

Our original call to be a human being is the call to understand ourselves authentically, because truly or realistically, in accordance with things as they really are, and then to lead our lives accordingly, which means to believe only what is true and to do only what is right. This implies, as the means to living out our call, that we are also to reflect critically on our own self-understanding and life-praxis as well as those of all others insofar as this may be needed in order to validate (or invalidate) the claims to truth and rightness that they make or imply.

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We are originally called simply as human beings to exist both gratefully *from* the community of all others to whom we are related and benevolently *for* them. This means that we are to appropriate every opportunity they provide, not in order to pursue our own private self-interest or to cultivate our own private virtue, but in order to make our optimal contribution to the community by maximizing the opportunity of all of its members to make their own optimal contributions.

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To be human is to be called to live as a fragment, albeit a self-conscious and, therefore, responsible fragment of the integral whole of reality as such. In other words, the meaning of ultimate reality for us demands that we each accept both our own becoming and the becomings of all others as parts of this ultimate whole and then, by serving as best we can the transient goods of all the parts, to make the greatest possible contribution to the enduring good of the whole.

4 September 2006 (Labor Day)