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The Entrepreneurial Calling: Perspectives from Rahner

WILLIAM J. TOTH
tothbill@shu.edu

I. Introduction

THE CALLING OF THE ENTREPRENEUR must be considered within the more comprehensive call to holiness.¹ Within the Roman Catholic tradition, holiness is initiated by an outpouring of Christ's resurrectional power accompanied by a sharing in the divine nature: "His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us to his own glory and excellence, by which He has granted to us His precious and very great promises, that through these you may escape from the corruption that is in the world because of passion and become partakers of the divine nature" (2 Peter 1:3-5). Holiness involves a progressive graced appropriation of divine attributes so that the deepest source of our human identity, namely our capacity to image God and to be configured to Christ is clearly manifest. Finally, in the words of John Paul II, "holiness is not something outside the bounds of normal everyday life. For God calls his people to lead holy lives within the ordinary circumstances in which they find themselves: at home, in the parish, in the workplace, at school, on the playing field."²

In this paper I will offer a brief historical perspective on the social teaching of the Church as it relates to the entrepreneur. I will then offer a preliminary analysis of the vocation of the entrepreneur and show how the Trinitarian doctrines of the Father's providence, the Son's kenotic self-sacrifice and the Spirit's creativity in Rahner's pastoral writings relate to the vocation of the entrepreneur. Although he never constructed a specific and developed theology regarding the calling of the entrepreneur, I believe Rahner's exploration of these Trinitarian themes can serve to illuminate the nature of the entrepreneurial vocation and provide entrepreneurs with the basis for a spirituality that will provide both comfort and challenge as they pursue their distinct calling.

II. Historical Perspective

Although entrepreneurship stands at the heart of the market economy, Catholic social thought has devoted limited attention to the calling and role of the entrepreneur.³ In the fifth century, John Chrysostom thought it highly unlikely that merchants could pursue their vocation without sin. Gratian, author of a 12th century text on canon law, deemed it difficult for sellers of goods and services to please God. A good part of the condemnation of merchants and entrepreneurs was based on a failure to distinguish two types of wealth, namely "social wealth" which was placed at the disposal of the common good and "individual wealth" which remained in the possession of the individual. Jesus condemned wealth not placed at the disposal of those who needed it; he did not condemn the social wealth that comes from the creative contribution to the common good made by entrepreneurial activity. From the thirteenth to the 16th century, Catholic moralists such as Antoninus of Florence, Dominic Soto, Gregory of Valencia and Ludovico Molina justified the profits of entrepreneurs on condition that they performed a useful productive service to the community. Profit not based on such service was morally unsound.⁴

Beginning with Leo XIII's *Rerum novarum*, Catholic papal social teaching tended to focus more on the moral merits of the planned and the market economy systems, the dynamics and morality of wealth distribution rather than wealth creation, and the requirement of solidarity rather than subsidiarity. The net result was that the economic role and calling of the entrepreneur remained somewhat below the radar line of Church social teaching. Even as late as Vatican II, the council fathers in *Gaudium et spes* mentioned only the following bearers of economic functions: owners, employers, managers and workers, omitting the entrepreneur.

It was not until the publication of *Sollicitudo rei socialis* in 1983 that the word "entrepreneur" actually appeared for the first time in a papal social encyclical. Here Pope John Paul II viewed

enterprise as an activity of God the Creator whose image is impressed upon humanity. This image is clearly expressed in the abilities of men and women to combine *intellectus* (mind), *res* (material things) and *opera* (work) to produce goods and services that enhance and fulfill the human persons within community. Pope John Paul II treated enterprise and the role of the entrepreneur as a right subsumed under the right to personal economic initiative and considered this right to be co-equal to the right of religious liberty. In talks to managers, entrepreneurs and professionals, Pope John Paul has insisted that entrepreneurship is social service. In an address to the entrepreneurs of Milan, Pope John Paul remarked: “the degree of well-being that society enjoys today would have been impossible without the dynamic figure of the entrepreneur, whose function consists in organizing human labor and the means of production in order to produce goods and services.”⁵ The entrepreneur also balances and adjusts to market needs, worker expectations and the demands of correct business management.⁶ Most importantly, an entrepreneur is a steward of the resources of a nation. These resources are not to be possessed but to serve labor and ultimately, to be made available to all in society

III. Dynamics of the Entrepreneurial Calling: Perspectives from Catholic Social Teaching

What precisely is the entrepreneurial vocation? A few preliminary observations are in order. If vocation in the Christian context is a call to holiness, empowered through the redemption granted to us by Christ, then intrinsic to any vocation is a call to moral integrity. The vocation of entrepreneurs, therefore, is falsified when entrepreneurs deceive or cheat others, and violate bonds of trust with their associates and constituencies.

The vocation of the entrepreneur, understood from a Catholic perspective, is also directly shaped by Catholic social teaching on work, the purpose of the business enterprise, property ownership and the accumulation of profits. Work, in the Catholic perspective, belongs to the vocation of every human being. The dignity of work is primarily related to the humanity of the worker. It becomes manifest when a human person exerts himself or herself for the sake of procuring what is necessary for the various purposes of life and self-preservation and contributes to the common good.⁷ Entrepreneurial activity, therefore, has dignity to the extent that it shares in these purposes. This emphasis on the humanity of workers *as they work* gives rise to a Catholic conception of the business enterprise that is radically different from a conception of an enterprise as a mere engine of profits. The purpose of a business firm within the Catholic perspective is not

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simply to make a profit, but to form a community of persons that can satisfy their basic needs through work and contribute to the well being of society.⁸ The life of a business is regulated not by profit alone, but by human and moral factors which are more significant. Moreover, in the Catholic perspective, ownership and profits are not absolutes. Property has a social mortgage; its use is subject to the principle of the universal destiny of all goods which governs all economic activity. Ownership of capital as well as claims to profit and the overall pursuit of profit are just and legitimate only if they serve useful work. Ownership and profit accumulation become illegitimate when they serve to impede the work of others and when they are the result of curbing the expansion of work and the wealth of society, illicit exploitation, speculation or the breaking of solidarity among working people.⁹ This is not to say that profits are irrelevant. Profits indicate the health of a business, but they are not the sole indicator of such health.¹⁰ More important are the people who make up the firm's most valuable asset. Their ability to satisfy their basic needs through their work and to contribute to a higher standard of living for all is the most significant indicator of a successful business. In the light of these considerations drawn from Catholic social teaching, the vocation of the entrepreneur excludes the pursuit of profit or shareholder maximization as one's *exclusive* goal.

What, then, is the unique calling of the entrepreneur? One could begin by pointing to a manifest desire to provide a service not readily available—a service that provides people with greater opportunities and level of fulfillment than they had previously. Business is about creating goods and services, jobs and benefits, new wealth that did not exist before. The effective entrepreneur sees (discerns, discovers) unmet or poorly met material needs, designs creative productive strategies to meet those needs, enlists, initiates and coordinates the aid of investors and workers to assist in the production of needed goods and services—in the context of a work dynamic that contributes to a heightened sense of dignity and community among the workers—so as to bring about the economic growth of society. Entrepreneurs must show initiative, make vital decisions, accept effort, take risks, understand markets and their evolution, aim for innovation, inspire associates and coordinate public labor for the common good. Perhaps the complexities of entrepreneurship can best be understood under the rubric of *intellectus* (innovative and prudential foresight), *opera* (the ability to combine and co-ordinate), and *res* (the productive forces of labor and capital). The net result is the production of innovative goods and services that make economic growth possible.¹¹ In the words of Pope John Paul II, “organizing such a productive effort, planning its duration in time, making sure that it corresponds in a positive way to the demands which it must satisfy and taking the necessary risks—all this is a source of wealth in today's society” and in the generation of social wealth, the role of the

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entrepreneur is decisive.¹² Important virtues are needed for the entrepreneur to remain faithful to this Catholic understanding of the authentic vocation of the entrepreneur. Here again Pope John Paul II provides a helpful list of these virtues: "...diligence, industriousness, prudence in undertaking reasonable risks, reliability and fidelity in interpersonal relationships as well as courage in carrying out decisions which are difficult and painful but necessary, both for the overall working of business and in meeting possible setbacks."

For the entrepreneur, a hidden but primary conflict is not the split between capitalists and workers, technocrats and humanists, government and business, liberals and conservatives, rich and poor, but the struggle of the past versus the future. Often the efforts of entrepreneurs are opposed by those who support existing configurations of industries with their productive and distributional patterns, e.g. economists committed to "economic *equilibria*" and "stationary states". In a very real sense the millions of small business entrepreneurs are the prime source of what Joseph Schumpeter described as the essential feature of capitalism—its "creative destructive capacity" which comes from "the new consumer goods, the new methods of production or transportation, the new markets, the new forms of industrial organization that enterprise creates."¹³ It would be conceptually narrow to classify this struggle as the old v. the new. Ultimately, this particular struggle concerns what it means to be human. Are we persons of creative imagination operating in a physical world where chance and the possibility of producing better goods and services leading to a better future abound, or are we creatures governed by the calculus of rationality that can and ought to deny, suppress and plan away the dangers and uncertainties of human existence and exclude the possibility of economic and technological breakthroughs? The entrepreneur is generally oriented to an anthropology of freedom and a cosmos open to continuous creativity.

The entrepreneur must also attend to the world as a region of unfathomable complexity, ignorance and peril. In order to prevail over such difficulties, the entrepreneur needs to understand how necessary it is for people to make constant efforts of initiative, sympathy, discovery and love. Many entrepreneurs are willing to give long before they know what the universe will return to them. David McCord Wright has speculated on the reasons why "a brewer, say, might build a new brewery even though the volume of beer sales, or the price of beer, or both, were falling. There are three causes: the better beer, the cheaper beer and the "bullheaded brewer" whose providential sense of love makes him feel "that he is smarter than the market."¹⁴ Entrepreneurs often are convinced that they can produce a better beer more available to the public and thus create demand which redounds to the benefit of society.

Ultimately, the vocation of the entrepreneur is marked by a creative, altruistic, providential love.¹⁵ It is the presence of this providential love that generates the willingness to venture without a complete assurance of reward, to take initiative amid radical perils and uncertainties.¹⁶ When such love and the hope it generates dies in the minds and hearts of people, so does enterprise. Not surprisingly, Pope John Paul II has called entrepreneurs “protagonists of love for new times.”¹⁷ “Entrepreneurial love” recognizes the other as other, not as a prop in the furtherance of economic ambitions. Such love does not make the other a prisoner but leaves him or her free to self-give and elicits synergistic cooperation. Such interpersonal and organizational miracles achieved in business are more likely to happen within the context of a love that takes people beyond themselves and is proved through faithfulness.¹⁸

IV. Rahner: Introduction

Throughout his work as a theologian, Karl Rahner remained consistently faithful to a vision of humanity as being completely embraced and irreversibly transformed by divine grace. The holy mystery of God gratuitously enters every dimension of human reality not as something alien and impersonal but as a personal presence—a divine self-communication to every human being whose capabilities for receiving such communication have been prepared in the very structures of their humanity. Rahner’s life work consisted in demonstrating that Catholic religious belief for all its dubious “irrationality” bears in its symbolic depths the most profound and significant truths about the human person. Most importantly, these faith-based anthropological truths are ratified in common human experiences. For Rahner, theology or discourse about God is never far from human experience. In Rahner’s view our attempts to make sense out of our own life strivings already reflect the lure of God—a source of dynamism that penetrates our being as we experience the desire to do and be better than we are. Our experience of this love is instantiated in the entire range of human activity: work, civic duties, play and business.

Rahner did not directly address the vocation of the entrepreneur, nor did he offer any extended meditations on the activity of the “immeasurable Mystery” in the realm of business enterprise. The methodology of this paper, therefore, needs to be made explicit. In a well known and well quoted passage dealing with how we experience the Spirit in our lives, Rahner supplies a number of examples. He concludes by inviting his readers to supply their own examples of mysticism in the ordinary affairs of their lives.¹⁹ This paper constitutes a response to Rahner’s

invitation. It will draw upon Rahner's Trinitarian theology, focusing specifically on certain characteristics of the persons of the Trinity as "entrepreneurial". If spiritual formation is marked by a growing likeness to the Triune God, then it is well to point out to entrepreneurs various ways in which they can see and appropriate a certain likeness to the persons of the Trinity and thus respond fully to the nobility of their calling as a calling to holiness.²⁰

V. Rahner's Trinitarian Theology and the Role of the Entrepreneur

A. The Father's Providence and Entrepreneurial Foresight

The first base-point for a Rahnerian theology of entrepreneurship lies in the creative and providential mission of the Father. A primary characteristic of the Father is to guide all of history toward the achievement of His purpose: communion of humanity within the Trinity. "As I have planned so shall it be" (Is 14:24). For Rahner, the providential task of the Father is executed within an interplay of divine and human freedom. God's freedom is expressed in a variety of ways. On a primordial level, God freely places in motion nature's internal and external causes and, according to Rahner, their "con-spiration" lies ultimately in that will and disposition of God we call providence.²¹ God can also freely initiate an event "over and above" or "additional to" these natural causes. On the other hand, human beings are free to undertake actions that are in accord with God's will or that violate the divine will. We are also free to interpret events in our lives as coming from nature's internal and external causes, God's providence or God's extraordinary intervention. Rahner also points out that all events that seem to be misfortunes can, by our acceptance of it in serene and resigned trust in God, be turned into blessings. This expanse of possible divine and human responses giving rise to new responses introduces into the divine human relationship and element of risk and uncertainty.

How do these reflections on the providence of the Father relate to the entrepreneur? At the heart of the entrepreneurial vocation is the ability to *pro-videre* ("see ahead")—to envision the possibility of an innovative good or service, to appreciate fully its benefits and to plan the appropriate combination of resources needed to produce the product or service. The entrepreneur's primary skill that radiates divine activity is to envision a goal that will result in an enhancement of people's lives and orchestrate patterns of personal cooperation entered into freely by people so that the goal can be realized. Like the Father, the entrepreneur works within an arena marked by an interplay of planning and risk. Both entrepreneurial activity and divine activity partake of planning—

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the advance weighing of alternative decisions and their optimal combination. Both God and the entrepreneur encounter risk—particularly, the risk that arises from the free choices of others to subvert the desired goal. Whereas God chooses not to eliminate the risk by respecting the freedom of human beings, even their freedom to subvert His plans, the entrepreneur has no choice in the matter. He cannot control the choices of others. For both God and the entrepreneur, however, risk of failure is inevitable. Yet because failure itself is not inevitable both God and the successful entrepreneur proceed with persistence. The good entrepreneur and God both construct “contingency plans” to overcome initial resistance to their goals. Both will constantly monitor the progress of their plans and adapt to feedback.

For Rahner, the critical question is: why does anyone persist in doing what is good in the face of failure, or to rephrase it in Rahnerian rhetoric: what is the condition for the possibility of such persistence? His response sheds light on the mystery of God and the mystery of the entrepreneur. One can detect in Rahner’s theology a certain similarity between the patterns of divine and human activity and entrepreneurial activity. Both are grounded in an other-directed love. It is this love that drives God to offer a better future for humanity. It is this same love that prompts God to respect the freedom of humanity and when the risk of this love is realized in the misdirection of human freedom, it is this love that prompts God to persist in bringing salvation to humanity. For Rahner, providence both divine and human and—by extension—the providence exemplified in the entrepreneurial vocation is not a matter of control of others. Rather, it is a series of multiple surrenders to the one who is not controlled or systematized. God surrenders control by respecting our inherent freedom and by adopting contingency plans when we exercise our freedom to reject God’s offer of self—a pattern of divine behavior repeatedly borne out in the Old and New Testaments. By the same token, human beings attain communion with the uncontrollable Mystery of the Father by imitating His providential activity in categorical acts of love of neighbor that take into consideration human freedom. Here we touch upon a significant component of the entrepreneurial vocation as viewed from a Rahnerian perspective. For Rahner, a person’s life becomes holy as it surrenders ever more deeply to the lure of the immeasurable Mystery by rendering ever deeper surrenders of self to others.²² Entrepreneurship is a vocation to a holiness marked by 1) acceptance of risk arising from human realities, some of which cannot be controlled and some (e.g. human freedom) which ought not be controlled; 2) persistence in the offering of beneficial goods and services to others; 3) creative planning to combine the resources of self and others and 4) adaptation in the face of initial failures. In pursuing this vocation, the entrepreneur at his or her best embarks

on a life that involves the surrender of control, as well as the surrender of all that is provisional and unnecessary.

B. The Son's Kenotic Risk and Entrepreneurial Risk

If the ground of the Father's "providere" is other-directed love, this love is concretized in the kenotic risk of the Son. This second theological base-point for the entrepreneur—one which underscores the depth of his or her risk can be found in the "searching Christology" of Rahner.²³ Taking as his starting point the human experience of risk—something every entrepreneur is familiar with—Rahner constructs a theological affirmation of Christ that illuminates the depths of self-emptying love that ground all human risk. Rahner begins by noting that human beings are drawn to love others only in the context of risk:

Every trusting, loving relationship to another human being has an un-cancellable "plus" on the resolution and decision side of the balance sheet—as over against the reflective side, the side that tallies up the justifiability and reasonableness of such risk and venture.²⁴

As human beings, we cannot know what is demanded before we love because, ultimately, it is our very personhood that is demanded. What is risked, what is sacrificed, and found in love is one's very identity, but Rahner insists that this is "known" experientially to the lover after he or she bestows love. In terms of Christ Rahner views Christ's loving kenotic self-emptying as the essential divine risk. It is the necessary preliminary for what follows in the drama of our redemption, namely, the transformation of the loved one (humanity) into the saved one. Christ's kenotic risk and his "will for the Cross," as Rahner states it, has at its depth a human meaning available to all of us. By taking on suffering and death, Christ affirms a human powerlessness before God. This sacrifice of ego and its values is an implicit witness that salvation lies solely with the God of forgiveness.

How does Christ's kenotic risk relate to the entrepreneur? As we have noted, risk is the essential milieu of the entrepreneur. Entrepreneurship begins with giving first and getting later. Entrepreneurial investments are made without a predetermined return. In this regard the entrepreneur stands in stark contrast to those who accept the possibility of detailed rational knowledge of human affairs and their future effects. For the entrepreneur, demand arises from the quality of the good and services produced and the qualities demanded will continually change in a changing world. The entrepreneur who shapes the future must live ever in hope. By the same token entrepreneurial hope is not utopian. It stands braced for the possibilities of creative success and

cruel failure. At the heart of Rahner's Christology is the lure of divine kenotic love. This divine kenotic love can be related to the risk of the entrepreneur through a series of foundational affirmations. First, on the broadest level, it is the lure of kenotic divine love that leads the Word of God to introduce itself into the human heart—a heart prepared to receive the Word in its very structures.²⁵ This same heart, however, can accept or reject the Word that stands ready to confer on us not just divine love, but ultimately our own humanity purified and made holy. It is the lure of divine love that overcomes risk and will not deter Christ from his self-sacrifice. Moving from the transcendental to the categorical level, Rahner argues that it is this same lure of divine love that causes us to risk and sacrifice ourselves for one another as we engage in concrete acts of neighbor love. If the actions of the entrepreneur are genuinely acts of neighbor love, then truly, the ground of his or her undertaking of risk lies in this very same lure of divine love fully expressed in Christ's self-sacrificial love.

C. The Spirit's New Creation: An Entrepreneurial Activity

A final and most significant characteristic of the entrepreneurial vocation can be drawn from Rahner's understanding of the Holy Spirit. In a profound meditation on the experience of the Holy Spirit, Rahner asks the question: *Why is it that we do not dare to call ourselves mystics...? Do we have any experience of the Spirit?* In responding to these profound questions, Rahner points out that in the very exercise of our knowledge we experience a transcending of ourselves beyond the object known into a boundless ocean of nameless mystery. When this experience is noticed and consciously surrendered to, one experiences the Spirit. Rahner concludes:

There we find what we Christians call the Holy Spirit of God. Then we experience something which is inescapable (even when suppressed) in life, and which is offered to our freedom with the question whether we want to accept it or whether we want to shut ourselves up in a hell of freedom by trying to barricade ourselves against it. There is the mysticism of everyday life, the discovery of God in all things; there is the sober intoxication of the Spirit, of which the fathers and the liturgy speak which we cannot reject or despise, because it is real.²⁶

Using Rahner's mode of thought, it would not be difficult to posit as an experience of the Spirit the creative impulse of the entrepreneur. Such an experience might unveil itself when the entrepreneur sees an unmet or poorly met human need and devises a workable strategy to meet this need that far exceeds in simplicity and scope what exists and which results in unimagined extensive benefits. In Rahnerian terms this "critical breakthrough" taps into the underlying and transcendent order. The

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entrepreneur has reached into what Einstein called “the cradle of true art and true science.”²⁷ An immediate problem here is that the logic of entrepreneurial creativity is suspect by many who seek to reduce the process of thought to the compass of the human brain, governed by coherent physical laws that exclude total novelty from human behavior. In this mindset, whatever cannot be explained by such laws is relegated to the realm of chance. Yet it is precisely the fact that entrepreneurial creativity often cannot be traced back to “laws of necessity” but emerges cradled in surprise and randomness that makes it partake of transcendence. The process of a creative entrepreneurial breakthrough is often hidden from public view. More often than not it unfolds in the personal drama of the entrepreneur who dares to borrow and take risks to carry out an innovative idea that in all likelihood will fail. For Rahner, the manifestation of creativity is just the first phase of the Holy Spirit’s activity. The circle of the Holy Spirit’s activity becomes complete when the “entrepreneur-creator” of the breakthrough acknowledges and surrenders personally to the uncreated Creator as the ultimate source of all human creativity. In that process, not just the work of the entrepreneur but the entrepreneur is blessed. At that moment he or she becomes *kainon*—a new creation. At that moment the entrepreneur has accomplished the basic human task which, according to Rahner, is to surrender to the transcendental order of truth and value whose ground is God.

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¹ *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*, Chapter V, “The Call to Holiness,” in Flannery, A. ed. Documents of Vatican II (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William N. Eerdmans Publishing Co. 1975), 396-402.

² “Address to the Bishops of Scotland on the Occasion of their Ad Limina Visit,” March 2003. *L’Osservatore Romano* (March 12, 2003): 3.

³ Peter H. Werhahn, *The Entrepreneur: His Economic Function and Social Responsibility Ordo Socialis #4*. (Trier, Germany: Paulinus Verlag, 1990) 11-14.

⁴ Johannes Messner, *Social Ethics: Natural Law in the Western World* (St. Louis: B. Herder Book Co. 1964), 770.

⁵ Pope John Paul II, “Address to the Entrepreneurs of Milan” (May 22, 1983). *L’Osservatore Romano* (May 30, 1983):5.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Leo XIII, *Rerum novarum*, n. 114, 130; John Paul II, *Centesimus annus*, n. 6.

⁸ John Paul II, *Laborem exercens*, n. 35.

⁹ Pope John Paul II, *Centesimus annus*, n. 43; *Laborem exercens*, n. 14.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ “Catholic social teaching has made it clear that entrepreneurial spirit and formation of capital are in fact the motor driving economic growth.” Peter H. Werhahn, *The Entrepreneur*. 32.

¹² Pope John Paul II, *Centesimus annus*, n. 32.

¹³ Joseph Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy* (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), 83.

¹⁴ David McCord Wright, “Mr. Keynes and the Day of Judgment” *Science* No 128 (1958): 1258-1262.

Daniel Bell surveyed the writings of economists and social thinkers generally associated with the Right and concluded that “romantic or traditionalist, Enlightenment or irrationalist, vitalist or naturalist, humanist or racist, religious or atheist—in this entire range of passions and beliefs, scarcely one respectable intellectual figure defended the sober, un-heroic, prudential, acquisitive entrepreneurial pursuits of the bourgeois world.” (Daniel Bell, “The New Class: A Muddled Concept,” *Transaction/Society* Vol 16, no. 2 (January-February 1979), 17).

¹⁵ Michael Novak stresses altruism—the desire to serve others—as a central element of vocation in general. Such altruism nourishes and sustains the entrepreneur in their day-to-day work. See Michael Novak, *Business as A Calling: Work and the Examined Life* (New York: The Free Press, 1996), 22.

¹⁶ George Gilder suggests that Adam Smith put altogether too much stress on self-interest rather than altruistic creativity as the foundation of the capitalist system. See George Gilder, *Wealth and Poverty* (New York: Basic Books, 1981), Preface, x.

¹⁷ Pope John Paul II, “Address to Members of the Union of Christian Executive Entrepreneurs,” Rome. December 14, 1985. *L’Osservatore Romano* (December 21, 1985): 4.

¹⁸ Herbert Vorgrimler, *Understanding Karl Rahner: An Introduction to His Life and Thought* (New York: Crossroad. 1986), 8.

¹⁹ “Let us look for that experience in our lives. Let us seek the specific experiences in which something like that happens to us. If we find them we have made the experience of the Spirit which we are talking about.” Karl Rahner, *The Spirit in the Church* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1979), 22.

²⁰ The process of becoming “like” God (*theosis*) was a staple of the Greek Fathers of the Church. It represented for them the summit of Christian perfection. See Jules Gross, *The Divinization of the Christian According to the Greek Fathers* (Anaheim, California: A&C Press, 2002).

²¹ Karl Kehmann and Aslbert Raffelt, eds. *Karl Rahner. The Practice of Faith: A Handbook of Contemporary Spirituality* (New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 1986), 270-271.

²² “The true system of thought really is the knowledge that humanity is finally directed precisely not toward what it can control in knowledge but toward the absolute mystery as such; that mystery is...the blessed goal of knowledge which comes to itself when it is with the incomprehensible one....In other words, then, the system is the system of what cannot be systematized.” Paul Imhof and Hubert Biallowons, (eds), *Karl Rahner in Dialogue: Conversations and Interviews 1965-1982* (New York: Crossroads, 1986), 196-197.

²³ Rahner’s characterization of his Christology as a “searching Christology” can be found in Karl Rahner & Wilhelm Thusing, *A New Christology* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1980), 5.

²⁴ Karl Rahner, *The Spirit in the Church* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1979), 16.

²⁵ The primary Rahnerian anthropology is the human person as “hearer of the Word” whose very structures of existence have been divinely shaped to host and receive the incarnate the Word of God.

²⁶ Karl Rahner, *The Spirit in the Church*, 23.

²⁷ Albert Einstein, *The World As I See It* (London: John Lane, 1935).