Revisiting the Natural Institution of Marriage in the Culture of Basotho through the Lens of Karol Wojtyła's Philosophy

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Abstract

The institution of marriage is the basis of every society, as through marriage, a man and a woman make a contract for life with the intention of having children and thus forming a family. In Lesotho, there are civil and customary marriages. Both regimes have their positive traits as well as their problems. I critique the regimes and irregular unions based on the foundational principles of Karol Wojtyła. I argue that divorce, as permissible in civil marriage, is wrong according to the personalistic norm of Karol Wojtyła. Moreover, by permitting polygamy, customary marriage needs to be improved to accommodate only monogamous marriage, as it allows a spouse to fully donate himself to the other. I totally disagree with irregular unions, which include, *inter alia*, abduction, elopement, cohabitation, and unions arising out of the infidelity of married persons, such as concubinage. I make it clear that irregular unions are not legal in Lesotho, but they are practices that have to be abhorred, for they reduce a person to a status of an object.

Keywords:

Marriage, family, personalistic norm, love, and human person.

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Introduction: Marriage in Lesotho

At the center of every society, there is the institution of marriage between a man and a woman for the procreation and upbringing of children. Marriage is one of the oldest institutions, which is as old as man. Through marriage, a man is complemented by a woman. The need for partnership, arising from social nature, becomes manifest. The human person needs company and a helper in life. Out of love, a man goes out of himself in order to find the love of a woman. That spousal love and the sexual act that they engage in within the matrimonial state are some of the components of marriage. The fruits of marriage are children.

In the society of the Basotho people, there are two types of marriages, namely customary and civil. Manyeli defines customary marriage as:

> 'deemed' to be completed when there is agreement between the parties to the marriage coupled with parental agreement both as to the marriage and as to the amount of the *bohali*, and when part, at least, of the *bohali* has actually been paid" (Poulter, 1981, p. 61). Initially, customary marriage was a formal agreement between the two families without the consent of the bride and bridegroom. Later, with the influence of the church, the parties had to consent to the marriage. This agreement between the two families was sealed with the family of the bridegroom paying the *bohali* either in the form of cattle or money.[2]

This means that customary marriage requires three things to exist namely consent of the spouses, consent of both families and *bohali* which means lobola.

On the other hand, civil marriage is similar to ecclesiastical marriage. Here, a man and a woman agree to enter into a lifetime partnership. They make their permanent contract before the church or civil official. In this regime, marriage is valid when the parties are adults and have attained the age of eighteen. Only the consent of the spouses is required and there is no need for the consent of the parents and payment of dowry. In the church marriage, there is no divorce while the civil one allows divorce and the husband is permitted to marry the second wife while the first is still alive only if the civil court has granted a divorce.

[2] L. Manyeli, "Ambushing Basotho Customary Marriage," *Humanities and Social Science Research* 2(2) 2019, 10.

There are also unions which are not falling under the above classification of marriages. The unions emanate from *chobelo* elopement and *chobeliso* abduction and are called irregular. There is a distinction between "*chobelo*" and "*chobeliso*;" "Elopement" and "abduction" are not the same - "*chobelo*" is "elopement" while "*chobeliso*" is "abduction."[3] The former is a milder form of abduction.[4] It is a process whereby a boy and a girl agree to elope together because they both love each other but the parents do not like their union. As a result they plan pregnancy to force parents to accept the girl in the boy's home. This happens in a case where the parents of a man do not like the fiancée (a girlfriend) of their son. During the darkness of the night, the boy goes to his home with his girlfriend. This is done non-violently.[5] The latter is a process whereby a man forcefully marries a woman without any agreement or consent. According to Mokhethi, a girl is abducted without any prior consultation.[6] This is done violently in a way that can be sexual, moral, physical or emotional. It dehumanizes the girl and is grossly unjust to her.[7] Both elopement and abduction show lack of freedom and self-determination since a girl is violently forced and in another scenario they act under pressure due to the lack of parental consent.

Although, Manyeli heavily criticized customary marriage in as far as agreement of the parents and dowry are required, he did not challenge the irregular unions. There are some problems that still remain. The focus should be on their welfare and their freedom in that union. Since the Catholic Church has influenced the culture of Basotho, there is a need to clarify some of the foundational principles for those who envisage to build a partnership of a whole life in a comprehensive manner.

On the basis of the foregoing, the most suitable Christian philosopher Karol Wojtyła since gave a compelling account of the foundational principles of marriage in the philosophical arena.[8] The problem which he identified exists in Basotho culture today. According to him, the central question of "the world outlook (*Weltanschaung)*" is "the subjectivity of the person" … "in relation

[3] P. Mokhethi, *Lesotho's Challenge: The Irregular Unions* (Maseru: Mazenod Institute, 1988), 11.
[4] *Ibid*., 12, citing H. Ashton, 2nd ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), 65-66.
[5] *Ibid.*
[6] *Ibid.*
[7] *Ibid.*
[8] Cf., M. Acosta, A.J. Reimers, *Karol Wojtyła's Personalist Philosophy, Understanding Person and Act* (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press 2016), 15-16.

with the human community."[9] This is observed within the spectrum of morality and culture.[10] Confronted with the problem of personalism, philosophy has the peculiar task to clarify the nature of man and his place in the universe.[11] Philosophical anthropology and ethics must assert their rightful place in the world outlook in order to solve contemporary issues.[12] He forged the perennial philosophy "with contemporary currents and thus brought a new method."[13] He gave "an account of human action that begins from an ethics based on Scholastic metaphysics and realist phenomenology. This union gives rise to his own style of personalism."[14] This anthropological and ethical outlook shall be more relevant to enrich and even to shun the incompatible elements that pose a problem to a matrimonial life in Lesotho.

In applying the philosophy of Karol Wojtyła in the natural institution of marriage in Lesotho, I first discuss the foundational principles of marriage as stipulated in Wojtyła's moral philosophy and ethics. Then I critically discuss customary marriage and lastly make a critique of irregular unions. Then I conclude that irregular unions are not part of customary marriage in Lesotho although they are practices that are inimical to the foundational principles of proper marriage.

The Foundational Principles of Marriage in Wojtyła's Moral Philosophy and Ethics

The marriage regimes that were mentioned earlier have some constitutive factors such as agreement of persons, monogamy and commitment for life. Wojtyła has a comprehensive account of how persons, who need to commit themselves to each other, must act. In his essays in moral philosophy and ethics, *Love and Responsibility* as well as *Osoba I czyn* (*Person and Act*), he

[9] K. Wojtyła, "The Human Person: The Task of Christian Philosophy Today," *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association* 53, 1979, 3-4. This was written by Karol Wojtyła in 1976 as the introduction to his article "The Person: Subject and Community," *Review of Metaphysics* 33 (1979/1980), 273-308, but was omitted by the Review. (Ed.).
[10] Wojtyła, "The Human Person," 3-4.
[11] Acosta and Reimers provide the historical background using the material of Burgos in this manner: "Personalism is a philosophy that is fundamentally characterized by locating the person at the center of its reflection and its conceptual structure. It flows from several sources, but took precise form in France in the 1930s and later acquired notable importance throughout all Europe, influencing such relevant events as the UN's Declaration on human rights or those texts of the Vatican Council II which refer to the human being or to religious freedom."
The citation comes from: Acosta, Reimers, *Karol Wojtyła's Personalist Philosophy*, 3-4 citing J. M. Burgos, *El Personalismo* [Personalism], trans. by A. Reimers (Madrid: Palabra, 2000).
[12] Cf., Acosta, Reimers, *Karol Wojtyła's Personalist Philosophy*, 3-4.
[13] *Ibid.*
[14] *Ibid.*, 15-16.

"reflects on intersubjectivity-subjectivity, sociability, fatherhood, and the personal subject, among others."[15] This reflection puts love as the basis of marriage. The Polish philosopher makes it clear that spousal love is "realized most deeply in the self-giving of the loving person to the beloved person."[16] He further explains what it means to master oneself: "By nature, that is due to what being he is, the person is a master of himself (*sui uiris*), and cannot be imparted to the other or substituted by the other (*alteri incommunicabilis*) when the participation of his own will and the commitment of his personal freedom are required."[17] Self-mastery presupposes that man is able to govern himself. Self-mastery in sexuality demands a person "to master the concupiscence of flesh."[18] A human person must act in conformity with reason and not merely out of desire for another person. By being incommunicable, man is unrepeatable and irreplaceable yet through love, a person can donate himself to the other person. In this giving of oneself, a person does not cease to be but is expanded and enriched.[19]

The whole "I" in the moral philosophy of Wojtyła must be committed to the other. It is reciprocal in the sense that each participates in the giving of oneself. It is not only about a sexual drive which tantamount to "use." As "someone," a human being cannot be reduced to a thing. He points out that the designation "person" was coined in order to emphasize that man cannot be relegated completely to the category of "specimen of the species," "but has in himself something more, some particular fullness and perfection of being."[20] The idea of using the other in order to satisfy one's sexual needs is abhorred in Wojtyła's moral philosophy. He further talks about "the personalistic norm" which is the principle of loving the person that is, treating the person in a way corresponding to the being he is. Wojtyłian's philosophical anthropology shuns whatever degrades the human person. Every concrete person has a dignity that has to be respected. In human relationships, every person should be recognized as a person and not an object. He must not be used as a thing, a person is someone. Wojtyła applies the Kantian philosophy which is couched in the categorical imperative: "So act that you use humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, always at the same time as an end, never merely as a means."[21]

[15] *Ibid*., 18.
[16] K. Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, trans. by G. Ignatik (Boston: Pauline Books & Media, 2013).
[17] *Ibid.*
[18] *Ibid.*
[19] *Ibid*., 107-108.
[20] *Ibid.*
[21] I. Kant, *Grounding of the Metaphysics of Morals* (Indianapolis, Ind.: Hackett Publishing, 1993), 429.

By giving himself to the other, the person becomes a gift of love to the other, not an object to be used as the variation of the Kantian's second imperative.[22] The concept of communion according to Wojtyła circumscribes the dignity of the human person: "Only one who possesses himself can give himself away—and give it selflessly. And only one who is in control of himself can also make himself the gift—and this is again the gift of selflessness."[23] In this way, a person gives himself freely to the other without being used as a means like a thing that has not given itself to the other.

The intersubjective relationships are made freely. They flow from consciousness and determination of individuals. No one should be used as a means rather everyone is a person who participates. Wojtyła talks about fair love. There should be love between persons where each donates himself or herself willingly to the other. Through this principle spouses can treat each other as persons in a monogamous marriage which is also indissoluble. It must be a communion of persons for their entire life.

Wojtyła clearly emphasizes the justification of sexual acts within marriage. "The fruit of the union is the person's reciprocal belonging, whose expression is (among others) full sexual intercourse – we call it conjugal relations or intercourse since … it finds its proper place only in marriage."[24] The sexual act is justified within marriage because of its consequences. The result of intercourse between a man and woman is progeny. A child as a new member of the society must be then accepted and registered. In this way, the birth of the child born as a result of intercourse between the spouses makes them a family. There are other challenges to marriage such as adultery, concubinage and polygamy that are incompatible with these foundational principles of marriage. Manyeli has already discussed and made a stunning assessment of some problems of customary marriage in Lesotho. The major critique will be on irregular unions which include *inter alia*, abduction, elopement, unions arising from infidelity of married persons and cohabitations that are inimical to the principles of proper marriage.

[22] *Ibid.*
[23] K. Wojtyła, "The Personal Structure of Self Determination," in: *Person and Community: Selected Essays*, trans. by Th. Sandok (New York: Peter Lang, 1993), 187-195. K. Wojtyła, "Osobowa struktura samostanowienia," in: K. Wojtyła, *Osoba i czyn oraz inne studia antropologiczne* (series: Człowiek i moralność, vol. 4), ed. by T. Styczeń, W. Chudy, J.W. Gałkowski, A. Rodziński and A. Szostek (Lublin: Towarzystwo Naukowe KUL, 2000), 421-432.
[24] Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, 109.

Customary Marriage

The salient feature of Basotho marriages nowadays is monogamy and indissolubility as a result of the influence of the Catholic Church which arrived in 1862 around forty-two years after the founding of the Basotho nation by Moshoeshoe in 1820. Another commendable aspect of customary and ecclesiastical marriage is that there is no divorce, that is, the spouses take a contract for life until one of them dies. Marriage in Lesotho is between a man and a woman. There are very few polygamous marriages while most of the marriages are monogamous. Even the King of Basotho who is the symbol of unity, is not subscribing to polygamous marriage since he is monogamous although it is permissible in customary marriage. In both cases of monogamy or polygamy, Basotho's culture upholds sexual intercourse as permissible within marriage:

> The Basotho recommended and regarded sexual intercourse as being moral only in marriage either monogamous marriage or polygamous marriage. Cheating in as far as monogamous or polygamous marriages and pre-marital sex were concerned were always castigated as being immoral. Clearly, it is inconceivable that the Basotho could be amoral in sexuality while being so strict on behavior in sexual intercourse.[25]

However, customary marriage is not without problems. Such problems include permissiveness towards polygamy, consent of the families for the marriage to be valid. Apart from these problems Manyeli also points out that dowry is also one of the problems and that polygamy degrades women since man is not fully committed to one person. Manyeli further considers:

> [P]olygamy as being morally condemnable because it regards women as objects of men. First, marrying a woman primarily to form a tie with neighboring clans clearly demonstrates that she is merely being used as an object for maintaining peace with other tribes. Second, to marry a woman in view of having more hands at one's disposal is also using her as a mere tool. According to me, as used in these two senses the woman's dignity as a person is violated. To use Kantian terminology the woman in polygamy is not used as an end-in-itself

[25] Manyeli, *Ambushing Basotho Customary Marriage*, 14.

> as it should be the case, but rather she is being used as a means to an end. Evidently, a woman should not be used as a mere tool since this amounts to dehumanizing her.[26]

In this cited passage, Manyeli applies the moral philosophy of Kant which is akin to Wojtyła's personalistic norm to fight against polygamy. He also argues that since the parties to marriage are adults, they should make their own decision, the consent of the families is not relevant. His arguments and conclusions are indeed compelling yet in relation to lobola he also finds it as a problem which must be discarded. Moreover, Manyeli heavily criticizes dowry as the third constitutive element of a valid marriage:

> I have ruled out the third condition of the *bohali*. Firstly, I have shown that this element of the *bohali* is to a great extent a contributing factor to the long-standing and persisting male domination and suppression of women in Sesotho customary marriage. Secondly, I have attempted to demonstrate that the *bohali* does injustice to the family of the bridegroom that has equally contributed to the expensive upbringing of their son. I have therefore suggested that the *bohali* be replaced by the two families contributing to finance the newly formed family to kick start.[27]

I beg to differ as far as dowry is concerned. Dowry is given by the family of a man to the family of a woman as a token of appreciation. It can be in the monetary or animal form.

> At its heart, lobola is a negotiated token of appreciation from the prospective husband (and his family) to the prospective wife's family. Historically expressed in cattle, it is today commonly paid in a mix of cash, livestock, and agreed gifts. The point is not to "buy" a spouse. Rather, lobola formally acknowledges the new relationship, builds ties between families, and affirms respect for the woman, her parents, and her lineage.[28]

[26] *Ibid*., 15.
[27] *Ibid*.
[28] A. Banks, *The Law on Lobola in South Africa in Marital Law* (10 September 2025) – https://gslaw.co.za/the-law-on-lobola-in-south-africa/ (accessed on 23 October 2026).

It is a "token of appreciation" because as Basotho are from a patriarchal society. This means when a woman is married, she inherits the surname of her husband and is incorporated into the family of her husband. In this way, the family of the man through dowry acknowledges the work done by the family of a woman by begetting and upbringing. Viewed in this manner, dowry is a sign of gratitude and should be upheld. Concerning his suggestion, that both families should contribute there is what is called *ho phahleloa* which means giving of presents to the new family by their families so as to kick start their new matrimonial life.

Critique of Irregular Unions in Lesotho

At the center of the family is the institution of marriage. The irregular unions accruing from elopement, adduction and infidelity. In this part, divorce and cohabitation form part of the discussion.

Abduction

Marriage as a natural institution between a man and a woman should be formed by consent between the parties who love each other. However, in abduction, force and fear are involved, since a girl is abducted. Moreover, there is no communication between the parties. According to Mokhethi, "In *Chobeliso*, for instance, force and corporal punishment are inflicted unjustly too, upon the person of the abducted girl, whose love and consent are not asked for." This victim is compelled to marry a man she does not love and even know.

There is no encounter between a man and a girl that establishes a relationship. In this situation, a man imposes and does not propose to a woman. This attitude accrues from the superiority complex of men over women. In the philosophical arena, whether one is a male or a female, they are equal. According to Wojtyła:

> The human sexual instinct is not an exclusive foundation of marriage, and it cannot be conceived only emotionally nor subjectively. The abuses in the sphere of sexuality are almost irreversible. Marriage is a bond between two persons which leads to personal union

> strengthened by a covenant. In the personal marital life there is no place for a subordination of women; in this instance there can only be total equality…[29]

Everyone is an end and should not be used as a means.[30] For the institution of marriage to exist, each partner has to participate or share without being totally absorbed or conditioned. Wojtyła talks about efficacy, a girl or a boy must realize his or her own personalistic value of action in the act of marriage. But in abduction, the personalistic value of action is one-sided. It is not a shared product that integrates each partner. Rather it is the individualism of the man that forced conformism on the woman.

Furthermore, there is no dialogue. No marriage can exist without communication since human beings express themselves through language and signs. To establish a family, dialogue between a woman and a man is necessary. On this note, abduction is a human degradation and is repugnant to reason.

Elopement

Whereas abduction lacks consent of the woman, in elopement both the man and the woman agree to marry yet the parents oppose. A boy impregnates a girl and as a result goes to the family of the boy in the night. Although there is no violence and disagreement between the parties to marriage. They act under pressure and their freedom is curtailed by the lack of parental consent. In extended families, where not only parents and children are considered but more so grandparents and others, it becomes a problem. Since marriage is not considered to be a private affair between a man and a woman but also requires the entire families of both the girl and the boy to be involved. According to Manyeli,

[29] A.N. Woznicki, *The Christian Humanism and Adequate Personalism: Karol Wojtyła's Existential Personalism* (New Britain: Mariel Publications, 1980), 39, citing K. Wojtyła classes in ethics, University of Lublin in the academic year 1956-1957.

[30] Cf., M.S. Fahmy, "Never Merely as a Means: Rethinking the Role and Relevance of Consent," *Kantian Review* (2023), 28, 41-62. This citation from Fahmy clarifies the concept of human dignity in Kantian/ Wojtyłian terms: "But a human being regarded as a person, that is, as the subject of a morally practical reason, is exalted above any price; for as a person (*homo noumenon*) he is not to be valued merely as a means to the ends of others or even to his own ends, but as an end in itself, that is, he possesses a dignity (an absolute inner worth) by which he extracts respect for himself from all other rational beings in the world. He can measure himself with every other being of this kind and value himself on a footing of equality with them." (MS, 6: 434-435).

> The inclusion of parental agreement is frequently perplexing when the families object to the decision of the parties to enter into a marriage. Parents in customary marriage interfere with the choice made by the parties to the extent that one of the parties at times marries a partner chosen by the parents.[31]

The problem here lies where a family of a boy or a girl chooses a partner to marry. For instance, the family of a boy can say, "X, marry Y because Y comes from a rich family. We, as your family, want to associate with rich families." If the boy refuses, the family will refuse to support the family of X, should he marry another girl than the one the family proposed. Since marriage is an institution of mature adults, their freedom to choose for themselves is required. Wojtyła abhors individualism and totalism which negate the freedom of individuals in the community.[32]

Another challenge is that a boy and girl have sexual intercourse with the intention of pregnancy so as to mobilize their parents to tolerate their union. Sexual intercourse is an act that ought to be done in a matrimonial setting. In this case it is done before marriage because the parents do not want the union. Wojtyła emphasized the sacrosanctity of sexual intercourse. He did authoritatively say that sexual intercourse is proper only when done by married persons within their marriage. To impregnate a girl is also dangerous since the family can refuse to support the new family arising from this act and this can ruin the future of the girl. This puts her in danger since she can be discriminated against and hated in the family where she is married.

The consent of the parties to marriage should be an essential constitutive element for a marriage to be valid. The role of the parents is to support what their children who have attained ages of maturity need and not to choose for them. Here the principle of efficacy must be evoked. The agents are men and women who act out of free-will and not through the will of their parents. The community should not suppress the freedom of the parties to marriage.

Unions Arising from the Infidelity of Married Persons

In interpersonal relationships of love, loyalty is the hallmark. Without fidelity to each other, the relationship becomes a purgatory full of lack of trust and even slowness of the partners. As a result,

[31] Manyeli, *Ambushing Basotho Customary Marriage*, 15.
[32] K. Wojtyła, Person and Act *and Related Essays*, trans. by G. Ignatik (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2021), 389.

some resort to violence because of infidelity. Most of the fathers who do this are miners who are working in the Republic of South Africa. Since they take a lot of time at work, sometimes some fall to the temptation of having extramarital affairs. This infidelity becomes a great blow since the wife at home is left with children and the father supports his concubine. Sometimes the wife at home has ten children.

Extramarital affairs are not only bad for the family but for the concubine as well. When one has given himself fully to the other there is no turning back. He must be responsible and is obliged by conscience to fulfil the needs of marriage. An act of choosing the other as a wife, presupposes ownership and possession. One possesses and owns the act of marriage. He does this willingly and consciously as an act that he performs out of his free-will. He is bound by duty to fulfil what is required of him in marriage. Marriage itself means in joys and sorrows, in riches and poverty the parties are obliged to support each other. The sense of responsibility cannot be compromised even under economic constraints. By committing oneself to the other, one is bound to the other.

How does a concubine get affected? Due to the fact that the married person uses a concubine for sexual satisfaction not in view of marrying her, a concubine is treated as a sexual object. She is dehumanized. She becomes merely a means and not an end. A married man does not commit himself but uses this one as long as his real wife is not around. The exploiting man has no sense of responsibility. If a child can be born as a result of this concubinage, only the concubine has a duty towards her child born out of wedlock.

Divorce

Although civil marriage has values such as allowing only the consent of parties to marriage, it allows divorce where there is a malicious desertion or adultery. The situation of marriage is deplorable since the divorce rate is dramatically escalating nowadays. Many families are torn apart due to this draconian death of marriage called “divorce.” Most of the divorces result from infidelity of spouses and malicious desertion. Due to economic constraints some men as well as women end up deserting their families and end up staying away from them. It seems as if divorce subscribes to the ideology of utilitarianism. John Stuart Mill taught that whatever is useful should be adopted;

whatever is no longer useful, one has to drop.[33] The idea of using the other is clearly seen when one is no longer satisfied with the other to the point of divorcing.

Wojtyła expounds the law of gift in the context of self-determination in a way that sheds more light on giving oneself totally and permanently: "Only those who can represent themselves … may also become a gift to others."[34] Lack of self-control where a man and a woman fail to master their own actions and as a result they do not trust each other. Even if there are differences, love must unite the two till death.

The phrase "ought to belong to each other" is imperative and imposes obligation on the spouses to strive for unity in their matrimonial state. Even though one can be tempted, due to challenges of life to divorce, one has to remember that uniting them as spouses is more important than what separates them.

Cohabitation

Irregular unions are also perceived in the form of cohabitation known as "stay together." People who avoid marriage because of permanent commitment prefer to cohabitate. This is a temporary irregularity and can end any time when they wish to break up. The couple sees themselves as "sex partners." The crux of the problem here is also ontological. Although they use each to satisfy their sexual desires, they also run away from responsibility and obligations arising from marriage. They become objects of their desires instead of living as rational beings who are controlled by reason and not desire.

To build a strong relationship, persons should be responsible and feel that they are obligated by their commitment. Where there is no obligation, people are no longer free since freedom is to do well and avoid evil. The moral obligation arises in interpersonal relationships. The failure to run away from such obligations means that one is not yet ready because of fear of responsibility. Wojtyła makes it clear that conjugal love reaches its summit in parenthood:

> Conjugal love is fulfilled by parenthood… Parenthood is a gift that comes to people, to man and woman, together with love, that creates a perspective of love in the dimension of a reciprocal life-long self-giving, and that is the condition of a gradual realization of that

[33] Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility,* criticizes Utilitarianism in Chapter 1.
[34] Wojtyła, "Personal Structure of Self-Determination," 153.

> perspective through life and action… And this is precisely the dimension and sense of the responsibility that essentially corresponds to this gift.[35]

It is manifest from the above citation that romantic love finds its perfection in parenthood. Self-donation or self-giving is necessary in romantic love so that partners can grow together in their matrimonial life. Although man lives in space and time as a temporal being he has something eternal, that is, love. The fact that there is something eternal in man indicates that man cannot be regarded as a mere animal. He is a being ordained to love and not to be used as a means.

Conclusion

It is worth noting that since Lesotho was influenced by the Catholic Church, there are many positive values for marriage in general. Although things like polygamy, irregular unions and divorce are seen to exist, the institution of marriage exists in Lesotho and many people live happily in their monogamous marriages. The problems will always be there, but they cannot defeat or destroy the institution of marriage. I began by showing that marriage is either civil or customary in Lesotho. The civil one also encapsulates the ecclesiastical even though in the Church divorce is impermissible while in pure civil marriage divorce is permissible.

Pertaining to civil marriage, divorce must be rejected because marriage must be regarded as a contract for life. Even the progeny and upbringing of children requires both parents, namely father and mother.

In customary marriage, I highlighted the values such as absence of divorce, the sexual act is only considered valid within marriage, and the consent of the parties is required. However, there is still a minor problem of polygamy since a few cases still exist today. Polygamy itself does not allow one to give himself fully to the other. The personalistic norm of Wojtyła abhors polygamy.

The irregular unions such as elopement and abduction, unions arising from infidelity and cohabitation also exist. I made it clear that they do not form part of legal marriages in Lesotho. They should be rejected because they do not uphold the dignity of the human person rather a person is reduced to a tool.

[35] K. Wojtyła, *Fruitful and Responsible Love* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1979), 23.

The future depends on stable marriages and families. It depends on fair love. What the Polish philosopher taught on anthropology and ethics in the community is a foundation worth telling so as to fix challenges that face the institution of marriage today. As human beings, "male and female are equal", "and no one should be used as a means" since both are ends in themselves. True freedom is manifested when they love each other and are faithful to each other:

> Only the truth about oneself can bring about a real engagement of one's freedom in one's relations with another person. It is the giving of oneself, which means limiting one's own freedom because of another person. Freedom is for love. Unused by love it becomes something negative, leaving man with emptiness and a lack of fulfillment. Love engages freedom, fulfilling it with that which nature itself desires; it fills it with goodness … man needs love more than he needs freedom, since freedom is only a means, whereas love is a purpose.[36]

Without love, life for a human person can be meaningless. Wojtyła says that love is a purpose. In Greek a purpose or a goal means *telos*. This means that love is teleological. By being teleological, love is found in the dimension of God. That is why he talks about *humanum* and *divinum*.[37] Man is not merely natural but has something divine in him. This is expressed by love. Love gives meaning to spouses.

[36] K. Wojtyła, *Miłość i odpowiedzialność* (Kraków: Znak, 1962), 124.
[37] K. Wojtyła, "Humianizm a cel człowieka," in: *Aby Chrystus się nami posługiwał* (Kraków: Znak, 1979), 149: "The heart of the matter is in this case the problematics of the purpose. Is God the goal of man, and, if so, in what sense? … Creatures are the act of God's will. Will is always directed toward a goal and the goal of the will is always some good. Since the good contained in an objective (that is, a created being) cannot perfect God, it can, therefore, only reveal God."

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