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# The Problem of Responsible Parenthood in the Axiological Perspective Analysis Inspired by the Encyclical *Humane Vitae*

**Abstract:** The article is devoted to the issue of responsible parenthood, which was formulated in the encyclical *Humane Vitae* by Paul VI in 1968. The content of the encyclical referred primarily to the issue of responsibility arising from fertilization. The author of the article relates the issue of parental responsibility to the care of a child with mild mental disability. Parental childcare is a consequence of calling the child to live. The author of the article analyses the issue of responsible parenting from the philosophical perspective and thus focuses on the recognition of the world of values by the parent-guardian of a person with intellectual disability. Close relationships with such a person require special spiritual, moral, and axiological sensitivity. The author of the article, in addition to the encyclical *Humane Vitae*, has been inspired by the reflections of Jean Vanier and Julia Kristeva on disability, resulting from two religious and secular perspectives.

**Keywords:** responsible parenthood, values, an intellectually disabled person, courage, Paul VI, Kristeva, Vanier

Responsible parenthood, as we use the term here, has one further essential aspect of paramount importance. It concerns the objective moral order which was established by God, and of which a right conscience is the true interpreter. In a word, the exercise of responsible parenthood requires that husband and wife,

keeping a right order of priorities, recognize their own duties toward God, themselves, their families and human society.<sup>1</sup>

## Introduction

The issue of responsible parenthood has already been widely discussed. The author of the article is interested in an axiological perspective, in which we can analyse the problem of reading the world of values in difficult situations, and this is undoubtedly the parent's care over a child with mental disability. This issue is the subject of research of special educators, psychologists, and psychiatrists. Unlike representatives of the above-mentioned areas, the author of the article is interested in understanding the value of responsibility and related values in the case of close relationships between an able-bodied person (parent-guardian) and an intellectually disabled person (child). The axiological position adopted by the author of this article can be described as "axiological relationism." According to this stand, values exist regardless of the subject, they are revealed in specific interpersonal relationships and in relation to things. These relationships function in culture like a certain system of network relationships—the subject does not create them, but participates in them. In certain situations people get to know them and organize them into a set of values.

In his encyclical *Humane Vitae*, Paul VI emphasizes the importance of the issue of responsible parenthood. However, how to implement this postulate when parenthood is part of a difficult family life situation? Openness to life also means openness to the life of a person with disability. For the author of the article, in addition to *Humane Vitae*, the reference point is the correspondence between Julia Kristeva and Jean Vanier collected in the book *Leur regard perce nos ombres*.<sup>2</sup> The book provides two perspectives of thinking—secular and Catholic. The interlocutors describe a unique nature of meeting a fit person—a parent or guardian with people with intellectual disabilities.

Julia Kristeva is a French-speaking philosopher of Bulgarian origin, associated with the postmodernist and feminist movement. She is an intellectual interested in issues from the field of linguistics and contemporary psychoanalysis. Kristeva has introduced the term *intertextuality* into humanistic discourse,

<sup>1</sup> Paweł VI, *Humane Vitae*, 10.

<sup>2</sup> Julia Kristeva and Jean Vanier, *Leur regard perce nos ombres*, Polish trans. Katarzyna and Piotr Zwirzchowsky, *Bez(sens) słabości. Dialog wiary z niewiarą o wykluczeniu* (Poznań: „W drodze,” 2012).

especially to the literary theory.<sup>3</sup> Kristeva is the mother of an intellectually disabled person. She was struggling with the established French governmental institutions that could not provide proper care for her son, especially when it comes to the organization of a center where mature, mentally impaired adults could function independently of their families. Her interlocutor in the book is Jean Vanier, a Canadian social activist, philanthropist, philosopher by education, born in Geneva, founder of the Arka communities in which adults with intellectual disabilities live and work with their careers.<sup>4</sup> In 2015, Vanier received the Tempelton Award for supporting the promotion of practices related to discovering the spiritual dimension of human life.

## Responsible Parenthood and Disability

Human activity is always associated with the choice of specific values. Linking responsibility with parenthood shows that there is much more to it than just passing on life. While parenthood can be considered as a natural category, responsibility is a category resulting from the pattern of behavior in culture or the voluntary commitment of a parent or a carer. Freedom of choice in this case should be understood in a specific context. Nobody, or almost no one, chooses to have his child disabled. Although theoretically, it is possible that, for example, deaf parents would wish their child, conceived by means of in vitro fertilization, to have his/her hearing impaired just like the parents. The author does not analyze this issue, it falls under the problem of in vitro fertilization. In this article, the subject of research is responsible parenthood considered as an attitude towards a person functioning in a specific family and social situation (neighbors, kindergarten, local government, and state institutions). Responsibility understood as a moral value is essentially associated with the value of voluntariness, otherwise it becomes something forced, for example resulting from social pressure or a legal order. However, political (contract) responsibility should be distinguished from parental responsibility. In both cases we are dealing with a social dimension of responsibility and voluntary recognition. Lack of freedom means that we are dealing with a legal

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<sup>3</sup> Michał Paweł Markowski, "Przygoda ciała i znaków. Wprowadzenie do pism Julii Kristevej," in Julia Kristeva, "Soleil noir. Dépression et mélancolie," Polish trans. Michał Paweł Markowski and Remigiusz Rzyziński *Czarne słońce. Depresja i melancholia* (Kraków: Universitas, 2007), V–XLIX.

<sup>4</sup> Anne-Sophie Constant, "Jean Vanier. Biografia," Polish trans. Katarzyna Wierchowska and Piotr Wierchowski (Kraków: WAM, 2015), 12–14.

act, considered in the context of compliance or non-compliance with the law, that is, contractual responsibility.<sup>5</sup>

One should look at the concept of responsible parenthood proposed by Paul VI. When writing the encyclical *Humane Vitae* in 1968, the pope focused on the issue of the transmission of life. The text also provides a broad perspective on the problem of responsibility. Man is part of the plan of divine love in the world. "Marriage, then, is far from being the effect of chance or the result of the blind evolution of natural forces. It is in reality the wise and provident institution of God the Creator, whose purpose was to effect in man His loving design" (*Humanae Vitae*, 8). Moral commitment translates itself into basic relationships that define marital love.

This love is above all fully human, a compound of sense and spirit. It is not, then, merely a question of natural instinct or emotional drive. It is also, and above all, an act of the free will, whose trust is such that it is meant not only to survive the joys and sorrows of daily life, but also to grow, so that husband and wife become in a way one heart and one soul, and together attain their human fulfilment. (*Humanae Vitae*, 9)

This love is to be full, faithful, exclusive and fertile, aimed at breeding offspring. Paul VI combined responsible parenthood with an emphasis on a rational giving of life, subordinated to natural rules that are part of the personal aspect of human behavior.

Hence the need arises for spouses to control their drive in terms of rational recognition of the physical, economic, psychological, and social conditions in which the family functions. Here we take into account the context of poverty and diseases genetically inherited by spouses. Paul VI wrote:

With regard to physical, economic, psychological and social conditions, responsible parenthood is exercised by those who prudently and generously decide to have more children, and by those who, for serious reasons and with due respect to moral precepts, decide not to have additional children for either a certain or an indefinite period of time. (*Humanae Vitae*, 10)

Openness to parenthood associated with the postulated naturalness of conception also indicates openness to a disabled child. This last postulate is not explicitly expressed in *Humane Vitae*, but stems naturally from the logic of the argument.

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<sup>5</sup> The distinction between moral and legal deeds is an extension of Immanuel Kant's reflection on the metaphysical aspects of legal theory. *Die Metaphysik der Sitten*, Akademie-Ausgabe der Königl. Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Berlin 1910, Polish trans. Ewa Nowak, *Metafizyka moralności* (Warszawa: PWN, 2005), 18.

The issue of responsible parenthood was in the center of Paul VI's thoughts. It is based on three premises: (1) natural (duty to oneself, family, society), (2) cultural (maintaining order of things and hierarchy of values), and (3) supra-natural (human duty to God). The terms biological and natural cannot be used interchangeably to refer to the thoughts of Paul VI.

The term biological indicates the very fact of conception, while the term natural, which is close to it, has a specific axiological dimension, as it is about more than just the beginning of life. In the theological and philosophical approach, the term natural, in addition to the fact of conception, also includes action in accordance with natural law, or ethical norm, resulting from the reading of God's law by human reason. This order is read in our conscience. The double understanding of the natural as a biologically conditioned reaction, and secondly, as something consistent with the ethical norm is the cause of numerous misunderstandings in bioethical disputes between proponents of biological and theological (supranatural) interpretation of the world. This difference also applies to the connection of human nature with a teleological perspective, acting for the purpose of human life. In the classical approach, the goal of our life is inner perfection, life fulfilment, in Christian thought resulting from living close to God. From the scientific and natural perspective, the purpose of human life is not defined, it is rather about evolutionary adaptation to environmental conditions, rather than about fulfilled life. The purpose-oriented aspect is not included in the modern and contemporary description of the human condition.

Sentences like "responsible parenthood is a key aspect of human psychological maturity," or "responsible parenthood leads a person to moral perfection and good life" should be understood contextually. The sense of these sentences is part of a specific ethical-humanist or ethical-theological tradition, in which human life is associated with the postulate of moral perfection and with responsibility for oneself and others. This is especially important in the case of disability, when we are dealing not only with the care of passing on life, but also with the care of a child who was born with a developmental defect and is unable to realize the important value for us, which is the ability to live independently. A person with disability will constantly need support from the closest, to a greater or lesser extent, or support from state institutions that pay for a social worker and finance the functioning of a home accommodating adults with disabilities. Much depends here on the degree of disability. This issue was a concern for, among others, Julia Kristeva, who, despite many years of effort, could not obtain permission from the French government to finance the adaptation of the house in which adults with intellectual disabilities could live.<sup>6</sup>

The specificity of responsible parenthood assumes that it is not based on relationships between equal parties, its validity does not cease when the other

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<sup>6</sup> Kristeva, *Bez(sens) słabości. Dialog wiary z niewiarą o wykluczeniu*, 14–15.

party does not show similar behavior. Mutuality is expected in this relationship, but it is not a fundamental value. A mature parent is responsible for the child, the person entrusted to his care, but the child does not need to show a similar attitude. The German philosopher Hans Jonas described this type of responsibility as a non-reciprocal, unilateral relationship of responsibility. In his understanding, it concerned brotherly, sisterly relationships (horizontal relationship), and parental relationships (vertical relationship). The second type of relationship is stronger; requirements for parental relationships are also clearly socially sanctioned. The lack of parental help shown to their children is much more severely assessed than the lack of brotherly or sisterly help, interestingly even the lack of help given to elderly parents.<sup>7</sup>

Another aspect of the issue discussed is a different understanding of the responsibility of mothers and fathers. Despite contemporary trends regarding the equal role of man and woman in marriage, the parental responsibility of mothers and fathers still differs. The former is treated as more natural, because it is somehow a biological and social consequence of the fact of giving birth to a child. In the social interpretation of the value of responsibility, there is more of necessity than choice. We also know that this is not an unconditional necessity, there are cases of not taking or giving up parental responsibility by mothers. Another aspect of the issue discussed is a different understanding of the responsibility of mothers and fathers. In case of men, the factor of voluntary liability for responsibility for the child plays a greater role, as a consequence the lack of such an obligation is associated with lesser social punishment. Of course, there are many different factors that make up the social reading of responsible parenthood. Responsible parenthood is checked especially thoroughly when caring for a person with disability. Statistically, it is more often mothers who undertake their maternity tasks, and some fathers who leave their families are said to have failed in this situation and proved irresponsible. There can be many reasons for such decisions, at the moment the analysis is about the axiological relationship between responsibility and freedom, which is revealed in a challenging situation. We discover some relationships between values only when we are in a specific situation of commitment and choice.

In addition to natural liability, contractual liability should be highlighted. According to Hans Jonas, this responsibility is “artificially established” by assigning someone and accepting the task that is imposed on a person by contract. Here, too, the factor of freedom plays an important role, but it is legally sanctioned.<sup>8</sup> Childcare is the legal responsibility of parents. One understands this aspect of responsibility differently in case of biological parents who are

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<sup>7</sup> Hans Jonas, *Das Prinzip Verantwortung. Versuch einer Ethik für die technologische Zivilisation* (Frankfurt am Main: Shurkamp, 1979), Polish trans. Michał Klimowicz, *Zasada odpowiedzialności. Etyka dla cywilizacji technologicznej* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Platan, 1996), 182.

<sup>8</sup> Jonas, *Zasada odpowiedzialności*, 185.

inherently subject to legal parental obligations, and differently from carers of foster families who receive obligations from the state towards the children they look after. Control by government officials (social workers) over foster families is much more extensive than with biological parents. In both cases natural and contractual liability is similar, namely, it is expected that the entity (parent, carer) will agree to accept a commitment to take care for a person with disability. In the situation of adoptive parents, we are dealing with other variants of contractual responsibility, which over time becomes a form of natural responsibility, without biological foundation.

In addition to natural and contractual liability, moral responsibility should also be emphasized. The latter concerns those aspects of the action which, in addition to being accountable for (post factum) take into account the anticipation of possible effects of human actions. In this case, it is either about taking action or not taking it, if it may result in some serious damage to the subject making the choice or relatives. This dimension of responsibility is related to the value of maturity. Predicting such consequences is not certain, but only probable. Responsible parenthood, which Paul VI wrote about, consists of all the aspects of responsibility mentioned above. The principle of ethical behavior oriented towards the value of responsibility results from the realization of this value in specific realities of life. This is not always successful. We are dealing here with a normative approach, which is a reference point for human actions. It results from the fact that we should act responsibly, although we are not always able to meet this obligation. However, this is not an excuse for irresponsible and cowardly behavior.

## Responsibility in a Difficult Situation

As part of research on disability, many books and articles have been written about people with mental disabilities, but there is an insufficient number of papers on their parents-guardians. At the level of mental reactions, children's disabilities affect the functioning of parents. On the one hand, the abolition of physical and mental barriers is postulated, tolerance for otherness, elimination of prejudices, on the other hand, at the level of social perception of disability, there are still stereotypes and fears about the anti-social behavior of people with intellectual disabilities. There is often concern that they pose a potential danger to healthy people. According to *The World Program of Action for Disabled Persons*, and *The Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons Disabilities*, disability is primarily a social problem, and then a medical one. When we talk about disability, we are basically faced with the lack



of understanding and lack of acceptance on the part of healthy and fit people towards people with disabilities. The World Health Organization (WHO) points to several key aspects of disability: (1) impairment—loss of fitness or irregularity in the body's structure in physical, anatomical, and psychological terms; (2) disability—the impossibility or limitation of the ability to lead an active life characteristic of man; (3) handicap—a limitation in the possibility of performing social roles according to age, gender, professional work, and cultural conditions.<sup>9</sup> In this case, a lot depends on the type and degree of disability. The situation of parents-guardians of the disabled person is not defined, but it constitutes the social consequence of disability of their protégés. Although they are healthy, their perception of the world, understanding themselves, the specific stigma they bear is a derivative of the situation they found themselves in.

People with intellectual disabilities are a group highly exposed to social and occupational exclusion. This exclusion is greater than for people with physical disabilities. This is due to anxiety, shame, and fear of unconventional behavior and reactions of people with intellectual disabilities. It should be remembered that these people have limited ability to acquire communication and social competences, which makes it difficult for them to establish regular contacts with the environment.<sup>10</sup> Usually social contacts of people with intellectual disabilities are based on family relationships or the environment of other people with disabilities. Symptoms of exclusion affect various areas: interpersonal, institutional, cultural, and social.<sup>11</sup> Crossing isolation barriers is difficult in many cases, it requires support from caregivers. A disabled person in public space is often accompanied by a parent. It seems better when it is a father than a mother. Often over-protective mothers are negatively perceived by the surroundings. Accompanying the child by the father does not involve a negatively marked stereotype of overprotection. However, the father also has to deal with the stereotype of having a “faulty” child. The social stigma of disability transfers from a child to a parent, which means that in public situations one should show calmness and a large dose of unwavering confidence which, in turn, leads to the constant preoccupation with shame because of your child's social maladjustment. It can translate into guilt in an adult as well as in a disabled person, as it is because of him that the mother, father, siblings experience unpleasantness and are exposed to social shame.

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<sup>9</sup> <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/standard-rules-on-the-equalization-of-opportunities-for-persons-with-disabilities.html>, accessed September 20, 2019.

<sup>10</sup> Iwona Myśliwczyk, *Uznanie dorosłości człowieka z niepełnosprawnością. Studium socjopedagogiczne narracji osób z niepełnosprawnością intelektualną w stopniu głębszym* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Impuls, 2019), 20–22.

<sup>11</sup> Colin Barnes and Geof Mercer, *Exploring Disability*, Polish trans. Piotr Morawski, *Niepełnosprawność* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo „Sic!,” 2008), 29.



Jean Vanier used the term “tyranny of normality” in this case. It indicates a model of life based on striving for social prestige, which translates into a culturally defined value of success. The tyranny of normality lies in life, which is based on a pattern of constant competition for who will win the race and get measurable indicators of success—excellent education, well-paid work, sophisticated entertainment, and at a later stage of life successful children. In this competition, the weak lose and retreat into the area of narrowly defined privacy. The parent of a person with disability discovers that his or her child will not achieve this kind of success, its measure of success will be completely different, it will concern overcoming its own limitations—but how to show off his successes to friends.<sup>12</sup>

Phenomenological analysis of the situation of the parent of a person with mental disability reveals several areas related to experiencing values in a difficult situation. In the initial period, the experience of intellectual disability of a child is an experience similar to death of a child. This is a specific experience of accompanying someone who has to live with a significant “lack.” It is a fear that my child will probably not start a family, find a job, etc.<sup>13</sup> Hence the urgency of thinking about a person with intellectual disability as a child, regardless of its age, and not as a separate and autonomous individual who has the right to independence. Struggling with persistent fear that my child will cope in an indifferent environment without the support of a parent, grandparents, guardians, for example, getting off at the right stop while going to school, closing the door when leaving the house, or not getting burned by heating the soup, etc. It is a struggle with the institution of school where, despite the existence of classes with integration departments in which the competition scheme operates. The effects of education and teaching are measured by means of grades. Usually, a huge amount of work on the part of the student with disability and the parent involved in his or her education brings little results and poor grades at school. Very often the parent of such a child has to deal with the frustration resulting from the mismatch between the school’s education system and this child’s needs.

The experience of a child’s disability leads to a state of false consciousness. Its symptom may be a disapproval of disability, or its apotheosis, which manifests itself as an attitude of being chosen for extraordinary acts. This first condition is associated with the belief that psychiatrists and psychologists issuing the medical report are wrong and soon the child will reach the developmental norm. This applies to the early stage of child development. Usually, the need to issue a disability certificate takes place at the beginning of school education. The second condition is treating disability as a kind of choice, which is associated with

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<sup>12</sup> Kristeva and Vanier, *Bez(sens) słabości. Dialog wiary z niewiarą o wykluczeniu*, 53.

<sup>13</sup> Halina Borzyszkowska, *Izolacja społeczna rodzin mających dziecko upośledzone umysłowo w stopniu lekkim* (Gdańsk: Wydawnictwo UG, 1997), 34.

the belief that disability is a trial that makes a sufferer a contemporary biblical Job. Another form of false consciousness is special care that leads to isolation of the child. It results from love for the loved one, which is manifested in the creation of safe living conditions for him or her and ensuring mental comfort. An escape from the world brings the illusion of normality. Comfort is sought in a family community where there is also a child with disability. Susceptibility to injury and fear of losing one's own self is transferred from the child to the parent of the disabled person. It is self-exclusion resulting from an internal psychological blockade. Its consequence is real suffering and is associated with the experience of being different from families with "normal" children.<sup>14</sup> The desire to have a healthy child who is able to function independently is the most natural desire. In this case, something impossible to fulfil. However, it is not about accepting one's child's disability. At this point, we return to the issue of responsible parenthood, based on the ability to distance ourselves from the manifestations of false consolation and boldly tackling these forms of social behavior that are associated with the "tyranny of normality," Vanier spoke about.

## Responsibility as Courage

According to Julia Kristeva, cultural taming of disability is similar to taming mortality. A world without people with disabilities, just like the world in which mortality is pushed aside, would be a false reality, condemning us to some incompleteness of existence. A non-disabled person faces limitations of existence, fear of a constantly felt lack of disability. In many cases, disability causes fear, which then triggers defence responses—denial, rejection, resignation, arrogance, irritation. Parents of disabled children experience the same feelings that others experience, but they are aware that they cannot afford these feelings to control them. They must be brave in the Platonic sense—a man's bravery who fights the most difficult fight with his negative attitude; such flaws as unjustified shame, feelings of helplessness, weakness, tendency to sadness and despair. Especially the disability of the loved ones reveals to us the fragility of our existence and limitations regarding the art of attentive listening and patience. Working on yourself entails taming depression and fear, tame them with cheerfulness, in inner peace, without pathos and without enthusiasm. Mental stability, internal balance is in this case the optimal state.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Elżbieta Zakrzewska-Manterys, *Upośledzeni umysłowo. Poza granicami człowieczeństwa* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 2010), 79–80.

<sup>15</sup> Kristeva and Vanier, *Bez(sens) słabości. Dialog wiary z niewiarą o wykluczeniu*, 44.

External support for parents of children with mental disabilities consists of: appreciating their work despite the fact that the effects of this work are disproportionate to the effort. Here it is discovered that the measure of success is slow development, not winning awards in competitions. Creating conditions in which parents of children with disabilities have free time. Being a mentor of a child with mental disability is exhausting, parents must be able to temporarily change the role of guardians to another role. In such situations, it is also about the possibility of relieving tension, frustration, creating areas for information exchange and support, sharing responsibility with others, and being listened to. Just like people with disabilities, also parents-guardians need kindness and understanding and respect expressed by other people.

The culture in which we operate needs correction, a significant change of focus, from focusing on what is strong and successful to what is weak and helpless. People with disabilities reveal another image of humanity, often perceived as unattractive and thus hidden from others. They teach mutual listening, they teach others to see someone different and constantly check our expectations towards the cultural model of fulfilled life. It is not just about passive acknowledgement of one's weaknesses, but accepting them, being aware that they are an important element of our humanity. Kristeva wrote in this context about the need for new humanism.

In him, the desire for power and a sense of superiority over others are to be transformed into humble respect for them, because each person, in their individuality and uniqueness, has a gift to offer to others. The weakest are often the freest to be themselves—they occupy an important place because of their ability to change hearts whenever one wants to bond with them.<sup>16</sup>

According to Jean Vanier, new humanism reveals itself in the need to change the theological perspective, from an orientation in which God is presented as an almighty being to the formula of a “weak” God who needs love and support. Vanier believed that

for too long our heads have been filled with almighty God, who apparently was unable to hear the scream of all the poor. God does not give orders to people, he wants to give us his presence, which brings pleasure and happiness, even happiness and special pleasure.<sup>17</sup>

Interestingly, the postulate of new humanism is part of the thought of John Paul II. For the pope, people with disabilities are witnesses of humanity in the most difficult form of the fight for this humanity. Their existence is a preview

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<sup>16</sup> Kristeva and Vanier, *Bez(sens) słabości. Dialog wiary z niewiarą o wykluczeniu*, 84.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.

of a new world that is not ruled by strength, violence, aggression, rivalry, comparison with others, but love, solidarity, and openness to others. Especially with regard to people with intellectual disabilities, John Paul II wrote that:

The disabled person, even when his mind is injured or his ability to perceive is disrupted, is a fully human subject, having holy and inalienable rights belonging to every human being. A human being, regardless of the conditions in which his life is lived and the abilities he may show, has exceptional dignity and special value from the beginning of his existence to natural death. A disabled person—in spite of all the limitations and sufferings that are his or her share—makes us respect him/her when showing wisdom over the mystery of man. The more we delve into the dark and unknown areas of human reality, the better we understand that it is in the most difficult and most disturbing situations that the dignity and greatness of a human being are revealed. The wounded humanity of a disabled person is a challenge for us to see, accept and show in each of our brothers and sisters the incomparable value of a human being that God created to be a son in the Son.<sup>18</sup>

We do not choose disability voluntarily, it requires a lot of courage to see the world through the eyes of a person with disability, that is, the person who occupies the lowest position in a competitive society. If the rights of the weakest became a measure of social order, then the world would be more just in an ethical sense than it is today.

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<sup>18</sup> Jan Paweł II, “Przesłanie do uczestników Międzynarodowego Sympozjum na temat: Godność i prawa osoby z upośledzeniem umysłowym,” nr 2, *L'Osservatore Romano* (Pol. ed.), 2004, no. 4.

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## La question de la parentalité responsable dans une perspective axiologique. Une analyse inspirée de l'encyclique *Humanae Vitae*

### Résumé

L'article est consacré à la question de la parentalité responsable formulée par Paul VI dans l'encyclique *Humanae Vitae* en 1968. Le contenu de l'encyclique concernait principalement la question de la responsabilité liée à la fécondation. L'auteur de l'article pose la question de la responsabilité parentale quant à la prise en charge d'un enfant souffrant d'un handicap mental léger. Cette prise en charge par les parents est une conséquence de sa conception. L'auteur analyse la question de la parentalité responsable dans une perspective philosophique, il se concentre sur la lecture du monde des valeurs par le parent-tuteur d'une personne en situation de handicap mental. Les relations étroites avec une personne handicapée exigent une sensibilité particulière sur le plan spirituel, moral et axiologique. Outre l'encyclique *Humanae Vitae*, l'auteur de l'article s'inspire de réflexions de Jean Vanier et de Julia Kristeva sur le handicap ; ces réflexions sont issues de deux perspectives : religieuse et laïque.

Mots-clés : parentalité responsable, valeurs, handicapé mental, courage, Paul VI, Kristeva, Vanier

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Questione della genitorialità responsabile da una prospettiva assiologica  
Un'analisi ispirata all'enciclica *Humanae Vitae*

Sommario

L'articolo è dedicato al tema della genitorialità responsabile, formulato da Paolo VI nell'enciclica *Humanae Vitae* nel 1968. Il contenuto dell'enciclica riguardava principalmente la questione della responsabilità relativa alla fecondazione. L'autore dell'articolo riferisce la questione della responsabilità genitoriale et della custodia di un bambino con una lieve disabilità mentale, il che è una conseguenza della concezione del bambino. Si analizza la questione della genitorialità responsabile in una prospettiva filosofica, si concentra sulla lettura del mondo dei valori da parte del genitore-tutore di una persona con disabilità mentale. Le relazioni strette con una persona disabile richiedono una speciale sensibilità su piano spirituale, morale e assiologico. L'autore dell'articolo, oltre all'enciclica *Humanae Vitae*, si ispira alle riflessioni di Jean Vanier e di Julia Kristeva sulla disabilità ; queste riflessioni risultano da due prospettive : religiosa e secolare.

Parole chiave: genitorialità responsabile, valori, persona con disabilità mentale, coraggio, Paolo VI, Kristeva, Vanier