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John Paul II and Max Scheler on the Meaning of Suffering

I. Introduction

DURING HIS WEDNESDAY AUDIENCE at the end of Lent in the year 2001, Pope John Paul II said: “At the heart of this sacred Triduum is the mystery of an unbounded love, namely, the mystery of Christ who, ‘having loved his own who were in the world, loved them to the end.’”¹ One could, from a purely philosophical point of view, ponder what the meaning of “loving to the end” might be. And perhaps, straight away, two meanings emerge:

First: “Loving to the end” could mean that all the while Christ was suffering, he didn’t let it get the better of him, and simultaneously with that suffering, he never stopped loving. *Second:* “Loving to the end” could mean that Christ kept suffering right up to his death because if he had stopped suffering so intensely that would have meant precisely to stop loving so intensely also.

The first meaning indicates that two things were happening simultaneously to and in Christ during those last seventy-two hours of his life, namely, an intense suffering and an intense love. We might find it surprising that a person could continue to love while being tortured, and we might admire the strength of such a person. But in

this first possible interpretation of the phrase “He loved them to the end,” there is no expression of an intrinsic link between suffering and love, only an astonishment that someone could suffer and love at the same time.

With the second interpretation of the phrase “He loved them to the end,” however, an inextricable link between suffering and love is expressed, almost like a mountain and a valley, such that if the suffering were to vanish, so necessarily would the love—perhaps not all of the love, but a certain intensity and fullness of it would be lost. This second understanding of the meaning of the Crucifixion and death of Christ is one that perplexes many people. The most radically perplexed end up concluding that Christianity, with its intrinsic connecting of love and joy to suffering, is at best nonsense, and at worst masochism.

John Paul had a profound grasp of the inner link between suffering and love, and I believe that the depth with which he penetrated this mystery was greatly facilitated by the depth with which he absorbed Max Scheler’s notion of “the innermost *union of suffering and love* in Christian doctrine.”²

II. The Relation between the Work of Scheler and Karol Wojtyła / Pope John Paul II

Karol Wojtyła deeply absorbed the thought of Max Scheler³ during the time he devoted to phenomenology when preparing his *Habilitationsschrift*.⁴ And, when one author deeply absorbs another, the influence is lasting and can be detected in many ways. Scheler and John Paul have both written profound texts exploring the meaning of suffering, and the purpose of this article is to show, through a textual comparison, the influence of Scheler on John Paul by revealing the similarity of their positions on the topic. I will also thematize some of the more difficult questions concerning suffering that captured the imagination of both authors.

III. Three Foundational Questions Concerning Suffering

Three foundational questions concerning suffering can be posed:

1. What is the origin of suffering?⁵
2. What is the metaphysical status of suffering?⁶
3. Given the reality of suffering, what is its inner meaning, how does it relate to the other aspects of our lives, and what should our response to it be?⁷

Although both authors touch on the first two questions in the texts we will examine, they are predominantly concerned with answering the third, and they give strikingly similar answers. One foundational idea in John Paul's *Salvifici doloris* is that the reason for suffering in the world is to "unleash love." This is also the foundational idea concerning this question for Scheler. Both also express the vivid difference between the Christian approach to suffering and prominent non-Christian (philosophical and religious) approaches. Furthermore, they deal with the question keeping in mind the distinction between philosophy and theology, while utilizing each in their proper place.

Before delving into the Christian interpretation of suffering, John Paul begins, as does Scheler, by pointing out that the Book of Job represents a break with the basic teaching on suffering contained in most of the rest of the Old Testament. That teaching held that all suffering finds its meaning in the order of justice as punishment for wrongdoing. The Book of Job, while not denying that some suffering finds its reason for existence in the order of justice, rejects the assertion that all of it does. John Paul and Scheler interpret this book as distinct from much of the rest of the Old Testament because it teaches that there are forms of suffering that are not explained in the order of justice: the innocent suffer and their suffering is not punishment; that is, it does not line up with any wrong that they have done.⁸

While we may not be able to grasp fully the ultimate origin of innocent suffering, John Paul and Scheler have a similar way of ex-

pressing the idea that we can find a profound meaning within it related to love.

IV. Pope John Paul II's Explanation of the "Unleashing of Love"

John Paul's answer to the question concerning the meaning of suffering runs as follows: "Suffering is . . . present in order *to unleash love*."⁹ And in a second, more dramatic formulation he says that "man *owes* to suffering that unselfish love which stirs in his heart and actions."¹⁰ It seems that he perceives a mysterious and very important orientation within suffering to achieve the end of the flourishing of love among persons.¹¹

This "unleashing" of love is meant by John Paul in a threefold sense: (1) in the interior life of persons as the opening of a certain interior disposition of the heart, a *sensitivity* of heart that has an emotional expression unique to it;¹² (2) in the external life, giving birth to works of love towards neighbor;¹³ (3) and in culture, transforming the whole of human civilization into a civilization of love.¹⁴

I hope to show in what follows that John Paul closely followed Max Scheler's analysis of suffering expressing the *primacy* of the interior unleashing of love with respect to the other two types of unleashing. Additionally, neither author asserts that the exterior and cultural unlashings of love are unimportant; rather, the exterior is indispensable, and the interior and exterior together lead humanity directly to the grand goal of a civilization of love. I will include a set of texts from *Deus caritas est* which show that Pope Benedict XVI picked up the baton from Scheler and John Paul and holds the same position in that encyclical.

A QUALIFICATION TO POPE JOHN PAUL II'S ANSWER

It must be pointed out that John Paul's response is the answer to a specific and limited question. He is pointing to the undeniable fact that there is an inner meaning to suffering that can be experienced palpably in this world, namely, the flourishing of love that occurs

when people relate to each other in certain ways in the midst of suffering. A dramatic expression of this point is seen in the following prayer that was found scribbled on a crumpled piece of paper next to the body of a dead child in the Ravensbruck concentration camp:

O Lord, remember not only men and women of good will, but also those of ill will. But do not remember all the suffering they inflicted on us. Remember the fruits we have born thanks to this suffering: our comradeship, our humility, our courage, our generosity, the greatness of heart which has grown out of this; and when they come to judgment let all the fruits that we have born be their forgiveness.¹⁵

It seems that a group of prisoners were praying this prayer in the camp, and it seems that the prayer grew precisely out of their experience of this unleashing of love in the midst of suffering. Discovering responses such as this one to the experience of intense suffering lends empirical evidence to my assertion at the beginning of this article that the link between suffering and love is not merely that they can occur simultaneously, but that to an extent they depend on each other. I suspect that if any of the prisoners who were praying that prayer survived the war and could be asked whether they believe that they would have reached such an intensity of love had they lived normal lives, they likely would answer in the negative: it seems some levels of love do not come into existence without our being confronted with choices of how to be and act in the face of intense personal suffering.¹⁶

Yet, I do not say John Paul thinks that this is the full explanation concerning all of the questions surrounding suffering, nor does he assert that it answers all of our questions about it. It is, for example, difficult to find meaning in extreme cases of suffering inflicted on innocent children where not even beautiful fruit like this prayer is apparent to us. Perhaps it is for this reason John Paul says that the mystery of suffering is “an especially impenetrable one.”¹⁷

Still, the interior love experienced and expressed in the prayer

above does reveal a link between suffering and love, such that the love increased dramatically because a rare intensity of suffering drew from people an opportunity to respond in this way. That fact constitutes a partial answer to the question about the meaning of suffering, though it does not constitute an *exhaustive* answer, and of this John Paul has a sensitive awareness.¹⁸

Let us now turn to a fuller development of the meaning of the “primacy of the interior unleashing of love” as it appears in Max Scheler, Pope John Paul II, and Pope Benedict XVI. They all approach the idea in two distinct ways: from the point of view of someone facing a suffering person, and from the point of view of a person who is suffering.

V. The Primacy of the Interior Unleashing of Love in Those Who Help the Suffering

Scheler holds explicitly that the interior love that develops in the heart of persons is primary in relation to exterior acts of love: “I insist that love for one’s neighbor, in the Christian sense, is not originally meant to be a biological, political, or a social principle. It is directed—at least primarily—at *man’s spiritual core*, his individual personality.”¹⁹

Making his point clear with an example, Scheler reminds us of the story of the rich young man who told Jesus he had followed the commandments his entire life and wanted to know what *more* he could do to follow him.²⁰

Scheler points out that the reason Jesus asked the rich young man to sell what he had and give it to the poor is *not* because Jesus would have preferred a more equal distribution of wealth in that town. Rather, Jesus was focused on this man’s heart and he was hoping that, by means of the act of giving away, the man’s heart would fill with an abundance of love and generosity for others, ennobling the youth—but the challenge was too great for the young man.²¹ Scheler’s interpretation is correct, as is seen by the fact that the Bible verse does not end with “and so the poor in that town

remained unfed,” but rather with, “and [the rich young man] went away sad.”

Continuing his explanation, Scheler points out that the external help given can be small while the love is great or the help great while the love is small,²² remarking that love is not a mere “institution of charity.”²³ Scheler then utilizes this emphasis of Christianity on the interior love to point out the contrast between it and what he calls modern humanitarianism:

Modern humanitarianism does not command and value the *personal* act of love from man to man, but primarily the *impersonal* “*institution*” of welfare. This is not the exuberance of a life that *bestows* blissfully and lovingly, overflowing out of its abundance and inner security. It is an involvement, through physical contagion, in the feeling of depression that is manifested in outward expressions of pain and poverty.²⁴

John Paul, using the same terminology (institutional assistance/ personal help) expresses the same idea stating that

every individual must feel as if *called personally* to bear witness to love in suffering. The institutions are very important and indispensable; nevertheless, no institution can by itself replace the human heart, human compassion, human love or human initiative, when it is a question of dealing with the sufferings of another.²⁵

And Benedict, taking this same line of reasoning and making it his own, expresses the proper way of caring for the suffering:

Going beyond exterior appearances, I perceive in others an interior desire for a sign of love, of concern. This I can offer them not only through the organizations intended for such purposes . . . I can give to others much more than their outward necessities; I can give them the look of love which they crave.²⁶

A little later, addressing himself directly to Christian health care professionals, Benedict says,

Human beings always need something more than technically proper care . . . They need heartfelt concern . . . Consequently, in addition to their necessary professional training, these charity workers need a “formation of the heart.”²⁷

Now that we have seen the link between the teachings of Scheler and John Paul on the primacy of the interior unleashing of love, let us turn to their view concerning the importance of the exterior unleashing of love, that is, acts of assisting those in need.

VI. The Indispensability of the Exterior Unleashing of Love

From the texts above it is clear to see that our authors in no way mean to indicate by the primacy of the interior unleashing of love any type of self-enclosed love. They do not mean a love that is passive rather than active, nor one that would pay no attention to fulfilling the external requirements that relieve suffering. Scheler and John Paul explicitly make this point, again in strikingly similar statements. Scheler says, “Within Christian asceticism the so-called passive virtues of submission, patience, and the humble reception of suffering remain *subordinated* to the active virtue of love.”²⁸ And John Paul follows with “Christ’s revelation of the salvific meaning of suffering *is in no way identified with an attitude of passivity*. Completely the reverse is true. The Gospel is the negation of passivity in the face of suffering.”²⁹

And it is for this reason that John Paul and Benedict continually express the importance of the health care professions whenever they express the primacy of the interior love within the heart of those workers.³⁰ Scheler expresses quite beautifully and with philosophical precision the relationship between the interior and exterior unleashing of love in the following way:

Love is not valuable and does not bestow distinction on the lover because it is just one of the countless forces which further human or social welfare. No, the value is love *itself*, its

penetration of the whole person—the higher, firmer, richer life and existence of which its movement is the sign and gem. The important thing is not the amount of welfare, it is that there should be a *maximum of love* among men. The act of helping is the direct and adequate *expression* of love, not its meaning or “purpose.”³¹

The Schelerian idea of utmost importance is that there be a maximum of love among men. This love is an inner affective fullness which is then expressed in helpful acts. That order is the same one expressed by the two popes.

Perhaps we could express the idea simply by saying that while the physical bandaging of wounds performed by Mother Teresa of Calcutta was important, and even indispensable, it is not, strictly speaking, that which we admire in her. It is that “look of love” that the one receiving the bandage felt when she looked into his eyes. We admire and are drawn to Mother Teresa because of the intensity of love that dwelt in her soul which was the source of her approach to others in all her actions.

And so, while the Christian teaching on the meaning of suffering, according to Scheler and John Paul, gives a certain primacy to the dimension of love that is an interior warmth of heart, this in no way leads, in their view, to a diminishment of acts of service, but calls for more of such acts and bestows on them the depth they need in order to be effective in the fullest sense.

VII. An Objection and a Response

Some hold the view that it is merciful or loving to kill someone who is in pain; that, however, is not love, but abandonment, which is contrary to love.³² A powerful bit of empirical evidence for the truth of this can be found in an interesting response by Peter Singer when asked about his caring actions toward his mother at the end of her life.³³ When asked about the fact that he hired a team of home health care aids, spending tens of thousands of dollars in the

process, to care for his mother when she clearly fit his definition of a “non-person human,” Singer uttered the following surprising words: “I think this has made me see how the issues of someone with these kinds of problems are really very difficult. . . . Perhaps it is more difficult than I thought before, because it is different when it’s your mother.”³⁴

I have written on this topic elsewhere, and so for now I will simply point out that the main defender of mercy killing in our day has with this statement all but admitted that love (which is precisely what is “different when it’s your mother”) leads to the exact opposite theoretical view and personal behavior of everything he has ever written.³⁵

Whatever form of “love” the pro-euthanasia movement refers to, it cannot be that movement of the heart about which Scheler, John Paul, and Benedict are speaking, since they do not find in it a source to justify killing. There is a challenge here for philosophers to work out the contrary opposition hidden within these two approaches to love.³⁶

VIII. The Primacy of the Interior Unleashing of Love in Those Who Suffer

Until now we have focused on the growing love within a healthy person facing another person who is suffering. But we could also consider the Christian teaching from the point of view of the one suffering. Here too we find John Paul following Scheler’s perceptive statement that in the most radical cases of suffering

The Christian doctrine of suffering asks for *more* than a patient tolerance of suffering. It asks for—better put, points to—a *blessed suffering*. . . . It was not the growing *prospect* of a happy afterlife, but the experienced *happiness* of being in a state of grace of God while in throes of agony that released the wonderful powers of the martyrs.³⁷

According to Scheler therefore, the Christian view of suffering is radically different than the hedonist, Buddhist, and Stoic theories.³⁸ He states, “When one considers the interpretations, techniques, and narcotics by which the spirit of old wanted to empty the ocean of suffering, the *Christian teaching on suffering* seems a complete *reversal* of attitude.”³⁹

The key difference is that in the Christian view a full acceptance of the reality of suffering and a full living through that reality when one undergoes it in no way deletes the simultaneous possibility of a profound happiness, love, and joy. Scheler explains:

In different levels of our psyche we can be, simultaneously, emotionally negative and positive. . . . From the extensive emotions of the senses, related to the flesh (pain, lust, etc.) to the happiness and despair of our most profound self, there are *levels* of emotion. . . . We can suffer pain happily and drink the froth of wine unhappily.⁴⁰

John Paul also holds the view that the Christian who experiences suffering goes through three basic stages: acceptance, gratitude, and joy. And he holds that these stages cannot be learned from a book, but can be learned only by going through actual suffering, or as Scheler says, in the midst of suffering. There are numerous texts in *Salvifici doloris* where he makes this point, however, I will not develop his thought on that matter now.⁴¹ I will simply limit myself to concluding with one such text, which to my mind represents a kind of self-fulfilling prophecy. At the end of his life, John Paul *showed* us all the meaning of these words he wrote back in 1984 when he was still healthy: “When this body is gravely ill, totally incapacitated, and the person is almost incapable of living and acting, all the more do interior *maturity and spiritual greatness* become evident, constituting a touching lesson to those who are healthy and normal.”⁴²

Notes

1. <http://www.Zenit.org>, April 11, 2001.
2. Max Scheler, *The Meaning of Suffering*, trans. Harold J. Bershady. In *Max Scheler, On Feeling, Knowing, and Valuing, Selected Writings*, edited with an introduction by Harold J. Bershady (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 111. Italics in original. Max Scheler lived from 1874–1928, and was one of the original phenomenologists in the circle that included, among others, Edmund Husserl, Edith Stein, and Dietrich von Hildebrand. For a helpful introduction to the life, writings, personality and thought of Scheler, to be recommended is the special issue devoted to him of the *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 79, no. 1 (Winter 2005), ed. John F. Crosby.
3. George Weigel has provided insightful and thorough historical evidence of this through a concise retelling of the interesting way in which Wojtyła came to study Scheler, the reasons for which he translated Scheler's *Formalism* into Polish, and numerous anecdotal stories gleaned from personal interviews with Wojtyła's brightest students, fellow colleagues, and, of course, with the man himself. See George Weigel, *Witness to Hope, The Biography of Pope John Paul II* (New York: Harper Collins, 1999), 124–39.

And, Karol Wojtyła/Pope John Paul II himself often expresses his indebtedness to Scheler. Consider, for example, this explanation of his sources for *The Acting Person*:

Granted the author's acquaintance with traditional Aristotelian thought, it is however the work of Max Scheler that has been a major influence upon his reflection. In my overall conception of the person envisaged through the mechanisms of his operative systems and their variations, as presented here, may indeed be seen the Schelerian foundation studied in my previous work. (Karol Wojtyła, *The Acting Person* ([Holland: D. Reidel Publishing Co., 1979], viii).

4. I know of no English translation of this work, written originally in Polish. The following are the references for the Italian and the German translations: Karol Wojtyła, *Valuazioni sulla Possibilità di Costruire l'Etica Cristiana sulle Basi del Sistema di Max Scheler*. In *Metafisica della Persona, Tutte le Opere Filosofiche e Saggi Integrative*, eds. Giovanni Reale and Tadeusz Styczeń, Introduction by Jarosław Merecki, trans. Sandro Bucciarelli (Milan: Bompiani, 2003), 248–449. Karol Wojtyła, *Über die Möglichkeit eine christliche Ethik in Anlehnung an Max Scheler zu schaffen*, ed. Juliusz Stroynowski, *Primat des Geistes: Philosophische Schriften* (Stuttgart-Degerloch: Seewald [1953] 1980).
5. This question is searching for what it is that brought suffering into existence at all. Here, Christian thinkers deal with questions such as how is it possible that the first angel chose to sin, since then there was nothing bad at all? Why did Adam and Eve choose to sin? How could it be possible that original sin is the source not only of our free choices to hurt each other, but also of natural disasters and innocent suffering?
6. An example of a discussion surrounding this question would be the consideration of whether evil (taken in the broadest possible sense to include not only moral evil,

but also physical and mental suffering, natural disasters, and so on) can be exhaustively described philosophically as a privation of a good that ought to be present, or whether, while a privation is always a dimension of evil (again, in the broadest possible sense), there is more to its ontology than privation only. See the recent and interesting debate on this question between Patrick Lee and John Crosby in these articles: Patrick Lee, "The Goodness of Creation, Evil, and Christian Teaching," *The Thomist* 64 (2000): 239–70; John F. Crosby, "Is All Evil Really Only Privation?" *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association* 75 (2001): 197–210; Patrick Lee, "Evil as Such Is a Privation: A Reply to John Crosby," *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 81, no. 3 (2007): 469–88; John F. Crosby, "Doubts About the Privation Theory That Will Not Go Away: Response to Patrick Lee," *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 81, no. 3 (2007): 489–505.

7. This question starts from the experience of suffering and does not depend on whether a definitive answer has been given to the first two questions. Here one explores the reality and experience of suffering in order to discover whether it reveals an ultimate meaning or meaninglessness to life.
8. Scheler: "With great cogency, the *Old Testament* attributed a sense of justification to suffering. Each suffering had to be, finally, a *penalty*, an earthly realization of divine justice and reprisal. This penalty was for the sins of the individual, the parents, the whole fallen race. . . . However, a voice of the sufferers raised itself mightily in the late Psalms, most movingly in the Book of Job, and again in Ecclesiastes against this dreadful interpretation." *Meaning of Suffering*, 110.

John Paul: "In this horrible situation three old acquaintances come to his house . . . each one . . . tries to convince him that . . . *he must have done something seriously wrong*. For suffering—they say—always strikes a man as punishment for a crime. . . . The point of reference in this case is the doctrine expressed in other Old Testament writings which show us suffering as punishment inflicted by God for human sins. . . . The Book of Job . . . shows with all firmness that the principles of this order [the order of justice] cannot be applied in an exclusive and superficial way. While it is true that suffering has a meaning as punishment when it is connected with a fault, *it is not true that all suffering is a consequence of a fault and has the nature of a punishment* . . . Job has not been punished, there was no reason for inflicting punishment on him." Pope John Paul II, *Salvifici doloris* (*On the Christian Meaning of Human Suffering*), (Boston: Pauline Books and Media, 1984), 10.

9. *Salvifici doloris*, 29.
10. *Ibid.*, 29. (Emphasis added).
11. One might object that this reduces persons to the status of means, such that their suffering is a justified means to bring about the end of love. But John Paul's position is that the reason for the existence of suffering to unleash love in no way implies that we "use" those who suffer as a means to grow in love. Such an attitude would turn what ought to be a "superabundant relation" into a means/end relation, and would actually

destroy the possibility of love. Josef Seifert and others have explained the difference between a superabundant relation and a means/end relation in the following way:

With “superabundant” or “superabundant relation” the type of relation meant is that in which one reality follows logically and meaningfully after another. And also, the first reality, it can be said, “serves” the one that follows, yet not in the sense of being a mere means. In many cases the “first” reality within a superabundant relation is not just worthy in its own right to be respected (i.e., is not a mere means), but, in fact, is even more important than the second reality, which flows from it. E.g., the moral value of morally good actions and virtues is a higher value than the happiness which results in the person who is good. [My translation of Josef Seifert, *Was ist und motiviert eine sittliche Handlung* (Salzburg: Universitätsverlag Anton Pustet 1976), 72, n. 102a.]

It is only when persons who relate to suffering persons focus on the sufferer for his or her own sake that love can begin to flourish within the relationship.

12. *Salvifici doloris*, 28. Incidentally, we ought not be too quick to assume that those who *help* the suffering are the only ones who grow in this interior experience of love. Indeed, sometimes it is a more difficult challenge for the suffering one to grow in love toward the one who helps him—this presupposes, for example, a profound humility to accept the help and to be thankful.
13. *Ibid.*, 30
14. *Ibid.* I have explored this threefold sense here as well in Peter J. Colosi, “John Paul II and Christian Personalism vs. Peter Singer and Utilitarianism: Two Radically Opposed Conceptions of the Nature and Meaning of Suffering,” 3rd Global Conference: Making Sense of Health, Illness and Disease July 5–9, 2004. St. Catherine’s College, Oxford University. Available from author.
15. A number of years ago, Rev. Charles Talar, University of St. Thomas, Houston, shared this prayer with me. We have both misplaced the reference, and I would be grateful for knowledge of its original source.
16. It must be explicitly stated at this point that suffering in no way *automatically* causes love to flourish; rather, suffering provides a challenge and an opportunity. A person undergoing suffering is free to respond in any manner whatsoever; those free choices then will determine whether love or its opposite will flourish in that situation. Viktor Frankl, a concentration camp survivor and world-renown psychologist, experienced this firsthand, and then analyzed it in the following way:

Even though conditions such as lack of sleep, insufficient food and various mental stresses may suggest that the inmates were bound to act in certain ways, in the final analysis it becomes clear that the sort of person the prisoner became was the result of an *inner decision*, and not the result of camp influences alone. . . . In the concentration camps, for example, in this living laboratory and on this testing ground, we watched and witnessed some of our comrades behave like swine while others behaved like saints. Man has both potentials within himself; which one is actualized depends on decisions but not on conditions. [Emphasis

added] Viktor Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning* (New York: Washington Square Press, 1984), 87, 157.

17. *Salvifici doloris*, 31.

18. *Ibid.*, 9.

Whereas the existence of the world opens as it were the eyes of the human soul to the existence of God, to His wisdom, power and greatness, evil and suffering seem to obscure this image, sometimes in a radical way, especially in the daily drama of so many cases of undeserved suffering . . . this circumstance shows—perhaps more than any other—the importance of *the question of the meaning of suffering*; it also shows how much care must be taken both in dealing with the question itself and with all possible answers to it.

19. Max Scheler, *Ressentiment*, trans. Lewis B. Coser and William W. Holdheim (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1998), 84. Original German: *Das Ressentiment im Aufbau der Moralen*, in Max Scheler, *Vom Umsturz der Werte* (Bern und Munich: Francke-Verlag, 1955).

20. *The Catholic Bible, Personal Study Edition, New American Bible* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995): Mk 10:21–22: “Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said to him, ‘You are lacking one thing. Go, sell what you have, and give to [the] poor and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.’ At that statement his face fell, and he went away sad, for he had many possessions.”

21. Scheler, *Ressentiment*, 71: “When the rich youth is told to divest himself of his riches and give them to the poor, it is really not in order to help the ‘poor’ and to effect a better distribution of property in the interest of the general welfare . . . The order is given because the *act of giving away*, and the spiritual freedom and abundance of love which manifest themselves in this act, ennoble the youth and make him even ‘richer’ than he is.”

22. *Ibid.* “The Widow’s mites (Mk 12: 42–24) [sic., it should read: Mk 12: 41–43] are more to God than the gifts of the rich—not because they are only mites or because the giver is only a ‘poor widow,’ but because her action reveals *more love*.”

23. *Ibid.*

24. *Ibid.*, 97.

25. *Salvifici doloris*, 29.

26. Pope Benedict XVI, *Deus caritas est* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2006), 18.

27. *Ibid.*, 31.

28. *The Meaning of Suffering*, 111–12. Scheler also contrasts the passivity found at the core of Buddhism with the activity of Christ in the following way:

The thesis of the Gospel, “Do not resist miseries” and “He who lives by the sword shall perish by the sword,” are consistent with the rewards promised by the so-called passive virtues. Nevertheless, this manner of encountering pain, suffering, and misery is not as deeply meaningful for Christianity as for Buddhism . . . the personal example Jesus gave in his life and death is basically different from

that of Buddha. Jesus often showed that he intended to resist misery and malice. He cleared the temple of the money changers, opposed the Pharisees in “holy wrath,” and prayed to God that “this cup might pass him by.” And in his last desperate cry on the cross, which expressed his own deep pain and the burden of the sins of humanity—sins he knew he suffered as a “substitute” and experienced in the depths of his heart with all the torment of sin inherent in humanity—he showed nothing of the quiet, cool composure with which Buddha lived and died in conversation with friends.” *The Meaning of Suffering*, 99.

29. *Salvifici doloris*, 26.
30. See *ibid.*, 29, and *Deus caritas est*, 22, where Pope Benedict explains that in Catholic teaching the service of charity is one of three equal ministries of the Church, the others being the Sacraments and preaching the Gospel.
31. Scheler, *Ressentiment*, 71.
32. The request to be killed is actually a plea for two basic things: to be loved and to have pain relief. As soon as these people feel loved and/or have their pain managed, they no longer ask to be killed (and are grateful that their request was not heeded). For ample evidence of this, see Wesley J. Smith, *Forced Exit: The Slippery Slope from Assisted Suicide to Legalized Murder* (Dallas, TX: Spence Publishing, 2003).
33. Peter Singer is a professor of bioethics at Princeton University’s Center for Human Values, and the most influential contemporary proponent of euthanasia. For his view that many classes of humans, including “profoundly and irreparably intellectually disabled human being[s]”, such as his mother was, are not persons and can (and sometimes ought) be killed, see Peter Singer, *Practical Ethics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 85–87, and Peter Singer, *Unsanctifying Human Life*, ed. Helga Kuse (Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers, 2002), 239–40.
34. Michael Specter, “The Dangerous Philosopher,” *The New Yorker*, September 6, 1999, 55.
35. Colosi, “Mother Teresa, John Paul II and Christian Personalism vs. Peter Singer and Utilitarianism: Two Radically Opposed Conceptions of the Nature and Meaning of Family.” In *The Family in the New Millennium: World Voices Supporting the “Natural” Clan*, Vol. 3. Ed. S. A. Loveless and T. B. Holman. (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishing, 2007), 49–65. See also Colosi, “What’s Love Got to Do with It: The Ethical Contradictions of Peter Singer” (<http://www.godspy.com>, February 25, 2005).
36. The most obvious opposite to love is hatred, and many, perhaps most, people who opt to participate in euthanasia do not have feelings of hatred for the person killed. But another opposite to love is abandonment, and perhaps here is the primary reason why euthanasia cannot be loving.
37. Scheler, *The Meaning of Suffering*, 112.
38. Scheler analyzes each of these theories at length in *ibid.*, 97 ff.
39. *Ibid.*, 110.
40. *Ibid.*, 112.
41. *Salvifici doloris*, 1, 23–24, 26–27.
42. *Ibid.*, 26.