

# Rationality, Faith and Human's Everyday Living: A Philosophical Analysis on John Paul II's Encyclical Letter of *Fides et Ratio*

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## Abstract

Even though the problem of the relationship between faith and reason has been a very classical topic in the history of the discussion between philosophy and theology, the urgency of continuously re-discoursing on this topic remains. This article discusses the very topic based on John Paul II's Encyclical Letter of *Fides et Ratio* with the argument that, although the emergency of that Letter is much more in the pastoral purposes for the establishment of the properness of the relationship of the two in Church's ministry, this study finds that, from the philosophical perspective, this Letter implies some epistemological standpoints which one could think. Those ideas are the status of the two as the basic capacities of every human everyday searching for truth (and certainty) for living, the status of truth, certainty, and the completeness of human existence is the ultimate orientation of the epistemological operation of the two capacities, the status of everyday experiences as the basis or the foundation for thinking and some epistemological challenges and virtues which one has to (or might) consider and live by.

**Keywords:** faith and reason, epistemological standpoints, truth, certainty, etc.

## Introduction

Even though the problem of the relationship between faith and reason has been a very classical topic, the urgency to persistently rethink on the topic remains. The need for the incessant discussions of the correlation between these two areas of knowledge is not due merely to the glitches the upsurge of radicalism, terrorism, pluralism, secularism, fundamentalism, atheism, modernism, indifferentism cause as many have claimed.<sup>1</sup> The most fundamental reason to remain discussing this topic is due more to the reason (fact) that, in every objective moment of human everyday living, one always deals with, struggles for, or is concerned with the problem of certainty, truth, values, epistemological foundation and meaning for their living. In one's everyday living, one deals with the problem and the need of knowing and understanding something with certainty and truthfulness for one's life convincingly. These points are, of course, are very necessary for survival, meaning of life, continuity and the worth of human existence. This study sees that, for those essential needs, people always rely on what they reasonably think/understand and what they believe through something that is beyond their critical reasoning. In their living, people sometimes both knowingly and unknowingly rely or based on the fundamental role of these two capacities – faith and reason – as the two epistemological or hermeneutical means for living. Both play the role as tools or medium for the operation or the process of understanding and interpreting the

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<sup>1</sup>One could add here the reason of the urgency of this topic based on the argument of Ratzinger and Jurgen Habermas in their dialogue in Bavaria, Germany a couple of times ago as another point considered. Florian Schuller, *The Dialectics of Secularization*, Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI) and Jurgen Habermas, *Dialektik der Saekularisierung* (Freiburg: Verlag Herder Freiburg-Libreria Editric Vaticana, 2005) Florian Schuller (Ed.), Third Edition. Translated from German Text to English Version by Brian McNeil, C.R.V *Dialectics of Secularization: On Reason and Religion*, (San Fransisco: Ignatius Press, 2005). Translated into Indonesia language by Hari Susanto SJ. *Iman Melawan Nalar: Perdebatan Joseph Ratzinger Melawan Jurgen Habermas*, Giancarlo Bosetti (Ed.) (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 2009).

reality. This article re-discusses the very topics based on John Paul II's Encyclical Letter of *Fides et Ratio*, which is published on September 24<sup>th</sup>, 1998.<sup>2</sup>

One might think of that document as having been past for a couple of years and because of that, the vivacity and the echo of that topic might have also been no longer strong as it was in the past. This study<sup>3</sup> sees that the unceasing relevancy and the relentless urgency to keep discussing this theme is due to the previously-mentioned ideas, the fact of the dynamicity of human everyday experience and need for everyday discourse for finding the truth and certainty for living as such. Besides, people also might think of it as something exclusive due to its publication is anticipated for the business of the Catholic pastoral ministry yet, when profoundly reflected, the echo of the relevance, urgency, importance and values of the fundamental ideas of this document is broader rather than exclusively limited in the Catholic Church context as people usually comprehend. So, as formerly said, nonetheless the main idea of that document was mainly in terms of the relationship between faith and reason in the Catholic Church's pastoral context, yet, this study claims that, philosophically, the urgency to keep on re-discussing the relationship of these two topics is due also to the fundamental fact that in human everyday living people are concerned with the problem of rational thought/reasoning and belief. The urgency of unremittingly rethinking of it remains due to its determination to the continuity of human everyday existence itself.

## **1. The Epistemological Status of Faith, Reason and the Truth**

As previously mentioned, although this document is purported to the pastoral and theological business, it actually implies a broader echo, relevance and even ideas beyond the limits of theological area (Catholic Church's Ministry domain). The values of its contribution, is not only relevant to the problem of the rise of terrorism, radicalism, fundamentalism and pluralism as previously said but more basic than that reason is that, in the everyday living, factually, people always establish their everyday living based on what they rationally think and what they believe as the reliable foundation and hold for their living. In living their life, people inescapably look for certainness, reasonableness, reliability, trustworthiness of the conceptual foundations that can stand and serve as the grip and basis for their living. For that purpose, people usually stand and base on what they rationally think and understand and what they receive from their belief when their reasoning comes to its limit. In everyday living, people deal with the problem of how to find the rational foundation for living and deal with something that beyond their capability to think and the area that can only be received with faith or belief. People, in fact, discover those foundational concepts through what people rationally think (reason, philosophical reasoning) and what people believe (faith, revelation and religion). These conceptual foundations determine and shape human everyday living which one may discover implicitly sound in this document. The need for an unending discussion regarding the mutual relationship between these two capacities is based on the fundamental facts of their existential role or functioning for the operation of human everyday living. This fundamental reason makes the unceasing urgency of the discussion of the relationship of the two becomes an inescapable matter. Thus, it can be said that, the status of the working of these two capacities is the condition for the possibility of human everyday existence, which means to say, it enables or it makes the operation of the everyday life become possible.

From that reason, one also may say further that, the dialectical relation between faith and reason is basically an epistemological or hermeneutical event or paradigm. As an epistemological or hermeneutical event, it points to the concept that what operates in that dialectical relationship is a process of understanding and knowing the model of the

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<sup>2</sup>Technically, in this article, this article uses the abbreviation of 'FR' as usually some commentators use in their writings or commentaries. The abbreviation of FR is the short form of the document of *Fides et Ratio*. This Letter is published for the bishops. Alvin Plantinga finds that, it is actually not published only for the bishops but for all the people who have the good will for that. Alvin Plantinga; *Philosopher's Respond to Pope John Paul II's Encyclical Letter of Fides et Ratio*, 1-13.

<sup>3</sup>This article is just a revised version which I, the writer, has published on Academia Journal.

relationship between the two or the process of interpreting the properness of the relationship between them. It deals or is concerned with the problem of how one knowing and understanding the reality based on the working or the role of these two capacities. That is to say, those epistemological processes basically refer to the matter of thinking or reflecting the elements like: understanding, knowledge, truth, belief, conviction, certainty, etc. For instance: truth (FR, 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 24, 26, 28, 29, 30, etc.), certainty, experience, reason (FR, 5, 8, 13), belief-faith, human existence, and understanding and knowledge (FR, 1, 8, 13, 25, etc.). These ideas appear in Pope's reflections concerning the status of faith and reason as the two cognitive sources of human everyday living. And, saying that the role of the two faculties is an epistemological event or business means that these two epistemological or cognitive capacities enable people to think, know and understand reality that finally lead them to find certainty and truth.<sup>4</sup> The function or the role of these two primal capacities facilitates the process of perceiving, intuiting, conceiving and comprehending the logical laws and relations of reality which one experiences.

The emphasis on the status of these two determining tools for the whole process of cognition appears from the outset of the document. The stress on the determining the status of the operation of FR as the two basic capacities of the cognitive activity determines the entirety of Pope's idea of the dialogue between them. It appears firstly in the document's text through Pope's metaphor of 'two wings' in his description of the relationship of the two. The symbolic sign of 'two wings' (of the very body) which Pope uses implies rich interpretation of model or perspective of the relationship of these two operators of cognition process. Regardless of the other interpretations which one could make, epistemologically, this metaphor explains the determining role of these two capacities in the context of human every day's searching for truth as beforehand said. In insisting of these fundamental role and relation of the two authorities of cognition, Pope himself declares as well from the onset, "faith and reason is like two wings, and because of that, the soul of human brings up to the contemplation of the truth" (See the Introduction). For Pope, these two capacities are not just the natural apparatus of human self but also bears an existential task as the means for the searching the truth (See Introduction). Without these elements, people are not able to think of their own existence. Although Pope does not elaborate it explicitly in his document, it seems that this document underlines the idea of cognition as understood in the history of philosophy. The two of them are primordial or natural capacities, which means that these two capacities exist primordially since man was born, existentially attached to one. Both are basically oriented on the cognitive and epistemological need or desire for certainty. Both are then also said as the existential capacities because the two capacities are the constitutive or determining elements which determine the continuity of human existence. It has to be philosophically admitted as well that, the natural desire for truth as such is something spiritual, something dealing with 'the operation of human spiritual nature.' It deals with something beyond the capability of human's cognitive power itself which is beyond the limit of human capability. To borrow Pope's theological terminology, we have the natural desire for truth itself for the fullness of human existence because God Himself puts that desire in human heart for searching the truth (Ibid.). From there, he insists that the fundamental desire for truth, for one sense, is for one to know deeply of him or herself, but in some sense, is also to attain the fundamental truth as such, that is the ultimate union with God himself.

The stress on the role of these two epistemological means also implicitly appears in his content of the identity of the church as the "minister of truth." In serving people searching for truth, Pope shows the essential status and role of rationality or reason or the capacity of thought as natural and primordial tool which everyone possesses already in themselves (FR, 3). Possessing that capacity simultaneously or from itself implies on a primordial calling, task, duty and invitation to develop the activity of reasoning, thinking and understanding optimally as a fundamental task as a human. Thinking, reasoning and understanding or knowing then is considered as a determining aspect of human existence. For Pope, this primordial task or desire is motivated fundamentally by the spirit of curiosity which is inherent to human self from the outset. Surely, this desire is for the certainty, truth and ultimate fullness as a human (FR, 4). In this natural capacity, reason's reasoning, it always pursues or is signified by the logical reasoning, rational approaches, logical coherence, and critical analysis, methodological and scientific elaboration and comprehensive and radical

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<sup>4</sup>Timoteus Ata Leu Ehaq, *Irreducibility, Probabilistic Knowledge and Everyday Epistemology: A Study on Hume's Theory of Knowledge*. MA Thesis. (Ateneo de Manila University: 2016), 1.

conclusions or inferences. These are the characteristics or the typicality of operation of the reason which appears in the philosophical approaches. That is to say, regardless of its challenges and shortcomings, the status and the fundamental role of reason (philosophical reasoning) is objectively and reasonably emphasized/indicated by Pope in this Letter.

Reason is the essential capacity which determines the reasonable approaches whereas the revelation is the key matter of the notions of faith. Reason is the natural capacity which everyone has in their primordial existence. As admitted by Pope, through the human souls, one can identify, think of and find the “objective status or place (source)” of reason. The source and the place of the rational capacities are in human soul. That is to say, naturally, one primordially brings in itself the capacity of searching for the truth or certainty of its existence.<sup>5</sup> Although theologically interpreted, Pope concedes the natural and primordial fact of the natural desire for certainty, and that desire are concerned deeply with the certainty of knowledge, the fullness of its own existence and its relationship with the Supreme Being.<sup>6</sup> For Pope, naturally, in everyone, there are natural capacities to produce and look for the increasing certainty or truth so that, their life becomes more human. Philosophy which is sourced from the natural operation of human reason is the representation or the implementation or realization or manifestation of the natural capacity of searching for knowledge itself. Pope even looks at the activity of doing philosophy as a natural and existential calling of human existence. While referring to the literal meaning of the term, Pope emphasizes the natural vocation of human, which is to think reasonably of everything which deals with human everyday existence (FR, 1, 3). Besides some concepts (knowledge and understanding) one can think using reason, and some aspects of revelation and faith one is able to explain them through the rational reasoning, yet, some of them are not accessible by reason, only through faith. This explains the difference of faith and reason; for one, reason can question everything including all the revelatory contents and reasonably be aware of its own limits whereas revelation cannot put or apply all of its revelatory experiences as the solution and answer of the philosophical reasoning.

Of ‘faith,’ which is generally understood as the “reasonable acceptance of the truth of the revelation” it actually contains in itself the underlining of status of reasonableness of the faith as such. In FR, Pope says that, “there is an understanding typical to faith, going beyond the understanding typical to human reason, which can also lead to God (FR, 7,8, 9).” Pope refers to the statement of Vatican Council I, “there is a double order of understanding, differentiated but not separated (FR, 9). It is distinguished either of the source and its goals.” For Pope, philosophical reasoning relies on the pure activity of reason whereas the act of faith (the faith’s reasoning) is based on an act of accepting all the supernatural realities which are beyond the limits of reason’s activity.<sup>7</sup> That is to say, faith also functions as an epistemic means in understanding the realities, specifically the realities that are beyond the works of natural activity of reason.<sup>8</sup>

From that insistence, these two capacities, as from the outset of the document insisted, stand and operate as the two epistemological capacities which determine human everyday cognitive activity as several times mentioned. The primordially and the fundamentality of these two capacities is due to the fact that, in the most primal and embryonic moment of knowing and understanding activity or even the moment of one being conscious of something, one deals with or is profoundly concerned with the role or the functioning of these two epistemological means. In the heart or the deepness of the event or moment of consciousness as such which is the determining element of human existence (FR,

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<sup>5</sup> FR, hlm. 7.

<sup>6</sup>FR, hlm. 7.; [Ex. 33: 18, Psl: 27: 8-9, Jn: 14: 8, I Jn: 3:2]. Here, I use the term “Supreme Being” based on the reason that, what dominantly Pope refers here in his discussion is the ancient way of looking of “the relationship between faith and reason” as in St Thomas Aquinas, Plato and Aristotle’s atmosphere. See also FR, 1, 3. The questions concerning the existential problems like: human existence, continuity, etc. also belong to the fundamental desire of human to know.

<sup>7</sup>Second Council II, *The Pastoral Constitution of Gaudium et Spes, of the Church in the World*, art. 59.

<sup>8</sup>Bishop, John, "Faith", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (winter 2016 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL=<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2016/entries/faith/> Alvin Plantinga is one of the thinker put in this group. See also, "Faith," by. James Swindal, *The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ISSN 2161-0002, <https://www.iep.utm.edu/>, today's date (November 9, 2018) Email: [swindalj@duq.edu](mailto:swindalj@duq.edu) Duquesne University U. S. A.

1, 2, 3), it is none other than an epistemological happening (consciousness: *cum*: together and *scire*: to know). Both the reasoning based on revelatory experiences (faith/belief) and the reasoning based on the reason is originated from the consciousness which is essentially and principally an epistemological event. Thus, the vitality of these two elements is due to the determining role of both in enabling the sustainability of human existence through the operation of consciousness.

## **2. The Autonomy, the Limits and the Interrelationship of the Two (Faith and Reason)**

Even though he emphasizes on the essentiality of faith and reason from the outset of the document, he actually describes, as well as by the metaphor, the model of the interrelationship as like ‘two wings and aimed to remind the readers of the possibility of some epistemological challenges which might decline the meticulous rigor of the endeavors in seeking the truth, actually implies on this concept (FR, p.7). That weight does not just implicitly underline the key role of these two capacities as the two epistemological sources of human everyday living, it also implies on the interrelationship and the autonomy of the two capacities. Thus, the urgency of explaining this point is to show or to ascertain the philosophical foundations (FR, p.7, art.3, 9) of the interconnection and the autonomy these two capacities in its operation. That is to say, the pastoral reflection of Pope on the status of the relationship of these two capacities is not only a pastoral invitation but also stands on a philosophical basis or assumption which necessitates the clarity of their relation and autonomy.

The autonomy of the two capacities is philosophically determined by the typicality of their approach and comprehension to the reality. That, then, leads to the distinction of the produced or resulted paradigms or perspective. Besides the peculiarity of approaches determines the limits, resonance or the grasp of these two’s model of reasoning. Besides the inseparable connection of the two, there are also the points concerning the distinction between these two capacities. It is concerned with the approaches, methods or the operation or working of these capacities, the objective limits of the reach of the operation of these two and typicality of the methods of them both. The objective autonomy and irreducible connection of the two sources of knowledge is due to the fact that they operate (reasoning process) in the different approaches. Philosophy deals with the activity of reason while faith deals with the revelation, something that one can just accept with faith. The reasoning process which deals with the activity of reason deals purely with the reasonable approaches while in the context of faith, one can only approach through faith.

The “two wings metaphor” also explains the fundamental fact of the *parallelism* of FR in connection with the attempts of cognizing. Their parallelism basically describes, for one, the equal status of them two, though they are not equal or similar to one another. It is not just due to their equal position in supporting human to look for knowledge and certainty. It deals with the fact of the irreducibility of them to one and another. One cannot reduce the peculiarity or the typicality of rational approaches to merely “revelatory experiences.” Conversely, the doctrine of the Jesus as “the Son of God” cannot be directly rejected based on some philosophical approaches. The rational perspectives finally come up for one moment to their limit and they cannot go farther to say of something which is not supportable by empirical experiences. Under the light of faith, one cannot merely declare that philosophical paradigms find their answers in revelatory notions. Thus, the parallelism of them both explains the specification, uniqueness, particularity, typicality and the irreducible characteristics of their perspectives.

By picturing the connection of “faith and reason” as analogous to two wings (a bird or an airplane), Pope actually also designates the “parallelism” and “not-the equality” between these two sources of knowledge as previously said. The fact that the two are parallel means that the two elements of understanding have different characteristic of the way of investigation and orientation. They have the parallel status but different way to truth or certainty. The differentness of both is due to the way they approach reality and human experience. Pope’s statement of parallel status of these two areas of knowledge also implies on the irreducibility of them to one another. Avoiding the general assumption or views which subordinate and look down the status and the value of philosophical approaches to a mere instrument for an explanation of the revelation or faith, Pope, by using the metaphor of “two wings” Pope simply shows the reasonableness, validness and the objectivity of admitting the parallel relationship between the two. It is because, faith,

in fact, needs philosophical reasoning for its pastoral business whereas philosophy objectively do not require the intervention of revelation and faith as the corrector for its own reasoning and methodology. Any correction to philosophy is always a philosophical reasoning towards philosophical approach itself. As insisted by Vatican I Council, “both philosophy (reason) and faith (revelation) have the different truth which are exclusive and not identical, connected, and differentiated both by their sources and orientations (FR, 8, 9, 17).” The exclusivity and differences explains the irreducibility of these two epistemological sources towards each other.

The irreducibility of these two aspects points to the impossibility of reducing/replacing each of them to an interchangeable application or use. The reason is that, there is differentness in terms of the typicality of their approaches, sources, orientation, character and ways of reasoning.<sup>9</sup> The typicality of the status of faith/revelation is located in the way people look at the status of “reality and the capability of human understanding itself.” For the Pope, beyond philosophical reasoning there is an area of reason or knowledge that can only be entered by revelation and faith. His philosophy and his investigations could not enter the territory. In the perspective of faith, this “area” is considered and viewed as a higher domain of its position compared to scientific and rational studies. This is a theological position based on faith and belief. From a philosophical perspective, philosophy always sees it as a region of reasoning in another or different ways of view and paradigm. Faith and revelation emphasize faith while philosophy in the consistency of its views, philosophy can only arrive at the data of the empirical experience and not move further in claiming something new and other. This is the limit of the capability of human reason. FR explains that, from the perspective of faith and revelation, the source of truth is faith of the revelation (FR, 7). FR also claims that, from this perspective, all the claims of understanding and knowledge altogether with all of its explanations are based on the doctrines of faith and revelation. That is to say, all the claims of knowledge and understanding has been tied to or based on some doctrines which one needs to just adhere. This is the epistemological or philosophical basis of the unceasing urgency, relevance and the significances of this discussion (the relationship between faith and reason) as John Paul II means. The collaborative and operative relationship between the two can be pictured as follows:

THE STATUS OF FAITH AND REASON						
HUMAN EXISTENCE	Revelatory Experience	Faith	Belief/Faith	Theology	Truth, Value & Meaning	The Fullness of Human Existence
	Consciousness					
	Non- Revelatory Experiences	Rationality	Philosophical Reasoning	Philosophy and Other Sciences		

The third point which one has to insist is the objective and reasonable limits of their approaches as formerly said. As previously said, the fundamental connection of the operation or approach of these two is located in the matters such as: human experiences as the source, starting point or and foundation. It also deals with the concept of truth and certainty as the shared orientation for the fullness of human living. The difference between these two deals with the matter of methods or approaches. The two of them approach, apply or interpret human experiences and the aim of human living in a distinctive perspective.

The capacity of reason enables the process or the operation of reasoning or the work of reason. It finally produces philosophical reasoning. The spiritual experience or revelation enables the operation of faith. The experience of

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<sup>9</sup>Pope affirms the understanding of these two matters as the Council of Trent, First Vatican Council (in the Constitution of Dei Filius), and the Second Vatican Council Constitution of Dei Verbum.... There is a peculiar understanding of faith, beyond the notions peculiar to human reason, which, after all, by its very nature can find the Creator. That sense reveals the truth precisely based on the reality of God who reveals Himself. Truth is very sure, because God does not deceive, nor want to mislead (FR, 9).

revelation conditions the forming of faith. In this context, faith deals fundamentally with something that one can just accept through spiritual attitudes. The traces which can be shown as the evidences of the idea of limits of reason are still in the metaphor of two wings insisted by Pope as beforehand said. When he speaks of the relationship between them both as the relationship as two wings, he indirectly speaks of the typicality or the uniqueness of the approaches of them both. The typicality of them both can be referred to the use of reason and non-reason in their methods. It can be identified indirectly in Pope's statement when he speaks of them both as like two wings which lead one to reach truth. It implies their autonomy, their limits of their methods or approaches, their uniqueness and typicality. The evidence for that also can be seen in FR, 8, 9, 10, 13, 16 and 17 explains the differences but also the objective limits of their approaches.

In FR, Pope uses the idea of "truth" as the object of human desire because those objects stand finally as the foundations of one's life. As previously said several times, in the concrete experience, people always look for those matters (truth, knowledge, understanding and certainty) through rational reasoning and revelatory ideas. Factually, people always look for theoretical and conceptual means as the hold or grip for their everyday living. In their living, people naturally always stand on some convincing ideas and concepts as the means. In fact, they usually use two kinds of reasoning in their everyday living; the reasoning which is led by reason that leads to the rational way of thinking and the revelatory approaches which one receives through one's faith. These reliable concepts they finally use as the means to solve the everyday problems, to interpret their everyday experiences, to establish their future and to ascertain their existential happiness. This is the reason of the vitality/fundamentality of these two aspects which is due to the fact/reason that, the two – faith and reason – stand as the source and foundation of the activity of cognition. And, that becomes the reason why it becomes the essential element of the continuity of human existence.<sup>10</sup> Thus, one could finally say that the epistemological role of the two capacities (FR,3) which operates or manifests through the reasoning typical to them both, finally leads to the fullness of human everyday existence as such.

Based on the experience of people using reason and faith-spiritual conviction for their daily life, how then people explain the collaborative relation between these two in their operation. The status of the relation consists of the inseparable interrelationship between the two of them, the typicality of their methods or approaches in assisting human being to obtain truth or certainty as formerly stated. In other words, the relationship between them deals with the inescapability of their interrelationship and autonomy. Concretely, the problem of the status of the relationship is concerned with the reasonable status of the objective autonomy, the irreducibility of one to another and also the fundamental relationship of both and the parallelism of the two (FR, 3,4,5 [p. 7]). Specifically, these points refer to the status of FR as the source of the epistemological operation for knowledge and understanding, the typicality of the methods, the limits of the reach, and the inseparability of the relationship between the two. As previously mentioned, the epistemological relationship between them is mainly in terms of the fact that the two of them function or operate as the two primordial sources of human everyday understanding and knowing.

The problem of 'thinking or knowing' is one of most fundamental and classical topics in the history of philosophy, specifically in the Western Philosophy. The classicalness and the fundamentality of this topic is not due only to the fact that the Western Philosophy, as it arose in classical Greek, dealt with the problem of understanding and knowing, it deals even primarily with the status of thinking itself as the determining element of human consciousness and even human existence.<sup>11</sup> In the primordial moment of human existence which is signified by human consciousness,

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<sup>10</sup>As Heidegger says, "in his work, *Being and Time*, which says that "knowing" is the phenomenal character of *Dasein* or *Being-in-the-world*. That means that the status of these two is the determining aspect of human existence. Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, Translated by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson, New Foreword by Taylor Carman (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, Incorporated: 1962), 87.

<sup>11</sup>In this analysis, I consider that the activity of knowing, understanding, cognizing and reasoning, imagining, memorizing, etc. are the forms of thinking itself. These activities are the elements of consciousness. The activity of thinking itself is integral part and fundamental activity which signifies the operation of consciousness. G. Vesey and P. Foulkes, *Dictionary of Philosophy* (Glasgow: HarperCollins Publishers, 1990)...See "Consciousness." See also, Van Gulick, Robert, "Consciousness", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring

that primordial event is an epistemological one because one deals with the consciousness of something (Consciousness means: *cum*: together and *scire*: to know of something, to be aware of something, etc.).<sup>12</sup> The reason of seeing the topic of ‘thinking’ as a fundamental issue is based on the reason or fact that, that topic inherently bases or always comes prior to any philosophical ideas whatsoever. Besides there are various philosophical approaches which deal with that topics with various perspectives in the contemporary era. Even, one has to say that, when one think of ‘consciousness’ as the most determining element of human existence, that, one knows through the activity or the functioning of thought or the operation of cognitive capacity.<sup>13</sup> Or, one could say that that human existence (or being) must come prior to any act of thinking, but the condition for the possibility for human existence is the capability and the capacity of thinking (knowing) as Heidegger claims.<sup>14</sup> That means that the capacity and the capability of cognizing is the determining aspect which enables the existence of human being. Without this capacity, human being or human existence is unthinkable or non-assumable. The activity of knowing as such then is the condition for the possibility of human existence and its continuity.<sup>15</sup>

Not only in the field of philosophical discourses, the topic of thinking - specifically concerning its value, significance and status - has also been one of the topics of the grappling of the church in the history (FR, 2, 6). It is due to the fact that, the activity of mission of the church fundamentally is concerned with the problem of understanding, or of how the proclamation of the truth of faith is understood and comprehended cognitively by the listeners of the faithful. The idea is that the matter that condition one to accept something with cognitive agreement is the capacity of intelligibility, and that matter deals with or is concerned with the cognitive tools of human being. The concern of the church towards this topic actually has been since Hellenistic and Patristic period<sup>16</sup> up to now. It is because the historical interaction between the mission of the church and the classical wisdom (the problem of intelligibility) is traced since or found in the historical conversation of Saint Paul with the Athens, as narrated in the Act (Gospel). This model can be referred as an explicit instance of that encounter. That encounter lasts until recent time, and the most celebrated discussion of these topics mostly referred is the discussion of Ratzinger (the former Pope) and the famous philosopher, Jürgen Habermas.<sup>17</sup> This discussion is considered as important is due to that reason that, in this discussion it comes out a lot of perspectives and new challenges which deals with the problem of ‘thinking’ (and its relationship with the topic of faith/religion) in the most recent times as observed and revealed by these two thinkers. FR continues to show the primordial and historical search for truth, meaning and effort for understanding of the world and human life itself. It can

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2018 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL =  
 <<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2018/entries/consciousness/>>.

<sup>12</sup>It can be referred to the critics of Edmund Husserl to the Descartes’ *Cogito* (Subjectivity) in which Husserl claims that the fundamental character of “consciousness” is always a consciousness of something. The *Cogito* is never empty.

<sup>13</sup>The term ‘consciousness’ is literally formed by the word Latin; *cum* which means ‘together’ or ‘with’ and *scire* which means ‘to know’, ‘to understand’ and to cognize’, etc That means in the most primordial moment of the operation of consciousness, it is none other than an act of cognition, an epistemological happening.

<sup>14</sup>Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, translated by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson, foreword by Taylor Carman (New York: Harper & Row Publishers. Inc., 1962), 86-87.

<sup>15</sup>Some could be here mentioned: Tertullian, etc. those who consider philosophical reasoning as something which comes from the pagan world. That is why that approach is dangerous to Christian faith.

<sup>16</sup>Some could be mentioned here: Angelo Scola, “The Cultural Dimensions and Implications of the Encyclical *Fides et Ratio*: 1-13; Avery Dulles S.J. *Faith and Reason: From Vatican I to John Paul II*, 1992-208; Alvin Platinga; *Philosopher’s Respond to Pope John Paul II’s Encyclical Letter of Fides et Ratio*, 1-13.

<sup>17</sup>Florian Schuller, *The Dialectics of Secularization*, Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI) and Jürgen Habermas, *Dialektik der Saekularisierung* (Freiburg: Verlag Herder Freiburg-Libreria Editric Vaticana, 2005).



be seen through the elaborations in two paragraphs of art. 1 in FR (FR,1). It is said here that, the phenomena of human' searching for truth, life-meaning and self-knowledge is integral part of the history of the culture of people in East and West. FR shows that the fundamental desire for truth, certainty, and self-knowledge is a primordial, historical and fundamental activity of human in whatever place and moment. Even, for Pope, the Church herself is integral part of those primordial, historical and fundamental attempts for truth and certainty (FR, 2).

In everyday living, in any acts of living, people are always concerned with the epistemological sources as foundation and operator of their understanding, knowing and belief. That finally determines deeply their living. Aside from that argument, the essentiality of the status of the two for human cognitive activity, and specifically in relation to their inherent and unbreakable relation, it is due to the fact, as formerly analyzed, is located in the most primordial moment or event of human consciousness as such. In every event of consciousness or people being aware of something, that event is the event is an epistemological event because it factually happens in that event is the event of being aware of something in the mind based on the operation of thinking and believing. In this primordial event, it happens there is the operation of the thinking and apprehending something through belief which is beyond or outside of reason. Then, one has to say further that, the tie or bind to human experience is based on the fact that the work of these two capacities always deals with, start from, dwell closely with, and treat and consider experience as the starting point, foundation for their effort to search or seek for truth/certainty/knowledge/understanding and the fullness of human existence as the orientation and the aim of the functioning and operation of them both. That is to say that, the metaphor of two wings also explains the inseparable connection of these two capacities which deals with the relationship between these two which is mainly in terms of the tie of the operation of these two capacities to human living. For one, the two of them are concerned with human, specifically the effort of understanding and knowing. And, secondly, the two of them help one to search for certainty or truth. And, that fact is due to the fundamental need for living and survival. But, one has to say further that, the tie between them also is due to the reason that they both deal with human experiences as the sources. Human experiences are the sources of all the process of cognition both in the field of revelation and rational approaches. One can only think of or look for knowledge, truth and certainty started from one's daily experiences and one can only receive faith through revelation based on the experiential expressions. The essential connection of the two – in terms of – starting point is due to the two of them use or begin with the same starting point which is reality or human experience whatever it be. In terms of 'orientation, purpose and aim,' it deals with the search for truth, certainty, and human living.

### **3. The Status of Experience, Reason and Truth as the Epistemological Paradigms in FR**

The discussion concerning the fundamentality of the status of FR and the epistemological relationship between the two, finally, leads to ideas like the status of experience as the foundations and starting point of the thinking or reasoning process, the status of reason, the idea of belief (faith), and the concept of truth as such. As previously said, these ideas appear many times in Pope's reflections and these ideas are integral part of epistemological discussion. Besides the idea experience is perceived as the starting point of the whole activity of thinking and reasoning as formerly stated, the idea of 'experience' as such is always related to human experiences. Pope indirectly implies on it in FR, 2 when he speaks of the history of human being that determines them to think of their existence. And, the idea of experience as such can be related directly with the conversation on the topic of human existence. It is because to think of human experience is to none other than the conversation of what people live, think, do, practice and believe in their everyday living.

Of reason, it has been previously discussed. One thing that could be added here is that, in FR, reason is seen as one of the epistemological capacity which enables the activity of cognition. It also starts from experience or it bases its activity from human experience. Even though, like spiritual or revelatory experience which bases on experience, it has its own methods in processing human understanding. Reason is the natural capacity which plays its own methods in establishing human knowledge. FR recognizes and admits the capability and the peculiarity of rational process. FR uses several terms to show its admittance and recognition on the status of reason and its work (FR, 1, 3, 4, 5, 8). Of 'truth', for FR, truth is reached by the operation of the two capacities, faith and reason. The two of them process the data they receive from experience and process that data to become truth. These truths then stand and serve as the conceptual

foundations for one's life. Besides the working of these two capacities it also helps people to find meaning and values from what they actually experience. That means that, the content of knowledge or understanding does not just aid one to solve the problem of life in the sense of practicality but it also functions to help people to find some meanings and view of life. Truth is concerned with the technical or instrument solution which one look for, or just simply values, meanings or some conceptual paradigms which help one to articulate his or her living meaningfully.

#### 4. Epistemological Challenges

As previously said, the fundamental reason of continuously discussing this topic is due to the primordial fact that in everyday living people deal with the effort of understanding and knowing for their living and survival, the second epistemological topics which stands behind Pope's theological reflection of this topic is the reminder or the invitation to avoid the irresponsibility and immaturity in the process of understanding and knowing (FR, 5). These two matters are the challenges or temptations in all the effort of understanding and knowing.<sup>18</sup> It is concerned with the methodological un-seriousness, rigorous-less-ness of the process. Specifically, some epistemological challenges which one could analyze from this context, namely, 1) as previously mentioned the possibility of returning to the traditional ways of understanding the relationship between faith and reason. It is concerned with the attitude of reducing the status and the role of philosophical reasoning or approach as just simply a merely pagan, not important, and simultaneously the overemphasis on the status of faith. That is the problem because it tends to become fideism as Pope observes in the past. On the other hand, the negligence of reason involves the theological or revelatory experience as an object or area which has to be admitted.

Besides, the un-seriousness and rigorous-less-ness in its own methodology, exclusiveness, absoluteness any approaches as warned by Pope in FR itself. Pope himself mentions some challenges which will be encountered in developing philosophical reasoning: 1) uncritical attitudes (FR, 55), pragmatic standard (FR, 5), un-seriousness of searching for truth (FR, 5), skepticism and agnosticism (FR, 5), minimalistic attitude (FR, 5), fideism (55, par 3), eclectics (FR, 86), historicism (FR, 87), scientism (FR, 88), pragmatism (FR, 89), nihilism (FR, 90). The uncritical attitude becomes one of the epistemological problems is due to the reason that this attitude fundamentally shows the methodological or methodic meticulousness of the philosophical or epistemological approach as such. Pope believes that this attitude is the root of the problem of the collaborative relationship of FR as such. He is sure that the careful and strict thoroughness of the executing or applying of the methodic requirements will finally lead to the necessity of the concerted relationship as such between these two capacities in their operations. 'Pragmatic standard' as mentioned means that often the effort of understanding and knowing is reduced merely for the reason of affectivity and efficiency. One has to know something in order for some practical and effective function. This is considered as a problem because the effort of knowing and understanding is reduced simply to the business of practicality, technicality, functional and utility. Of 'skepticism and agnosticism' as such can be explained as follows. Skepticism points to the attitude of not trusting the capability of reason itself.

#### 5. Epistemological Habits or Virtues

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<sup>18</sup>As said in FR that this Letter is aimed to reflect the activity of human reason due in the contemporary era, the efforts of searching for truth is increasingly neglected (FR, 5). Pope issued this Encyclical to invite the bishops, theologians, philosophers and researchers to search for truth (6). As ever said in *Veritatis Splendor*, the issuance of this Letter also is due to the discrepancies or distortions and rejections of some Catholic doctrines (6). He also issues this Letter with expectation to have back (to regain) faith and philosophy in harmonious relationship without loss their respective autonomy (48).

Due to those potential challenges, the emphasis on the fundamentality of FR, the objective and rationality of the collaborative relation between them logically implies and recommends some epistemological virtues (habits) that one may think and live so that the possibility to find out the convincing hold for one's everyday living one could be obtained. The essentiality, irreducible status, the connection and the parallel status of faith and reason imply on or entail some perspectives that one has to think. Those implications logically are concerned with something that one has to do with thinking and practicing (living). Those paradigms are related with the concept of habit or virtues. By habit or virtue, it is understood as something that one has to repeatedly do with perseverance, constancy, seriousness and with the vivaciousness in terms of the spirit and commitment. By virtue or habit, I mean the practice, constant and continuous process which one may do for a particular or specific ideal. It is said as habit because it deals with activity which one has to constantly practice, do and live. Or it is said as virtue because it connects with the custom, practices, and activities which underline constancy, perseverance, continuousness, and the involvement of the entire self in living or practicing it. It does not set aside the conscious dimension but integrate the consciousness and rationality in living it. That means that the idea of habit or virtue itself underlines the consciousness (conscious process), practice, paradigm of thinking, constancy and perseverance, the engagement of all the elements of human's capacity/faculties (senses, reason, etc.). That deals with the regularity, repetition, consciousness, forcefulness and vivaciousness in relationship with the process of living or practicing it. By habit, this article means the spirit of perseverance; constancy, continuousness, and something that one needs to do repeatedly but not mechanistically or automatically but rather involve the understanding and knowledge about what one has to live and practice habitually. Thus, based on the account and understanding of the meaning of habit or virtue, one may think of some epistemological habits which can be directly analyzed from the previous accounts; the status of the relationship between faith and reason. That means that the elaboration of the status of the connection between faith and reason does not only explain the reasonable positions, relationship and the essentialness of them to each other. It also implies directly some philosophical attitudes which one has to think, consider and live. That deals with the spirit, habit, and attitude which one has to do in relation with the appreciation, recognition, the way to think and the way to treat. That is to say that, one has to objectively and reasonably admit, recognize and appreciate reasonably of both their status as parallel, irreducible to each other, the connection of them both. The two of them must be treated objectively based on their perspective without subordinating, humiliating and reducing them. Thus, one has to objectively acknowledge the peculiarity, uniqueness and the typicality of both fairly. Those habits then are *first*, the appreciation and admittance of the peculiarity-autonomy-values, limit, the irreducibility and irreplaceability of both, and the inseparable interrelationship of one and another, the establishment of the spirit of perseverance of establishing the philosophical reasoning, and the living of the spirit or the habit of critical thinking and dialogues. These are the direct implications of the insurances and some challenges previously explained. Second, this study also finds that behind the discussion on these two cognitive sources, there are some epistemological matters which plays their role in Pope's efforts to re-interpret the relation the two: the natural and existential desire for certainty, the limits of understanding and the irreducible and the irreplaceable peculiarity/typicality of revelatory matters. Those habits or virtues are the spirit of perseverance and seriousness of developing the effort of knowing and understanding in all of its forms. It simply means to be serious with the effort of knowing or passion for the curiosity. The openness toward the typicality and the objective limits of their methods, approaches and fields. The spirit of discourses, spirit of dialogues, spirit of critical thinking, logical and reasonable thinking also become the points which one needs to think.

The *second* epistemological habit is the appreciation of the status of knowledge, understanding, certainty and truth. The admittance objectively the values and the status of rational approaches and the revelatory ideas are concerned with the certainty and truth. They are fundamentally connected to human effort of understanding, knowing, living and the need for survival. As formerly said, the orientation or the purpose of any act of knowing or understanding is not for knowledge itself. The efforts of understanding are aimed to look for certainty. The certainty itself finally stands as the foundations, sources, and basis for living. People need naturally some conceptual means as the foundation for solving their problems, interpreting their everyday experiences, discovering meaning and understanding, and setting up their future. In everyday living, people use the reasonable and spiritual approaches that help them to solve their problems, to discover values and meaning of their experiences and to set their future and safety. That is to say that, the previous analysis actually has explained or implied on something that one has to live, understand and practice concerning the connection between faith and reason itself. Those stresses are concerned with the acknowledgement of the importance

of those two capacities as autonomous one and another, peculiar and correlative to each other, irreducible, having the specific or particular approach to their sources.

The *third*, from the outset, specifically from the very statement, when Pope speaks of the two wings metaphors, that emphasis also implies an implication which one has to think and do. This article finds that, that statement implies on an invitation, a call and an urgency of living or practicing an epistemological habit or virtue. That virtue or habit deals with the key role of these two primordial capacities. And, that virtue is none other than an invitation to be serious in developing the effort of critical thinking, philosophical investigation, rigorosity in thinking and scientific research. The *fourth* habit which one could consider in this matter is the spirit of knowing. As emphasized by Aristotle in his *Metaphysics* and also mentioned by the Pope, man by nature has desire to know.<sup>19</sup> This primordial fact in itself implies also a virtue which one has to think, the spirit of developing the effort of knowing and understanding. Knowing and understanding is the fundamental propensity of human being as Heidegger claims that it is the essential character of *Dasein* because the capability to know determine the uniqueness of human to another things or human being.<sup>20</sup> The necessity of developing this aspect is also caused by the existential fact that, as previously mentioned, the basic human tendency to always seek the truth or certainty in order to get the meaning of life and effort to survive. This epistemological basic tendency is said to be aimed at 'self-knowledge.'<sup>21</sup> For Pope/FR, the fundamental or primordial aim of the efforts of understanding and knowing purports on the need of understanding and knowing one's own everyday experiences and life. From that assertion, it would be argued that epistemological efforts have historically been the existential project of mankind. In other words, there is a natural human longing to seek and understand the meaning of self and life more deeply. It is realized by the Pope that, in the primordial efforts of epistemological nuance, man is actually driven to a point where man realizes that the seriousness of his efforts to understand reality and the world, instead he was sent to know him and things related to him. In other words, the more he seeks to understand and know the reality outside himself, at the same time, he gets to know himself. In other words, epistemological efforts are fundamentally helpful in the existential self-assertion of the existent. In fact, its own epistemological efforts help sustain its ontological intimacy with its own reality or world environment.

## 6. Human Existence: Continuity, Meaning and Values of Living

The necessity of discussing constantly the relationship between faith and reason, finally, is not due only on the contemporary fact of the rise of the religions as an empirical fact as Habermas says or the rise and the development of the radicalism using religious arguments. It is more on the reason that, Pope stands on the three philosophical foundations which become the three fundamental areas of human everyday living which people deal with. These foundations fundamentally are concerned with the continuity of human existence. It starts from the everyday living (human existence) and it aims at the fullness of human existence. As previously said, FR begins with a metaphorical declaration/claim of the status, the essentiality, autonomy and the connection between these two fundamental sources of human cognitive activities, that is, faith and reason, is like 'two wings in which the human soul leads to the truth.' By using the metaphors, FR/Pope actually speaks of the fundamentality of these two elements of human cognitive capacity. This position is symbolically or metaphorically pictured by the two wings of the *same* "owner of the two wings." The "tie or the bind of these two parallel wings to their owner explain the fundamental connection and inseparableness of these two epistemological sources for the sake of truth. Meaning to say, the essentiality of them is due to their fundamental role for human's search for truth itself. The fundamental need for truth finally leads to the fullness of human

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<sup>19</sup>Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, translated with Introduction by Hugh Lawson-Tancred, (London: Penguin Group, 1998), hlm. I, 1.980a.

<sup>20</sup>Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, hlm. 86-87.

<sup>21</sup> The concept of "to recognize yourself" warning carved at the gate of the temple in Delfi, as a testimony to the basic truth, which should serve as the minimal criterion by those who seek to exclude themselves from the rest of the created realms as "men" As those who recognize themselves.

existence. The experience or the need for the fullness of existence refers to its continuity, existential happiness, values and the meaning of life rooted on everyday experiences, existential security and the everyday need for cognitive business and practicality.

## Conclusion

The novelty of Pope's way of looking at or understanding the relationship between faith and reason refers to the emphasis of the parallelism, fundamentality, autonomy, fundamental relationship and irreducibility of the status of these two epistemological institutions. That is to say, although that document talks and appears on the surface more in/as theological/pastoral formulation and orientation, there stands the reasonableness or objectivity of both the essentialness of one and another, the interrelationship of them both, the parallelism, and the irreducibility of them both. The reasonableness of the relationship between the two concerned with their inseparable interrelatedness, the irreducibility and their autonomy, the parallelism and the essentiality of them both as previously mentioned.

The highlighting on the fundamentality of the aspect of knowing and understanding for human existence appears from the outset of FR. That emphasis appears gaudily when Pope commences the entirety of his reflection of the model/picture of the status and the relationship between FR by proposing the metaphor of "two wings" as the means for his account. To make his readers easily understand the main idea of his Encyclical, Pope describes the relationship between faith and reason using that picture (FR, 7). The weight on the fundamentality of these two primordial capacities of cognition appears richly through Pope's epistemological metaphor of "two wings" as when he weighs on the spirit of constantly re-discussing the status of the relationship between faith and reason as two primordial sources of human knowledge. The determining aspect of human existence is human consciousness itself which is fundamentally concerned with the matter of knowledge or understanding. That is to say, the fundamental moment or event of consciousness is the epistemological happening, or an epistemological activity. That is to say that, behind His emphasis on the model of their interrelationship, there stands the idea of the fundamentality of these two sources or capacities of human everyday cognition. It means that behind that symbolical depiction of the connection of both, there appears the insistence of the determining status of them both as determining capacities which enable people undergo or live their everyday living. It is because, objectively, in everyday living, there are some problems of human living which one can only be solved using reason, and, there are also some problems of human living which one understands through what one believes beyond his/her capacity of reasoning. And, these two ways of living determine and help people to live. These two primordial capacities of human cognitive activity play a determining role for human everyday existence.

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