup>38</sup>Benedict XVI, Address to Her Excellency Mrs. Mary Ann Glendon, New Ambassador of the United States of America to the Holy See (February 29, 2008).

<sup>39</sup>Address to General Assembly of the Pontifical Academy for Life (2010). See also the 2007 Address to the International Theological Commission: “Indeed, on respect for this natural moral law depends the advance of individuals and society on the path of authentic progress in conformity with right reason, which is participation in the eternal Reason of God.”



Third, Benedict emphasizes the key to a renewal in bioethics today is the human person. The human person is essential to bioethics first because his moral formation is necessary for ensuring the authentic development of humanity. “The development of peoples is intimately linked to the development of individuals,” so we must learn to direct our freedom toward the good, by forming well, and by acting upon, the dictates of our consciences.<sup>40</sup> He says, “I believe that the real problem of our historical moment lies in the imbalance between the incredibly fast growth of our technical power and that of our moral capacity, which has not grown in proportion. That is why the formation of the human person is the true recipe, the key to it all, I would say, and this is what the Church proposes.”<sup>41</sup> Unfortunately, in our “brave new world,” formation of the human person is a daunting task, since the prevailing view of conscience amounts to nothing more than conviction in my own opinion, and thus conscience is, in effect, the handmaid of relativism. When we reduce the conscience to purely subjective belief, to the superficial, and to group consensus, we become enslaved to ourselves and to the prevailing winds of our times. Since at its core, ethics is about the pursuit of truth and the good of the person, which we are capable of ascertaining through the use of reason and by appeal to the natural law, it is essential that the human person continue to develop his capacity to know himself in light of God, love, and the truth of his own nature and that he act upon that knowledge. The capacity to pursue love in truth is a prerequisite of genuine human development; it is incumbent upon every person to foster this ability within himself.

Second, the human person is key in the renewal of bioethics because it ought not be forgotten that in evaluating technological developments “the human person always takes priority over other aims.”<sup>42</sup> The *telos* of technology is the person. Benedict’s wariness toward modern ethical trends reveals his concern for the “disturbing scenarios that threaten our future” and the “powerful new instruments that the ‘culture of death’ has at its disposal,” which can destroy the very good that technology purports to defend—that is, the human person.<sup>43</sup> Underlying these threatening manifestations of the “culture of death” is a denial of and an indifference toward the dignity of the human person, a denial of God, and a failure to love in truth. Showing respect for life and for God’s creation is a matter of “adopting a scientific

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<sup>40</sup> *Caritas in veritate*, n. 68. An exhaustive account of Benedict’s theology on conscience is beyond the scope of the present paper. Benedict’s understanding of conscience was expressed most beautifully in two addresses given to the Bishops of the United States while he was a cardinal. See Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, *On Conscience* (Philadelphia: National Catholic Bioethics Center, 2007).

<sup>41</sup> Benedict XVI, Interview in Preparation for the Upcoming Journey to Bavaria (August 5, 2006).

<sup>42</sup> Benedict XVI, Address to H.E. Mr. Walter Jurgen Schmid, New Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to the Holy See (September 13, 2010).

<sup>43</sup> *Caritas in veritate*, n. 75.

method that is truly respectful of ethical imperatives.”<sup>44</sup> These imperatives may be derived from the *telos* of technology—the authentic good of the human person.

### Hope of All Humanity

If we are to pursue authentic progress, particularly in the medical field, our sights must be set on the one hope of all humanity. Through technical progress, we can achieve a host of developments that bring hope: healing medications, life-saving procedures, cures for infertility, and the alleviation of pain. But while these developments are truly beneficial to man, they are never enough to sustain us. Benedict emphasized in *Spe salvi* that “anyone who does not know God, even though he may entertain all kinds of hopes, is ultimately without hope, without the great hope that sustains the whole of life (cf. Eph 2:12). Man’s great, true hope which holds firm in spite of all disappointments can only be God.”<sup>45</sup> In the same document, he also says that a “distinguishing mark of Christians [is] the fact that they have a future . . . they know in general terms that their life will not end in emptiness.”<sup>46</sup> We come to possess the virtue of hope through coming to know and love He who is, who was, and is to be.

Authentic progress is always directed toward God, is in accord with his truth, and encourages and enables every person and community to flourish. In *Caritas in veritate*, Benedict writes, “Evolving societies must remain faithful to all that is truly human in their traditions, avoiding the temptation to overlay them automatically with the mechanisms of a globalized technological civilization.”<sup>47</sup> Our failure to place and evaluate technological development within the context of love and truth will inevitably lead to infringement of the rights of man and to the enslavement of man to his own creation. Throughout his pontificate, Benedict’s teaching serves as a reminder that it is not scientific progress that redeems man but that man is redeemed by love in truth.

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<sup>44</sup>Address to United Nations (2008).

<sup>45</sup>*Spe salvi*, n. 27.

<sup>46</sup>*Ibid.*, n. 2.

<sup>47</sup>*Caritas in veritate*, n. 59