

## THE HUMAN PERSON AND SOCIAL ORDER: A MORAL PERSPECTIVE

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### Abstract

*The human person is the sacred element of every social and cultural initiative. It is therefore, the foremost presupposition of human sociality. The realization of its value within the social order requires the recognition of its transcendent value. This metaphysical insight reveals ontological rapport of the person and society within the purview of its moral and spiritual primacy. Individualism is a negation of society due to its inherent egocentric materialism. A social order of human rights, freedom and dignity is bound up with the spiritual resources of the person. A critique of metaphysics of human nature reveals this truth as a fundamental pedagogy for socio-cultural development of contemporary society.*

**Keywords:** Human, Person, Social, Order, Ethics, Man, Value.

### Introduction

The subject of the “human person” highlights the central aspect of human living within the context of certain social structures. This is because “every human being ... is a member of a civil society, of a nation, and a state”<sup>1</sup>. The human person therefore, constitutes a center of reflection as a foremost fundamental social concept. The ideas which reveal themselves as indispensable to our topic should be placed within the wider context of a conception of the human person and how that person relates to all the various social structures which he creates as the expressions of his needs and aspirations. Simply put ... Social structures which then are called to be for the person and for the good of the whole.<sup>2</sup>. No reflection on the human person as the principle and act of social order therefore, should as a matter of rational necessity be separated from the justice and obligations imposed by the common good of society as such for there exists a reciprocal relationship between the person and the society. The society makes the person and, is in turn made by the individuals. Finally, the human person, who he is, forms the fundamental basis for a philosophical reflection about society in Nigeria and Africa.

## **Personhood as Presupposition of the Social Nature of Man**

The social nature of man understood as an integral dimension and expression of his rationality and freedom is fundamental and indispensable to the realization of his essence in all its manifestation. This makes the question of human sociality very critical in our discussion of the concept of personhood. Personhood is the specific character of human nature that is ordained towards sociality. Specifically it constitutes the social nature of man and the gate way to his proper understanding and realization, perfections and fulfillment.

The ultimate end and rationale of the sociality of man is the attainment of personhood. This universal aspiration of man is the basis of the realization of happiness. True happiness of man cannot be attained outside the frame work of society and this in turn, within the context of the realization of his personhood. This is the foremost presupposition of the social nature of man. Therefore, human sociality is only meaningful in the context of the actualization of the ideals of personhood, which in turn is the proper ground for achieving the ends of society or social stability, progress, justice, development and peace. Josef Hoffner states this fact when he opines that;

.... It is only in terms of personhood that his (man's) social nature can be comprehended. Therefore, in order to gain access to an understanding of the state or quality of being social, ... the characteristic features of human personhood shall be defined<sup>3</sup>

## **The Individual and the Person**

Jacques Maritain in his analysis of the social consequences of the concept of the human person, draws attention to a basic distinction that has deep moral undertone for the social order. He distinguishes between the "psychological" and "philosophical" elements of the human person, namely, "individuality" and "personality". According to Maritain, it is "personality" and not "individuality" that conduces to a proper understanding of the socio moral imperative of the human person. According to him, it is the Thomistic analysis of the self and person that offers a more positive and stable understanding of the "self" and "person". According to Aquinas, the "self" or "person" is synonymous with "generosity", a kind of self-realization that is open to the others. It is therefore, contrasted with the Paschalian and Leibinizian notions.

Therefore, personality would mean the highest possible level of the development of the human nature within the social context. Consequently, the modern psychological understanding of self-consciousness is rooted in a kind of suffering and a kind of interior paralysis. A kind of self-understanding that is not conducive for the achievement of the social essence of man. On the contrary, philosophers notably St. Augustine and Hegel teach that "self-knowledge is a privilege of the spirit, and that much human progress consists in the progress of consciousness of self<sup>8</sup>. Therefore, from this point of view, it is discovered that a proper morality of the "self" or "person" requires a positive spirituality. A spirituality of openness to others, of acceptance of others and of self-giving a "Kernosis".

The Paschalian and Thomistic positions present us with the image and picture of the ambivalence of our concept in the contemporary Nigerian and African society which depict the predicament of the common good of society in Africa. It is the ambivalence which characterizes the various forms and manifestations of the crisis of society and the human condition in Africa.

They mean that the human being is caught between two peoples, a material pole, which, in reality, does not concern the true person but rather the shadow of personality or what in the strict sense is called individuality, a spiritual pole, which does concern true personality"<sup>9</sup>

Therefore, the understanding of human nature as rational, subsistent and free necessarily implies a movement towards realization in the social context. That is, in the mutual sharing of the abundant social and cultural heritage of society. Human person is therefore, not antithetical to charity. It is indeed this spirituality that humanizes it and informs it. Thus we are confronted with the distinction between individuality and personality in the search for a social order.

### **The Metaphysics of the Human Person**

Personhood or human personality which is a presupposition of human sociality as opposed to individuality has an ontological and metaphysical foundations. In the same vein individuality is also a presupposition of human nature but rather, which is not a principle of sociality and unity. The ontological foundation of the individual or individuality is matter. It is the principle of disunity and division. Let us consider the metaphysical basis of these two principles of human nature and by extension, their implications for achieving the goals of human sociality.

Let us first consider the principle of individuality in the composition of human nature. Phenomenologically<sup>11</sup> outside the mind, only individual realities exist"<sup>10</sup> Only they are capable of exercising the act of existing, this is in addition to collective realities constituted of individuals such as the society, family, state etc. However, individuality is opposed to the state of universality which things have in the mind. To this extent, individuality,

... designates that concrete state of unity and division, required by existence, in virtue of which every actually or possibly existing nature can posit itself in existence as distinct from other beings.<sup>11</sup>

In the category of beings, the constitution of spiritual beings are different from that of corporeal beings. For instance, the angels are individual essences, their divine essence, in its sovereign unity and simplicity, is supremely individual.<sup>12</sup> Pure forms or pure spirits are, of themselves or by reason of that which constitutes their substantial intelligibility, in the state of individuality. In other word, each angel differs specifically from every other, each is an individual by the very form in which its being consists and which constitutes in its species, absolutely free from any matter. According to Aquinas, in the composition of corporal beings, their individuality is rooted in matter, so far as matter requires the occupation in space of a position distinct from every other position"<sup>13</sup> Matter itself is a kind of non-being, a mere potency or ability to receive forms and undergo substantial changes ... an avidity for being.<sup>14</sup>

In every being made of matter, this pure potency bears the impress of a metaphysical energy called the "form" or "soul", which constitutes with it a substantial unity and determines this unity to be that which it is. "By the fact that it is ordained to inform matter, the from finds itself particularized to such and such a being sharing the same specific nature with other beings likewise immersed in spatiality."<sup>15</sup>

In the composition of the human nature, according to this theory, the human "form" or "soul", together with the matter which it forms, constitutes one substance man, which is both material and spiritual. Against the dualism of Cartesian theory, the soul is not one thing, namely, "thought" existing on its own as a complete being and the body or matter another thing, namely "extension" also existing on its own as a complete being. "Soul and matter are two substantial co-principles of the same being, of one and the same reality called man".<sup>16</sup> The principle of matter accounts for the individualistic traits in man. It is

the principle of individuation, which compels a man to live a materialistic life. Individualism is always a form of materialism because it is not open and acceptive but closed to the individual. Therefore, in man, as in all corporeal beings, individuality has its first ontological roots in matter.

... corporeal beings are individual because of material signata quantitat. Their specific form and their essence are not individual by reason of their transcendental relation to matter understood as implying position in space<sup>17</sup>.

In its characteristic manifestation, individuality could be described as the "narrowness of the "ego", forever threatened and forever eager to grasp for itself"<sup>18</sup>. It is the center of selfishness, it excludes from oneself all that other men are. It is the consummation of the closedness of person to all social realities, and as such, conduces to social disorder. Materialism, therefore, becomes the driving principle of social disunity, which can assume any determinate form. "As a material individual, man has only a precarious unity, which tends to be scattered in multiplicity. For matter tends of itself to disintegration, just as space tends to division<sup>19</sup>.

As an individual, each of us is a fragment of a specie, a part of this universe, a unique point in the immense web of cosmic, ethnic, historic forces and influences and bound by their laws. Each individual is thus subject to the determinism of the physical world. Nonetheless each of us is also a person, not limited to the determinism of the physical laws. Each of us is also a person and, as such, is not controlled by the laws of matter "Our whole being subsists in virtue of the very subsistence of the spiritual soul which is in us a principle of creative unity, independence and liberty."<sup>20</sup>

Personality as the principle of unity is therefore, the moral principle of human nature ordained by the consequence of human sociality towards achieving unity of social realities. It is the motivating principle to achieving moral wholeness and social responsibility. It is the actuating force of man's freedom and reason. It is opposed to individuality. But unlike individuality, personality has even a deeper metaphysical root. According Jacques Maritain. "... the best approach to the philosophical discovery of personality is to consider the relation between personality and love"<sup>21</sup>. This relation to brings out the nature of its operation and aspiration within the social context. For Maritain, love realizes the essence of personality, which is the unity of the person with other minds. As person is

essentially social in character, so also, is love. The spirituality of personhood is defined by love. Love goes straight to the other persons, not his qualities or accidentals, but the person. "Love does not go out to qualities. They are not the object of our love. We love the deepest, most substantial and hidden, the most existing reality of the beloved being."<sup>23</sup>

This idea of personhood is not understood by every culture. This reality about the potentials of the person is a metaphysical center that is deeper than all the qualities and essences which are found and enumerated by the subject of love. It is this reality to which love goes to and is attracted to in a person. Maritain speaks of this reality as

... a center inexhaustible ... of existence bounty of action, capable of giving and of giving itself, capable of receiving not only this or that gift bestowed by another, but even another self who bestows himself.<sup>24</sup>

Thus, it is the law of love, which brings out the metaphysical potentials of the person. Love does not go out to qualities or natures, or essences, but to persons. However,

Such a being must exist not only as other things do, but eminently, in self-possession, holding itself, master of itself ... it must exist with a spiritual existence, capable of super existing in knowledge and in love.<sup>25</sup>

Love, therefore, which characterizes the metaphysical basis of the person is deeply rooted in human freedom, reason and responsibility. Human nature is therefore realized in the attitude of love. There is no doubt that this conception of person is western in character, however, its rootedness in the Christian spirituality of love, presents a more pragmatic option for achieving social peace. This is because, in that tradition, God consists in a pure and absolute super existence of intellection and love.

This aspect of the western concept of person exposes the poverty of Africa philosophical conception of person whose metaphysics of God dispenses with love as a social network of human realities and independence. Western conception of person offers the African the most realistic option of overcoming socio-political obstacles which exist in many forms. The deep metaphysics of personhood promotes the attitude of immanence and presence of sociality that foster authentic social collaboration and unity. Unlike the concept of individuality, the concept of personality is related not to matter but to the

deepest and highest dimensions of being. Personality as rooted in the spirit holds itself in existence and super abounds in existence. Spirit is the root of moral responsibility.

Personality is the basis of the perfection of the social person. It is the basis of love, the receiving and giving of self in thrust. The capacity to give and receive in mutual inter personality is the foundation of realization and perfection. Materialism or individualism is opposed to this process of perfection because, it is essentially opposed to spirituality, which frees man from material attachments. It is argued elsewhere that the impossibility of the possibility of personhood in the context of African culture stems from the materialism and particularism of its spirituality. Personality is therefore, the starting point of social morality.

### **Person and society, the Social Nature of Man**

What then is the ultimate nature of human sociality? What is the nature and goal of our being social? How best can this social nature be understood and sustained? In what constitutes the essence of sociality? The question of the social nature of man is more profound than the mere fact that we are social, that we are already a social datum. Its supreme importance relates to the intrinsic natural aspiration of man to attain personhood, an existential condition for happiness. On this basis being social becomes only a means to Being. The social stage becomes only but a state of relation. A specific and unique form of relations, characterized by moral considerations, which reflects deep regards for the dignity, and transcendence of persons. The social is a state of mutual dependence.

In grounding the essentially social nature of man, it seems obvious to emphasize first of all his dependence on others and society in bodily – material spiritual-cultural and moral realms.<sup>29</sup>

Unlike animal species, man does not depend on nature for his survival. His survival is a result of his resolute application of his rational and social nature. Therefore, his rational and social nature specifies a definite domain of human relations and interdependence for his survival. So, while the animal is formed by its natural disposition and the environment in which it is embodied with unfailing instincts, "man however, passes on his experience and discoveries from generation to generation through education, tradition and teaching."<sup>30</sup> This dependence defines the cultural dimension of human sociability. Every culture rests on the common possession of the spiritual goods of past and present

generations. However, society preserves through its culture, that specifically human elements that preserve and perpetuate individual and collective survival. Man depends on the society in the cultural domains. Above all, the norms of the moral order require preservation and protection by society. This cultural and moral domain of dependence on the society clearly indicates that;

The social nature of man is most deeply grounded, not in a utilitarian way in external dependence on others, but metaphysically in the essence of man, which means wealth not poverty.<sup>31</sup>

So, social nature of man promotes mutual relationships based on mutual recognition and respect of the dignity and freedom that constitute the essence of each man. Culture as a specific human dependence on the society is in the domain of being, in the promotion of his realization, of his development and personhood. Culture goes beyond the mere specification of external dependence to the more profound dependence for man's realization. It's morality is a morality of realization and not of impoverishment.

This morality of realization specified by the culture of the society is inherited and internalized by members in enrichment of interpersonal relationship and interdependence. Communication defies the social dimension of interpersonal relations. This communication is at the basis of communion in the social order. Communion signifies the religious importance of the union of man, God and nature motivated by the spirit of love. Every social relation is most effectively sustained in the spirit of love. The good is the mutual giving and receiving of a share in personal values, whereby the different social groups are determined in their realms of meaning.

The fundamental reality that underlies the perfection of every aspect of human nature is society. Though man's nature is essentially rational, the law of reason consists in freedom which alone can be actuated in society. It is by means of his social nature that man finds adequate realization of his potentials and guarantee of eudaemonia, which serves the end of every human experiences.

It is not a question here of that love which egoistically abuses the other person and treats him or her like a consumer good, but of love as the esteem that takes effect in the willingness to sacrifice for one's neighbor and for the community. Through this kind of spiritual bond, people are capable of practicing social virtues, love of neighbor, fidelity, truthfulness, justice, obedience and of building

up cultural domains that individual could not create of himself or herself. Therefore, it will be very proper to situate the project of personhood in the fundamental genesis and root of human sociality.

This will enable us to discover the originality of the impulse to community which is at the service of authentic personhood. In this regard, the family and marriage feature most prominently as the fountain and origin of the social institutions ordained primarily to the cultivation of the social nature of man and personhood. In fact, the institutions of marriage and family provide us with the proper focus and dimension of individuality and sociality that conduce to authentic personhood.

So the person in his essence is ordained towards the community, towards society. Community or communion expresses more and with greater precision that "help which is derived in a sense from the very fact of existing as a person beside a person."<sup>35</sup> This fact becomes eo-ipso the existence of the person for the person, since man in his original solitude was in a way, already in this relationship.

... the communion of person could be formed only on the basis of a double solitude of man and woman, that is, as their meeting in their distinction from the world of living beings, which gave them both the possibility of being and existing in a special reciprocity<sup>36</sup>

The concept of "Help" also expresses this reciprocity in existence, which no other living being could have ensured. Indispensable for this reciprocity was all that constituted the foundation of the individuality of each person, and therefore, also self-knowledge and self-determination, that is, subjectivity and consciousness of the meaning of one's own self. Marriage and family therefore, bear this exclusive approach and content to the insight and meaning and value of person as determining the ultimate principle of sociality. The two institutions bring to the fore, the possibility of realization of the calling of the human person in its primordial attachment to the Divine will, for the concept of personhood cannot be detached from its ontological root. God therefore, uses the institution of marriage and family to demonstrate the true basis of human person and society. The idea of personhood therefore, in its solitude contains the element of sociability underscored by love and life. In this manner, personhood serves the purpose of society, just as society is also irrevocably committed to the project of personhood.

## **Society Defined**

Fagothy defines society as ... an enduring union of a number of people morally bound together under authority to cooperate for a common good<sup>41</sup>. The common good is the end of the society; however, it is an intermediary end. However, the end differs for each kind of society and determines the nature of the society. Explaining further the nature of society, Fagothy observes that though society is not a physical thing, except the actions of its members, it must be observed that ... it is not a separate substance, for it has no existence of its own separate from the individuals who compose it, it is not a kind of super imposition built out of the people<sup>42</sup>.

In its reality, society is a kind of relations, not a single relation, but a number of relations "unified and systematized into an order".<sup>43</sup> An order is not a physical substance distinct from the things that are ordered, but this does not mean that the order and the relations constituting it are not real. The order is as real if there are real beings ordered in that way. Society in its reality is as real as the beings it orders.

... not every relation, but only a unified system of relations is an order. Not every order, but only an order resulting from a human act, a rational choice relating means to end, is a moral being. Not every moral being, but only a moral being resulting from the simultaneous free choices of many people to cooperate toward a common good and achieve a common goal, is a society.<sup>44</sup>

The moral nature of society distinguishes a human society. It recognizes the freedom of the persons to cooperate for a common end. Though the end is the same for all and known by all, it is not imposed on them, save for the purposes of maintaining an order. This analysis is very important for the assessment of the nature of traditional African society. Individuals each has their own ends, but which are truly subordinated to the greater common good. It is on this basis that there can be stability, peace and justice.

## **Society and Common Good**

According to Fagothy, the common good is the end for which society exists. To say that the common good is the end of the society means that it is the end that is distinctive of society as such<sup>45</sup>. The achievement of the common good forms the basis for the existence of any form of society. But the common good is an

intermediate and not the ultimate end of the society. "It is an end that is a means to the ultimate end of each member"<sup>46</sup> the basis therefore, for the justification of the common good of society remains the possibility of the goal of personhood, of the good of its members.

The common good of society is not essentially differentiated from the individual good of its members. The common good of society is therefore seen from the perspective of the realization of the good of the individual members. The difference between the common good and individual is not substantial but only intellectual distinction between the two aspects of a reality. The common good of society is only an order attaining to the realization of individual goods realized within some concrete situations of choice of the individuals.

An adequate understanding of the common good of society does not reflect an extreme collectivist or individualist view of it. "The common good is the temporal welfare of the community, taken both collectively and distributively"<sup>47</sup>. Collectively, all members of the society are united in a common aspiration for well-being and happiness. This natural desire for self-realization, which is a quest for authentic existence, is common to every rational being. It is within this context of collectivity that the good of the society expresses itself and power. But distributively, the good of the individual members are rationally realized within the context of the free choice of individual that constitutes his right and dignity and freedom. An external collectivist view of the common good, makes the common good "... and entity over and above the individual good",<sup>48</sup> while the individualist, makes it "... a mere sum of individual goods".<sup>49</sup>

The common good is therefore, conceived in the negative and positive dimensions. Negatively, the common good consists of the maintenance and establishment of order. Each one has a place, his or her relations to others, his or her rights and duties towards him or her<sup>51</sup>. The common good taken negatively creates an atmosphere of free and legitimate exercise of personal initiative as an indication for the possibility of attainment of individual good. Each can rely on the order not to interfere, each is guaranteed a wide enough scope for private action and development as a person. Within this context of its negative perception, the common good, becomes the ground for "... peace, harmony, security, opportunity and freedom"<sup>52</sup>. The common good defends and realizes the freedom of the individual in act.

Considered positively, “the common good consists of giving to others and receiving from their powers, resources, and values that as individuals none would possess”<sup>53</sup> The common good creates a sense of justice amongst members of the society; it becomes a genuine ground for the expression of authentic inter subjectivity and building of social concern. The common good is therefore, “both active and passive, both supplementation and participation, a union, or better communion”<sup>54</sup>. To protect and maintain the common good, society develops institutions. These institutions “are regarded as instrumental agencies used by society for developing, storing and distributing the common good.”<sup>55</sup>

### **The Person and the Common Good**

The common good of society determines and defines the right order of relation between the persons as social entities and the society itself understood as a relation of order. To this end, the common good understood as the proper end of the society, is neither the individual good nor the collection of the individual goods of each of persons who constitute it.

Such a conception would dissolve society as such to the advantage of its parts and would amount to either a formerly anarchistic conception, or the old disguised anarchistic conception of individualistic materialism, according to which the whole function of the body politics is to safeguard the liberty of each, thereby giving to the strong freedom to oppress the weak.<sup>56</sup>

The common good of society is the right order of justice with regard to society as a whole and the person. It reveals justice as the most fundamental social virtue. Therefore, the end of society is the good of the community, the good of the social body. According to Maritain, if this good of the social body is not understood to be a common good of human persons, just as the social body itself is a whole of human persons, “... this conception would lead in its turn to other errors of totalitarian type”<sup>57</sup> The common good of society is therefore, ... the good human life of the multitude, of a multitude of persons, it is their communion in good living. It is therefore common to the whole and to the parts<sup>58”..</sup> The common good presupposes justice in its generic and specific dimensions.

The common good implies and demands recognition of the fundamental rights of persons and groups in which human persons are more primitively engaged than in political society. The common good of society as principal value involves the highest access possible, compatible with the good of the whole, of persons of

their life as persons and to their freedom of expansion. The common good of society is therefore, the assured basis to self-realization, actualization and perfection. Its ultimate end is therefore, personhood. In its negative conception however, the common good of the body politics implies an intrinsic subordination to something which transcends it because it requires by its very essence and within its proper sphere, communication or redistribution to the persons who constitute society. The common good implies great moral obligations for the persons and society. To this extent ... the common good is not a set of advantages and utilities, but also integrity of life, and end good in itself ... a bonum honestum<sup>60</sup> Therefore, to assure the existence of the persons is something morally good in itself, on the other hand, the existence thus assured, must be the just and morally good existence of the community.

### **The Human person: Concepts and Meaning**

The analysis of the concept of personhood draws attention to two basic distinctions of the human nature. This distinction in itself has deep moral and social consequences. This is the distinction often made between the psychological and philosophical elements of the human nature, namely, individuality and personality. However according to Maritain, it is personality and not individuality that pertains to a proper understanding of the socio-moral imperative of the human person. Various analysis of the concept of the person implies the highest possible level of the realization or actualization of man in the context of society. Historically the concept "person" is a specific Christian contribution to the world of civilization and ideas. Etymologically, the word "person" is "persona" in Latin and "prosopon" in Greek and has the meaning of "disguishing" This notion means that personhood is a disguise, something that is "unknown" and "unknowable". According to Mondin;

Until the advent of Christianity, there did, not exist, either in Greek or in Latin, a word to express the concept of person, because in Pagan culture such a concept did not exist, these cultures did not recognize the absolute value of the individual as such, and made their absolute value depend essentially on class and family, rank, work or race<sup>62</sup>.

Against this background, Christianity brings to light a decisive notion of the person. The singularity of the person, unique and unrepeatable and consequently, the substantial equality in dignity of every member of the human species<sup>63</sup>. The consequence of the pagan outlook on the person in the context of sociality was that man became completely absorbed by the society to the point of

anonymity and subjected to a blind destiny. Man lost his uniqueness as a unique being with unique character and outlook, consequently, his freedom, dignity and equality. This defect in the conception of the person by the ancient created the possibility of dysfunctional society founded on injustice and the relativization of the value of the human person. However, this concept of personhood as proposed by Christianity as an important patrimony of modern culture, still meets with some contemporary challenges.

Many people no longer want the word “person” to intend the uniqueness, unrepeatability, absolute value, and sacredness of the individual but wish to assign to this word a merely sociological meaning<sup>64</sup>.

As mentioned earlier, personhood refers to the deep reality of every individual man in the ontological realm. It is a reality which is prior to but ordained towards his society. It is a reality that determines the humanity of sociality. It is a concept which asserts that man is in himself an existence independently of society. It is a concept that gives content and meaning to all our social institutions and guarantees and promotes his dignity. As is threatened by the post-modernist culture of our time, a person is not only he who is recognized as such by society, he who receives from society the recognition of belonging to the human species In which case therefore, the word “person” is no longer that of the human reality in itself, but rather that of social convention. We have as it were reviewed the objective content of the concept of the person. How the person ought to be understood by society. It remains to x ray the subjective dimension, how the individual in himself should promote the idea.

According to Maritain, the Thomistic perspective on the “self” or “person” offers a more positive understanding of the subjective content of the sociality of the human person. For Maritain, this understanding of the “self” or “person” is synonymous with “generosity”, a kind of self-realization that is open to the others. It is therefore, contrasted with the Paschalian notion of “self” understood as “detestable” imperious and demanding, scarcely capable of friendship<sup>81</sup>. Consequently, the modern psychological understanding of self-consciousness as a consciousness that has no aperture to reality is rooted in a kind of suffering and a kind of interior paralysis. A kind of self-understanding that is not conducive for the achievement of the social essence of man. From this point of view, it is discovered that a proper morality of the self or person requires a positive consciousness. A consciousness of openness to others, of acceptance of others

and of self-giving, a "Kernosis" so to say. Therefore, a proper morality of the self or person required a proper positive spirituality. The understanding of human nature as rational, subsistent and free necessarily implies a movement towards realization in the context of social solidarity. That is in the mutual sharing of the abundant social and cultural heritage of society. Human nature properly understood as personality is not antithetical to charity. It is indeed this spirituality that humanizes it and informs it..

## **Conclusion**

What has been attempted in the preceding pages is the exposition and exploration of the moral potential of the concept of person. As the foremost presupposition of sociality its exposition is in tandem with the logic of social stability. The social condition of African societies is a clarion invitation to deep philosophical commitment to person. This is because the problem of development in Africa is succinctly put moral.

The notion of personhood is indeed very crucial and consequential for the project of the search for a social order and functional personality. It serves as the basis for the determination of moral responsibility and social stability, the most needed ingredients for achieving the goals of integral and sustainable development for African societies. The concept of person presents us with the proper socio-moral perspective on socio personal functionality. It is the guiding principle that underlies the achievement of that ultimate cause or foundation for culture, democracy and development. The person is the actuating principle of human sociality.

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