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Hope and the joy of living, in Pieper's philosophy

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Abstract:

We live in a practical society, where work is a god to be worshipped. The almost totalitarian situation implies that most people live to work and even the spare time we dispose of is destined to rest, in order to continue with our productive life, not to live a meaningful one. The result is that there is no time to devote to personal enrichment. When the most of time and efforts are destined to work, there is nothing left to culture, arts, meditation, and philosophy. And these are the activities that precisely are to lead us to feel the joy of life.

When there is nothing more than work to define who we are and what being alive means, then appears boredom and fatigue, because we miss something important. Life loses the taste of the new and its sense. Josef Pieper thinks that hope is the best attitude to walk the way of life. Hope teaches us that, in the end, it's all right. Not a fairy tale, but a good life to live. The alternatives are certainly dreadful. One of them is a flattery optimism, condemned to frustration, and the other is hell, where desperation dwells, as Dante told us.

Pieper was a Christian philosopher but lately the topic has been studied from other points of view. The power of hope shows itself in its capacity to change reality, to change our mind, first. And to change society. The real question is what we are living for. The answer could be to become the best version of ourselves and to leave a better world behind us. We can achieve this goal if we are hopeful and confident people. No matter how difficult the way may be, when there is a will, there is a way. So, let's go and enjoy the walk. Whatever may happen, it pays the bill.

Keywords: Work, Leisure, Desperation, Hope, Happiness

I. Work: use and abuse

We can see that, lately, working time dominates our whole life. Our family, our friends, our hobbies or even our rest, all is put aside for the sake of being professional and proper people. Our whole life is organised according to the timetable assigned to us. Our tasks menace to invade all our thoughts and our whole energy. We rest only to keep on working, sometimes. The worst part of the story is that most of times, one cannot even say the working day has proved to be satisfactory or an enrichment for working people. Lots of them are simply staying there without any motivation and waiting for their wages, without any implication in their tasks, in a silent state of demission.

The question is, if we must necessarily part with all the things that really matter in life at the workplace's door, only for keeping ourselves alive, does it really pay the bill? Is this life, after all? Real work, means we work to live, not live to work. So easy to say, so difficult to do. Exit has become a god that claims for sacrifices all over the world, as liberalism spread and defeats every opposition wherever it may take place. Pieper thought that work was necessary, but not sufficient. We are looking for the land of honey and milk. Milk is necessary, but we need some honey, too. Life is good when we can taste it. Living to work is a temptation nowadays because the other elements of human life that were traditionally regarded as what we worked for, family, friends, community, and faith are weakened, and so work is what defines who we are in modern societies. Some people surely have many difficulties to define themselves anyway, as work has proved to be a very unstable situation and one can be unemployed or change jobs many times during a lifetime.

Work is important for two reasons. First, most of us need to work to sustain ourselves and our families. The second reason is that we are created to create, to be co-creators. We feel motivated when we put our effort on something new, when we have something to offer. But total work is to be avoided.

We should not allow ourselves to be imprisoned by a tyranny of usefulness and instrumental formation during our whole life. We need a life plenty of freedom and fullness. To be most fully human is always to aspire to be something more than what we are, we need to go all time higher. The failure to do good or not developing one's potential, does in fact hurt oneself and others, who need and have a right to become the best version of themselves. As adults, we need to impart knowledge and encourage virtue according to the tradition to young people. But we need to inspire them, whether they work in practical labours or in mind ones. Successful people in any field are openminded. They know that there are lots of things to discover and are ready to find a way to them. So, they can feel themselves useful to society by contributing to its wellbeing.

We are not created to survive in life. True leisure is important because it has the power to transport us to another world. Pieper argues that leisure is not to be confused with amusement or with rest. Both are simply ways to restore ourselves to the productive functions that are assigned to us in our workplace. Only philosophy, poetry, art, literature, prayer, meditation, and other experiences have the power to take us beyond the chain of ends and means that binds the world of work. Pieper thought philosophy is the human activity that is most detached from the world of work, because it is the least practical of human activities, as it is certainly an end after all. The world of freedom begins with philosophy.

Hugh of Saint Victor said that the things by which every man advances in knowledge are principally two, reading and meditation.¹ And knowledge has got the key to freedom. The more we know, the more options we have at hand and the more we have got possibilities of acting efficiently.

A labour relation can be creative and satisfactory. The idea is to combine effort and dedication with pleasure and time to devote oneself to other activities, so creative and satisfactory as the professional one. Our life is enriched with every new challenge we take. And every person has his or her own way of enrichment.

¹ Coleman, A.P. *Leisure and Labor*, 85.

II. Being tired and tired of being

Living a life devoted to work, without any other motivation is often the cause of boredom and frustration. To rest for the only reason of keep on working cannot really be named rest. One needs to stay away of internal and external noise, and to contemplate the world around and the own life, and feel it's all right, after all. When, there is no time to do that, desperation comes.

While hope tells us that everything will end well, for the individual and for the community, despair tells us that everything leads to absurdity, to nothingness. In advance, despair has already taken sides. This attitude is perfectly compatible with a certain optimism about existence.² But, ultimately, the desperate is a suffering being since he is torn between his need for self-realization and the denial of it. Those who refuse to accept risks and those who refuse to accept hope have in common that they want to avoid frustration and disappointment. The systematic abandonment of hope leads to fatalism. Hope is seen as a prelude to disillusionment and the cause of the loss of peace. It can lead to action, but also to catastrophe.

Revers noted that the introversion of the person causes boredom, which is a trigger of despair, establishing a connection between the state of the desperate with that of the neurotic. This state of mind can be reversed by connecting the person with reality, where hope, the source of cure for mental illness, can be found.³

² Shumacher, B. *A Philosophy of Hope*, 131.

"The attitude of fundamental despair can coexist with a certain optimism about existence. Moreover, it does not necessarily reject daily waiting, it does not deny the fundamental hope or, rather, a positive completion of the natural inclination of the human being. However, the one who despairs fundamentally can also despair of waiting, thereby denying an ontology of becoming, of *not-being-yet*, and replacing it with a static and closed ontology of the finished, without any future, from which the category of possibility has been banished."

³ Quoted in Schumacher, B., *A Philosophy of Hope*, 133.

Pieper argues that the root of despair lies in *acedia*.⁴ According to him, the totalitarian world of work enslaves people, who can no longer engage in truly free activities. Industrial society denies life outside of work and does not give people the opportunity to self-realize, to become what they have the possibility to be.

There are basically two forms of despair, one is real desperation, the other is conceit.⁵ The first takes us to hell. Dante hangs on his doorway the sign: O, those of you who enter, abandon all hope."⁶ The damned have no hope. In fact, hope means everything will be fine. The root of despair is found in sloth, abandonment, and neglect. The desperate have no desire to become what they can indeed be.⁷ The second, takes us at a vanity fair.

There can be hopelessness and despair. The former is manifold, and the latter is unique, definitive. The goods in which we have put our waits can cause us disappointment and can open the door to despair. Human beings can decide that the object of hope is not attainable. And it is certainly true that the world can offer us enough reason to think this way.

Despair is not the only daughter of sloth. He has more: restlessness of spirit, indifference, pusillanimity, resentment, and malice. The restlessness of spirit is characterized by the flight of oneself, and we find it in verbal incontinence, in unhealthy curiosity, in unease and in importunity. Indifference is a denial of one's own being. Pusillanimity, on the other hand, means not giving value to the mystical possibilities of the human being. Resentment implies an immense narrow-

Pieper also saw a very close relationship between mental illness and despair and boredom. Plügge, in his work *Über suizidale Kranke* (On the Suicidal Sick), had developed the theme.

⁴ Pieper, J. *Über die Hoffnung*, 55.

"But the beginning and the root of despair is *acedia*, laziness."

(The principle and root of despair is sloth).

⁵ Pieper, J. *Über die Hoffnung*, 49.

⁶ Alighieri, D., *Divine Comedy*. Canticle I, Canto 3, page 19

⁷ Pieper, J. *Über die Hoffnung*, 59. That man does not want to be what God wants him to be, and that means that he does not want to be what he really is.

mindfulness, and malice, the choice of evil simply because it is evil.

The desperate often consider the persistence in other people of the joy of living an insult. The desire to drag other people into nowhere serves to give credibility to their attitude.

The hopelessness and sadness that accompany it is fought with courage, with the choice of the path of hope. It is necessary to rediscover the value of silence and the meeting with oneself. So, we can internalize what we are, and the place we have assigned in the world. Despair cannot have the last word.

III. Leisure: an antidote to boredom and more

Nowadays, most people enjoy leisure time as the best time in life. Time and money are invested to get pleasure, adventure, some rest or at least, to meet other people and talk about things one cannot talk about at work. The turnover in the entertainment industry, sport or tourism is increasing every year. And most people spend a lot of money in those activities. The percentage of yearly income dedicated to leisure time is growing exponentially since the last century. So, the question is not: Leisure, yes or not? The question is: Leisure time for what? The concept of spare time is by no means so simple and innocuous as it may have appeared.

For Pieper, the idea of leisure has nothing to do with spending time or with entertainment. It cannot be the same thing as rest or play, anyway. He says, one simply cannot enjoy leisure time without enjoying the working time. The question is how we are investing our time, the value we put on the days we dispose of on earth. If we are enjoying our whole life, the working time, and the free time, we can say we are happy people.

When Pieper talks to us about leisure, he talks about celebration (*Fest*) and happiness (*Glücklichkeit*). In fact, these are the real goals of human creatures on earth. He says that leisure and work aren't incompatible at all. Every day we must work, that's the usual thing. Leisure is important because it's

unusual. Furthermore, only serious work can lead to full leisure. Real leisure is not only one day without work. It's an important day, a day on we are transported to another world, full of possibilities, of new realities, where the unexpected, the different, takes place. Leisure is neither doing nothing, nor jumping in frenetic activity for hours on end just for spending time. Time is really a very important thing. It goes by (*tempus fugit*, as the romans said). Time is all we have here on earth to invest.

One must be joyful to have a good day. And joy comes from loving everything we do; everybody we meet, and every circumstance we must deal with. In some cases, we are face to face with stress, misunderstanding, illness, and death. If, nevertheless, we think life is beautiful, if we are proud of ourselves, and accept whatever comes, then we are happy people. Perhaps, sometimes we are not joyful, but we can be in peace with the world. Only if we sign our life as true, we will love all our days, the labour ones, and the others.

John Paul II said that "man lives a real life thanks to culture".⁸ Culture involves the whole person. The good, the true and the beautiful reminds us that we can transcend this life. We can accept, but relativise death, because it does not have the last word to say. Short or long, every life matters, and every life can be successful.

Happy people are the heart of a party wherever they are, at home, at work, in a football stadium, at the cinema or in the sea. Other people may have lots of money, hobbies, fame, and prestige. If they are not happy, they cannot celebrate. Celebration needs of gratefulness to be born. And it needs of love, too. When we love, we give and share what we possess and what we are. And we feel happy to give and to share.

Work satisfies our basic needs and procure our daily bread. But the totalitarian work state is to be avoided. We work to do something other than work. We work so we can have leisure, as Aristotle would say.⁹ This something other indicates an activity which is meaningful. Traditional wisdom has always understood that there are also human activities that do not

⁸ Coleman, A.P. *Leisure and Labor*, 133.

⁹ Pieper, J. *Only the lover sings: Art and Contemplation*, 27.

serve some other purpose and so are not servile. When we devote ourselves to them, we feel transported out of time.

The ultimate fulfilment, the real absolutely meaningful activity, the most perfect expression of being alive, the deepest satisfaction, and the fullest achievement of human existence must happen in an instance of beholding, namely in the contemplating awareness of the world's ultimate and intrinsic foundations,¹⁰ Plato would say.

An activity which is meaningful, cannot be accomplished except with an attitude of receptive openness and attentive silence. The problem is that, nowadays, man's ability to see and to hear is in decline, because there is too much to see and to hear. In our time, restlessness, stress, total absorption by practical goals and purposes are disturbing the human ability to perceive. In this obviously continuing process, there exists a limit below which human nature itself is threatened, and the very integrity of human existence is endangered. We must be able to see the trees in the woods.

At work and in our idle time, we are happy when we love everything we do, when we jump into the core of action, because, previously, we have been contemplating the world around us, and have seen who we are and why we do the things we do. To contemplate means, at first, to see, and not to think. That is, to see in an exceptionally intensive manner. A new dimension of seeing is opened by love alone.¹¹ Lovers can see what nobody else is able to perceive.

On our leisure time we are not simply resting, we are celebrating a party. We can say that there are three elements necessary for a party: game, contemplation, and waste. The party begins when we intend to do something for itself. There is not *for* or *in order to*. It's like playing. The game is always an essential part of the party. We can fly without destination because the important thing is the journey itself.

Contemplation is where the happiness of man and woman is to be found. One needs nothing and seeks nothing. The

¹⁰ Pieper, J. *Only the lover sings*, 22.

¹¹ Quoted in Pieper, J. *Zustimmung zur Welt*, 28.

Chrysostomus: "*Ubi caritas gaudet, ibi est festivitas*".

world is here, all around us, to be seen and admired, as if it were the first time a living person could discover it. We can consider it a present offered to us by God for the sake of our increasing maturity.

And finally, another element is the waste. One becomes rich in a party. Everything is there to share. And the only cause of all this giving is love. Because we love, we are ready to give and to offer. It may be real, or in remembrance or in hope. But joy always comes because of love. Only the lover can sing the song of life. Love gives birth to generosity and confidence. Life is beautiful when there is love.

With these elements, we can feel joyful. Joy is the consequence of love. When we possess something, or we receive something, let it be real, or hoped or remembered, we meet joy. Time plays no part in our state of mind because we feel ourselves out of time. So, when we come back to time, we feel regenerated and full of energy. We can accomplish all our duties and develop our tasks.

Happy people are grateful people, too. Happy people are those who recognise that all that is, is good, and that it's good to be. On the seventh day, on the day of rest, one can see that all the creation is good, very good indeed. So, we can live in a never-ending party, feeling ourselves in the best of places, at the right time and discovering all things for the first time, as a present offered to us for the sake of love.

On leisure time, we stop, stay silent and see, and accept that, though there is pain, tears, suffering, anxiety and death, life is a present. Life is worth all that. The assets of life are worth all the liabilities it can put on our way. On leisure time we can relativise all our circumstances. Hope shall lead us to the end of the road, and we will be able to enjoy all our steps, with joy, gratitude, and love. Hope is no kind of optimism. It's the result of confidence and care. Sometimes it is not easy to walk but the landscape is so beautiful, it is worth the effort.

Pieper says we can deduce three consequences from all that. The first one is that we can meet joy in the praise of God, creator of the world we live in. If life is beautiful, the giver of life is an artist, creator of Beauty. The second one is that the cult party is the real Party, where we praise God. We praise

him for who we are and for what the world is. And, finally, the third one is that only the rejection of cult can get the destruction of Party. Outside the Party, there's no hope. Despair and misery dwells in that devastated land of nowhere.

There are of course, different types of parties, religious and worldly. But even the worldly parties have their origin in cult, Pieper says. In cult we can be grateful to God for the world He has created. We put hope in what we obtain there. The fruit of cult is the superhuman capability to see the ordinary life as the first day. Being in the right place, on the right time. Seeing everything as new and prepared for us, for our fulfilment (*Vollendung*). Those are the fruits of Party, and that's a taste of Paradise. To be in a party is to live in the everlasting divine present. In a party, our leisure time represents a way to get free, for we can relativize our ordinary existence from the heights of possibility and dream. But a party requires a special dress to enjoy it. The party dress we must put on is made of humility, gratefulness, hope and confidence. Wearing an inappropriate dress may ruin the party.

In fact, happiness is to be found in contemplation. There we can find all we need; all we can desire. Only the human person can be happy. And the human person can only be happy in possession of good. God is the supreme good. So, Only God can make us happy people, according to Pieper. God and Happiness are the same thing. God is not happy for creating things. He is happy for he celebrates creation. He celebrates himself. Everybody who celebrates creation, who celebrates God, becomes a happy person, for he or she is looking at all that exists in a new way.

Pieper thinks that the immediate consequence of all that is that it cannot exist a praise of life without a praise of the giver of life, God. So, the real festivity is the religious festivity and the only thing that can ruin the spirit of happiness and festivity is the absence of God and the negation of his praise. With him, joy and happiness are granted for ever, for He is the answer to all questions, and makes odds with everything may happen.

Happiness and joyfulness are twin but are not at all the same kind of thing. Joy comes from the possession of Good (let it be in the real world, in hope or in remembrance). Happiness

is the answer to Joy. It comes from getting all there is to get. It means seeing but seeing in the right way. Happy people see themselves, the world and God. Happy people see what they love. Love is necessary to happiness, but it's not enough. The proximity of the loved one is in the origin of happiness. The contemplative person feels all there is around, he or she has got what others are looking for, because they see and love, and are happy to see and to love.

In contemplation, we are surprised, because we see things and people as never before. What we see is far more than what we have been looking for. Once we have begun to see, we just cannot stop. There is so much to discover! All around us is peace, joy, Gloria. But to if we intend to arrive at the point of contemplation, we need to stop. We need silence and peace. Work is important, family is important, hobbies are important, too. But we need to stop to feel their importance. To get a view of our whole live and see it as a very good thing, we need some rest. Then, when we stop and look around, we may discover such a display of good things.

The *vita activa* is to be fulfilled in the *vita contemplativa*. Action needs a direction to be efficient, needs to choose the inputs required to get the outputs desired. Contemplation leads to happiness because we find the meaning of it all in its boundaries.

IV. Hope: the way to happiness

For Pieper, human beings are on the way. A path involves a point of departure and a point of arrival. It seems that, of all creatures, human beings are the only ones who know they are going to die someday. Where does the road take us? Well, it takes us to the calm of heaven, after earthly misgivings. The main feature of this state is the *noch nicht* (not yet).

This *noch nicht* has a double aspect: the non-existence of fullness and the search for it. Its origin lies, according to Pieper, in creation from nothing. The path of *Homo Viator* is not a coming and going from being to non-being. It leads to fullness, even if it has not yet arrived, and even if there is a possibility

of not reaching it.¹² According to Pedro Laín Entralgo, this blessed life lies within us. It does not come from experience but from one's own being.¹³

The vital success, the validity of one's existence, is the goal towards which hope is directed. Earthly hopes are very legitimate and very valid, but hope in eternal happiness, according to Pieper is based on Christ's resurrection.

The concepts *status viatoris* and *status comprehensoris* (adherence of the will to the highest goods), designate the way of being human.¹⁴ Being comes from nothing, and the mere possibility of ceasing to be is terrible for a human being.

Becoming is somewhere between being and non-being. The stability of being accompanies the dynamism of becoming. Every human being and every community live in the tension between past and future.

In fact, every creature comes from nothing and has been created to *be*, not for annihilation. Creation is not only the beginning of a causal relationship, but the basis of the depth and infinitude of creation, of its mystery. The union of body and soul places us in a certain space and time, but the spirit is out of time. Despair cannot be a response to life, since the destiny of the human being is life, and fulfilment. Nor can the answer be in safety since the creature is threatened by sin and death. So, the only answer is hope, the path that leads to new the heaven and the new earth.

For Pieper, hope is a theological virtue. Either it is theological, or it is not even a virtue.¹⁵ The virtues lead to the best version of the human being in this life, and to fullness in God in the everlasting life. We wait in response to what we have received and what we believe we will receive. This is hope.

¹² Pieper, J., *Lieben, Hoffen, Glauben*, 201.

"The path of *homo viator*, of the person on the way, is not a directionless comings and goings between being and nothingness; it leads to realization and not annihilation. Although, the realization has not yet been accomplished and falling into nothingness is not yet impossible."

¹³ Laín Entralgo, P., *La espera y la esperanza*, 64.

¹⁴ Pieper, J., *Über die Hoffnung*, 12.

¹⁵ Pieper, J., *Schriften zur Philosophischen Anthropologie und Ethik: Das Menschenbild der Tugendlehre*, 263.

Hope is the eager wait for fullness, both natural and supernatural. It is born of strength, of good spirits, which trusts in the many possibilities of human nature, created by God. It represents an affirmation of the future, trust, and investment of resources in it. It has emotional, volitional, and intellectual components, which entail an attitude towards life. Attitudes should not be ruled out as non-cognitive, since they come, especially in mature people, from experiences and beliefs acquired about the world and society, which have been meditated and viewed critically. Magnanimity allows us to turn to valuable, great things, and so, we can put aside the pettiness of life.

Before God, one can only kneel, humbly, aware of one's condition as a creature. Pieper believes that, in fact, the lack of hope can only be due to two reasons: lack of fortitude or lack of humility.¹⁶ The strength leads us to develop our capabilities despite the impediments and obstacles of all kinds that arise. Humility represents the only valid attitude to the divine presence. At the very least, we can always hope in God's forgiveness. If there is a God worthy of our hope, then this hope must be inexhaustible.

We can only hope for ourselves and those we love. Christ is the foundation of Christian hope and, at the same time, its fulfilment.¹⁷ Hope is founded on God's goodness and power. It's a gift. When we pray, we manifest our hope, earthly and spiritual. Prayer is the word of one who waits.¹⁸ In it, we ask for spiritual help and bodily well-being. This hope, and the renewing strength it generates, provokes the renewal of youth. Youth is the cause of hope. When we are young, everything is still to be done and everything is possible. In youth there is little past, and you look at the future without reluctance, you

¹⁶ Pieper, J., *Über die Hoffnung*, 30.

"The loss of supernatural hope has two causes: lack of fortitude and lack of humility."

¹⁷ Pieper, J., *Über die Hoffnung*, 35.

¹⁸ Pieper, J., *Über die Hoffnung*, 71.

"For prayer, in its original form of supplication, is nothing else than the utterance of one who hopes."

It implies the acceptance of an interlocutor willing to listen and give help.

see in it a world of possibilities. In *the noch nicht*, there is the germ of all utopias, because in it we find the elasticity, lightness, fortitude, joy, and courage of trust, of youth.¹⁹

All hope tells us: everything will end well, perhaps leaving aside the *how*. Hope is always creative. It has the power to modify reality, while bringing about changes in people and the environment. There is a hope that can be confused with despair: martyrdom. The martyr finds himself surrendered, helpless, to earthly powers. He states, however, that hope is a theological virtue, directed beyond this world. Despite all the horror he may experience, the martyr does not deny creation. The martyr waits in eternal life, despite its own catastrophic end and that of creation, because everything is worth it. Life itself and all created things are regarded with gratitude and are considered truly good.

The path of the *viator* is not a zigzag between being and nothingness. It leads to full realization, that's why we have been created. It is an opportunity, it does not lead in any way to annihilation, although it is possible. Gabriel Marcel, in the preface to *Homo Viator*, also tells us that, possibly, a stable order can only be established if we do not abandon the awareness that our condition is that of a traveller.²⁰

We could say that even secular eschatology is in search of a better world. Human beings go in search of an object for their hope. The injustices of this world demand it. But a Christian has also lived the experience of a loving God. And that cries out against death as an end.

Pieper says, the whole person, not just the soul must transcend. The body allows relationships with the environment. For this reason, it leans towards the resurrection and not the immortality of the soul. Like Moltmann, he thinks theologians have been more concerned with knowledge of God

¹⁹ Pieper, J., *Über die Hoffnung*, 42.

"She alone allows people to share in the enduring possession of the relaxation that relieves and punishes at the same time, the light joy, the courage of trust, which characterizes youth and makes it so adorable."

²⁰ Marcel, G., *Homo Viator*, 1.

"Perhaps a stable order can only be established on earth, if man always remains acutely conscious that his condition is that of a traveller."

than with promises.²¹ A promise obliges whoever does it, but it's by no means guaranteed as it involves a reciprocal relationship. Human hope is the counterpart to God's promise.

The human being is in existence. He hasn't created himself. He doesn't know where he comes from or why he exists. But he has some understanding of himself. He has a conscience and a vocation, which drive him to become what *he can* really be. This future process must continue beyond death if we heed promises. If not, Paul already warns that:

"If Christ has not risen, our preaching is in vain, and your faith is in vain."

The resurrected body cannot be the same organic structure of flesh, blood, and bones. The spiritual body must involve another form of personal existence, full of possibilities. The body refers to space, while the soul refers to time. We cannot change the past, but our perception of events that occurred in the past can vary.

Even if there were the possibility of access to a just society and of achieving a transformed and transformative humanity, this would not mean having fulfilled total hope. All beings unfairly treated throughout history would not see satisfied their destiny. Total hope must encompass everything and everyone, throughout history. The God of love cannot allow death to erase the care of all that has been created. Hope is tied to our ability to do what God expects us to do, and He will do the rest. From that stuff are made the miracles.

Although it is facing the future, hope affects the present. It allows perseverance, trains the mind, and provides happiness. Reality is transfigured through hope. It is the answer people of faith give to the goodness of the world. But even for those who have no faith, for whom hope is nothing more than an emotion, at best, what can be expected is immense. It must be explained philosophically what it means to have hope, because of the obvious power it shows to change reality.

²¹ Macquarry, J., *Christian Hope*, 47.

V. To Conclude

Josef Pieper has left an enormous contribution to the philosophy of last century. He says that our mind does not create truth, rather, the truth of things is given in creation, and we have the task of arriving to knowledge by adapting our ideas to that truth. So, some research is necessary to attain it. We will not be able to come to the truth if we do not dispose of some aids. The aid will come from the moral virtues if they are deeply embedded in our character. That is, to know the truth, we must become persons of a certain sort. We must become virtuous people. The full transformation of character that we need will, in fact, finally require the practice of virtues. Faith, hope, and love are the main virtues, and for that reason are to be at hand in our personal research. We are not to forget that Pieper was a Christian philosopher. So, practising the virtues, we will be able to see all things as they are. But we must accept the fact that we never will be able to comprehend fully the inner nature of things because of our limits of reason. Only He, the Creator, knows what is made of everything. The goal of our life is to increase our knowledge of the world and to appreciate it.

However great and gratifying the life of virtue may be, though, the more we go by that road, the more we will realise its limits. The way of virtue is quite difficult to go through. It requires patience and effort. And it is not always its own reward, after all. It brings with a kind of serenity, but nobody can live with this serenity alone. We look for some return, sometimes. We need some motivation during our journey. We look for real happiness. Life can be so hard that we need to look forward to the end of hardship and the light of peace and joy.

The path towards virtue is an endless road that we never can achieve solely by our own effort, and the virtue of hope teaches us that we are *en route* as *viator* up to the very moment of death, which is the end of the route. Pieper thinks that hope is the only answer we can give to the experiences we meet in life. Desperation would lead us to misery, and we just cannot

feel in total security in the changing world we are set into. We must do and love the good, and we must avoid the evil to become proper people. So, the virtues make us able to follow in the right way our natural inclinations, respecting other people and nature. Being virtuous people, our walk on life, with patience, will be grateful and firm.

We can see that in the mind and the writings of Josef Pieper the philosophy of the ancient Greek and the Christian theological tradition met and enriched each other. He just couldn't make a choice between them. In life, we usually walk on the path others have opened, after all. He could find no contradiction between philosophy and theology because both are necessary to find the way leading to truth. He even said that it is possible that, in the end of history, only people with faith will be interested in the roots of things and in the final meaning of existence, that is, in philosophy.²²

Furthermore, Pieper considered that philosophy and hope had the same structure. Both are open to new possibilities and are *en route* throughout history, in a never-ending path of research and reformulation. Hope, as a virtue, has the power to reinforce our will and lead us to new possibilities.

At this moment of the exposition, we ought to consider at least the following points:

1) We need to be active people. There is so much to do. Our family, our society and ourselves have necessities to cover and we are able of doing all sort of good things, for others and for ourselves, in order to satisfy them. We have the right and the duty to devote our time and effort to improve our way of live.

2) Justice is a necessity too. We don't live alone. Our relations must be ordered to that aim. In the labour relation there are two partners, but they are not at the same level. One of the partners depends on the wages for living. So, dignity is to be preserved. And some equilibrium in the structure of the labour market is to be kept. Liberalism is neither to fix the rules nor to eliminate them in it.

3) When we love someone, we want him or her to be happy. His or her happiness makes us happy. We are not a leaf taken by the wind from a tree. We need take care of someone and

²² Pieper, J., *Schriften zum Philosophiebegriff*, 323.

be treated carefully by someone. We need to live with others in harmony. We become better people by helping others to develop their potentialities. We benefit of each other actions.

4) Artists are lucky people in a sense: their work survives the creators that have given birth to it. But everybody can be an artist. There are lots of things to be done, for the sake of our community and environment. There are many tasks waiting for us to be accomplished and everybody has a particular way of doing things. Our art works are to be admired and appreciated.

5) In our way in life, in our *statu viatoris*, we need of God's love. The only thing that never ends. Happiness requires eternity. Life can be so hard. Sometimes, it seems to be impossible to make odds with destiny. But death cannot have the last word to say. We hope for the land of promise, where fullness dwells.

Love requires eternity, too. When we love, we say: how good you are here. We need the beloved ones near us. We want them to be, and to be happy, forever.

6) The happy person is happy for his or her own sake. He or she needs nobody, needs nothing at all. Happiness is a fruit that comes from the inner parts of the heart. Nobody can put it there. Circumstances may be adverse, but nothing can disturb the calm habiting in our soul when we are happy.

7) We can put as elements of happiness: rest, peace, joy, gratitude, love, contemplation, and duty. Resting of our everyday activities, doing something really motivating; being in peace with ourselves, with our family and friends, with the world; helping and taking care of all. Loving life as it is and receiving all the joy that love can give us, with gratitude. Doing our duty and doing it with our best disposition, that could be the best destiny for any of us.

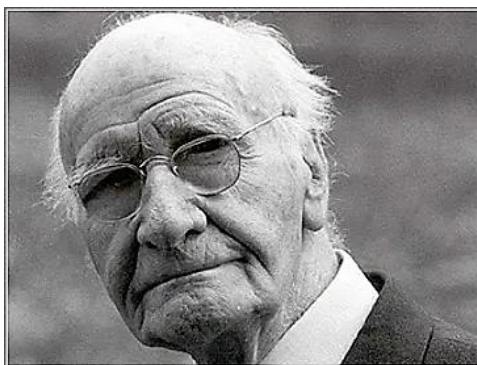
8) Hope is the only way to make the journey. Taking nothing for granted but with confidence. Flying away from desperation and security and accepting whatever comes to us.

Happiness is no kind of optimism. In fact, it can exist in the middle of suffering, of need, of trouble and of tears. Surely, we shall find a lot of them in our life. But, from the ashes of thousands of fires, it will rise a new energy to live. We all need

something to survive in our daily frenetic business: some time, some rest, some silence. In silence and rest, wide apart from the surrounding noise, we can find the reason of our whole life, who we are and what are we here for. When we know for what, surely, we will find the how to live.

The 7th day, the day of rest, comes to us as a memory of creation, and as a hopeful image of that which we are called to become. It shows all the beauty spread into the world around us. We are called to live our whole life in a party. But we need some spare time for this. Pieper warns us of keeping apart from cult because this means to remove the party from our lives.

So, to conclude, we are to work hard for the money we need, and to work efficiently for the sake of service and fame. We have a role to play in society. But we are to keep some time away from all our duties, just to see around us and even to evaluate our way of being, being grateful for all we have and for everybody who is sharing our life. Pieper thinks we need to look for higher mountains to climb and become the best possibility of ourselves. Then, nobody can take away from us the joyful feeling of living in a party, plenty of surprises. Not even death, or the total destruction of the human race, or the end of planet Earth. Let it come whatever event destiny has reserved for us. Because then, we are out of time and space, and we can celebrate from the core of our heart, singing to life, sharing our love, and exclaiming hallelujah!



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JUSTIN HUMPHREYS

