Taylor & Francis
Taylor & Francis Group

ARTICLE

Promoting culture and spirituality in an audiovisual society: Pope Saint John Paul II's teachings on cinema

Alejandro Pardo

University of Navarra, Pamplona, Spain

ABSTRACT

During his pontificate (1978–2005), John Paul II always approached cinema in a positive way, different from the reluctance that, generally speaking and with nuances, the Catholic Church initially manifested towards it. Aware of the powerful influence the film medium has as agent of socialization and culturalization, John Paul II poses the ethical challenge of using film's great potential to promote man and society. Analysing extensively Pope Wojtyła's statements on cinema, this article identifies and systematically presents their main ethical ideas. John Paul II expresses a positive vision of the cinematographic medium. His teaching combines respect and admiration with critical analysis, trust with warnings, the defense of freedom with the call to social responsibility for film industry professionals as well as for viewers. The results of this first systematic research on John Paul II's magisterium may open the way to future studies on the relationship between cinema and society, also on the links between the transcendentals of being (beauty, truth, goodness) and the artistic, socio-cultural and industrial approaches to cinema.

1. Introduction

The relationship between cinema and ethics is as old as the medium itself. A few years after its birth, cinema had already become an unprecedented popular phenomenon. It is not surprising that there were several voices that, already at the dawn of the last century, demanded attention on this new show-entertainment that exercised great power over audiences of all ages and conditions and influenced their ways of thinking and behaving. The Catholic Church joined its voice with that of other political, social and religious institutions, demanding greater ethical and moral responsibility both on the part of those who made and commercialized the films (producers, distributors, exhibitors), and in those who enjoyed them (spectators). With notable exceptions, it did so fearfully and defensively, as it had done with books, the press, and theater shows, and

as it would later do with television (Black 1996; Cebollada 2005; Biltereyst and Treveri Gennari 2015).

In this tortuous relationship between cinema and the Catholic Church, which has gradually changed from emphasizing cinema's negative potential to emphasizing its positive potential, the pontificate of Saint John Paul II was a new milestone, as several authors have underlined (Fiestas 1991; Aspíllaga 1994; Wolpiuk 2001; Pérez-Latre 2003; Mazza 2006; Fazio 1997; Caballero and Carlos 2008). Indeed, as this Roman Pontiff emphasized, the role that the Catholic Church was called to play in contemporary society demanded that it be present – according to the Second Vatican Council (1966) – in those 'modern areopagi' that include culture, art and communications (see John Paul II and Messori 1994, 124–25). Saint John Paul II recognized that, in the past, the Catholic Church had neglected its presence in some of these areas; and, from the beginning of his pontificate, he wanted to underline the enormous power of the influence of cinema and television (and the rest of the audiovisual media), and the consequent social responsibility that concerns those who work in this industry.

For Saint John Paul II, the historical relationship between the Catholic Church and cinema partially runs parallel with what the Church has maintained regarding art, especially since the Enlightenment. The progressive secularization of the world and its closure to transcendence forced the Church to be particularly cautious. 'The attitude of the [Catholic] Church was, therefore, of separation, distance, opposition in the name of the Christian Faith' (John Paul II 1980, no. 1; my own translation), he summarizes. The successive appearance of new types of media – and of cinema in particular – and their popularization as new and different forms of entertainment increased this reluctance. In any case, Pope Wojtyła, when recognizing this initial attitude of avoidance, insists on a more balanced view:

> The cinema, since it was invented, while sometimes giving rise to criticism and disapproval on the part of the [Catholic] Church on account of some aspects of its extensive output, has also often dealt with themes of great meaning and value from an ethical and spiritual point of view. (John Paul II and Messori 1997b)

And he concludes on other occasion: 'The Church's overall judgment of this art form, as of all genuine art, is positive and hopeful' (John Paul II and Messori 1997a, no. 2).

This insistence of Saint John Paul II on the positive vision that the Catholic Church has of art, of the media in general and of cinema in particular, is a constant feature of his pontificate. Beyond the considerations of the previous magisterium, a deep personal conviction can be appreciated in him, based on a profound anthropological and sociological approach. Following in the footsteps of Pius XII, both in his encyclical *Miranda Prorsus* and in his paradigmatic text entitled *The Ideal Film* (Pius 1955; Pius 1957), Pope Wojtyła has no problem including cinema among 'the gifts of God' (John Paul II 1993, no. 1) represented by modern media. For this reason, it is significant that he underlined this point in front of an audience as select and significant as the representatives of the Hollywood industry, in a meeting held in 1987: 'For a long time [the Catholic Church] has been a patron and defender of the arts; she has promoted the media and been in the forefront of the use of new technology' (John Paul II 1988, no. 8).[1]

Along with this, the thoughts of Saint John Paul II on cinema cannot be separated from his conscience about the leading role that this new medium plays within that

'modern areopagus' that is communication, especially as a culture configurator. Pope Wojtyła understands the scope that audiovisual fiction has in this regard, and for this reason he has not stopped encouraging those who work in this industry to take advantage of the enormous possibilities of this popular entertainment medium in a responsible way (Pardo 2005b), especially when it comes to exploring the relationship between faith and culture:

> From its very beginnings the [Catholic] Church has recognized the importance of the means of social communication as useful tools for making better known and appreciated those human and religious values which support the maturing of the individual. This calls for a strong sense of responsibility from those who work in this sensitive sector. Cinema allies itself with these means, availing itself of a language of its own which allows it to reach people of different cultures. (John Paul II and Messori 1999, no. 2; see also John Paul II and Messori 2002a)

The verification of this reality will be the foundation of all his teaching on the cinematographic medium, as explained throughout this article. The challenge that Saint John Paul II poses, then, consists in finding the balance between the freedom and autonomy that all human activity requires – and especially that which has to do with culture, art and communication – and the necessary ethical responsibility that working in such a relevant area entails (John Paul II 1979). In achieving this challenge, he will also involve the Pontifical Council for Social Communications, which he entrusts with 'a specific role in fostering the Church's presence in the world of cinema' (John Paul II and Messori 1995a, no. 2).

In short, Saint John Paul II maintains a positive vision of the cinematographic medium and encourages those who work in this industry. This contrasts with the reluctance and prevention that, generally speaking and with all sorts of nuances, the Church has manifested towards the Seventh Art. Aware of its enormous power of influence, Saint John Paul II poses the ethical challenge of harnessing this great potential in favor of man and society. At the same time, it should be stressed that the closeness that Saint John Paul II shows towards the cinematographic medium is explained by his artistic sensitivity, by his anthropological approach, and by his pastoral concern (Buttiglione, Fedeli, and Scola 1984; Negri and Paolo 1988; Leuzzi 1997; Ferrer 2006; Dovere 2008; Staglianò 2008). To this should be added its affinity with phenomenology, which gives great prominence to experience and subjective consciousness (Dinan 1981; Di Bella 2015; see also Casebier 1991; Sobchack 1992). All this justifies, in my opinion, how Pope Wojtyła understands the nature and scope of the cinematographic medium in a singularly accurate and profound way, and that his words reveal a solid personal conviction.

There are several books that collect the magisterium of Saint John Paul II on cinema, either in a monographic way (Trasatti 1988; Siniscalchi & Foley 2000; Siniscalchi 2001) or as part of a more general compilation (Gómez-Haces 1996; Viganò 2002; Cebollada 2005; Dovere 2008; Sartori 2011). However, none of them offers a systematic study of its content from an ethical point of view. This article aims to offer a modest contribution in this regard. When facing the magisterium of Saint John Paul II on this specific medium, I will first explain the criteria that I have taken into account when selecting the texts that, in my opinion, are part of his teachings in this regard. Then, I

will systematically present the main ideas that articulate his thinking in this field, with particular attention to those issues that have greater ethical relevance. Finally, I will draw some conclusions and discuss possible lines of future research based on this first approach.

2. Saint John Paul II's teachings on cinema: delimitation of texts

The magisterial teaching of Saint John Paul II on the cinema is not as vast as that referring to the media, although – obviously – many of the questions that this Roman Pontiff raises in relation to professionals who work with the press, radio, television, advertising or the Internet apply equally to those who work in the world of entertainment and, more specifically, in the film industry. Similarly, the depth and breadth of Pope Wojtyła's teaching on the cinematographic medium cannot be grasped without considering his teachings about the human being, art, culture and society. We are therefore faced with an intricate panorama of related areas, which move in circles, sometimes concentric and other times overlapping.

In this sense, it should be remembered that, by the terms *cinema* or *film medium* – which we use here interchangeably – any form of *audiovisual fiction* must be understood, be they feature films, animated films, telefilms or television series. In other words, what makes up this body of teaching – as is also the case with that regarding professional careers – is not defined by the *means* of exhibition or diffusion (movie theaters, television sets or mobile devices) but by the type of *content* (stories or audiovisual dramas, versus news, documentaries or entertainment programs).

This terminological clarification helps to understand the initial difficulty in defining what should be considered a teaching on cinema (or audiovisual fiction) in the case of the teachings of John Paul II. Although formed by short and not very numerous texts, this magisterial body reflects a great richness of content, as evidenced by the publication of several books that compile them and even include studies and lengthy commentaries on them. Among the more relevant books is the one edited by Claudio Siniscalchi and prepared together with the then President of the Pontifical Council for Social Communications, Archbishop (later Cardinal) John Foley, entitled *Giovanni Paolo II and il Cinema: Tutti i discorsi* (Siniscalchi & Foley 2000); and the volume about Saint John Paul II's speech to Hollywood prepared by Sergio Trasatti under the title *Il Papa a Hollywood: Il discorso di Giovanni Paolo II: 25 commenti italiani* (Trasatti 1988). To them would need to be added the compilations of magisterial texts on cinema during this pontificate mentioned at the end of the introductory section.[2]

These publications – together with Ugo Dovere's exhaustive compilation on the magisterium of Saint John Paul II on art and culture, which also includes all references to the film medium (Dovere 2008) – have constituted the starting point for determining the selection of the eleven documents which, in my opinion, constitute the direct teaching of Pope Wojtyła on cinema. They are the following:

1. Message to the President of the International Catholic Film Organization (OCIC) on the 50th anniversary of this organization (31 October 1978).

2. Address to the IV Conference of the Catholic Association of Cinema Exhibitors (ACEC) (24 May 1984).
3. Address to the People of the Communications Industry at Los Angeles (15 September 1987).
4. Address to the Representatives of the Production Companies involved in *The Bible* TV Series (9 December 1993).
5. Message for the 29th World Communications Day: *Cinema: Communicator of Culture and of Values* (6 January/28 May 1995).
6. Address to the Participants at the Plenary Assembly of the Pontifical Council for Social Communications (17 March 1995).
7. Address to the Participants at the I International Conference of Cinema Studies on *Cinema: A Vehicle for Spirituality and Culture* (1 December 1997).
8. Address to the Participants at the Conference on *Biblical Language and Contemporary Communication* (28 September 1998).
9. Address to the Participants at the II International Conference of Cinema Studies on *Art, Life and Representation in Cinema: Aesthetic Sense, Spiritual Needs and Cultural Roles* (19 November 1998).
10. Address to the Representatives of the Lux Vide Production Company (25 November 1999).
11. Address to the Participants at the III International Conference of Cinema Studies on *Cinema: Images for a Dialogue between Peoples and a Culture of Peace in the Third Millennium* (2 December 1999).

This list basically coincides with that compiled by Siniscalchi and Foley, and later repeated by the first in a second volume (Siniscalchi & Foley 2000; Siniscalchi 2001). For my part, I have found it convenient to add three more speeches delivered in various meetings with professionals and academics on the occasion of the screen adaptation of the Bible, since they include ideas about the audiovisual medium, whether film or television. On the other hand, I have not included another speech given on the occasion of a film release, as it does not offer any substantial contribution.[3] Other authors such as Viganò and Sartori follow a broad criterion, since they include texts that do not refer exclusively to the cinematographic medium.[4]

In my opinion, it is revealing that this magisterial body spans twenty years, covering a good part of the pontificate of Saint John Paul II. Indeed, the first intervention of this holy Pope focused on the world of cinema was a message addressed to the president of the International Catholic Film Organization (OCIC in its Italian version) on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of this organization, which took place on October 31, 1978 – barely fifteen days after his election as the Successor of Peter the Apostle. From there onwards, his pontificate would be marked by various speeches in which he would highlight the great power of influence of the cinema as an agent of socialization and culturalization, as well as the consequent social responsibility of those who work in this industry. His last speech, addressed to the participants in the third edition of the International Congress of Film Studies, delivered at the beginning of December 1999, insists on underlining the power of the cinematographic medium to spread values of peace and fraternal coexistence.

The eleven texts that make up this list can be broken down into different categories: (a) The first two have a more institutional character, since they respond to designated anniversaries of two Catholic organizations in the cinematographic field (the OCIC and the Unda);[5] in any case, they serve Pope Wojtyła to list down some thought-provoking ideas about cinema and praise the work of these entities. (b) Then follows the speech to Hollywood, which is itself a highly relevant text because of the place in which it was delivered. (c) Texts numbers 6 and 7 have as a backdrop the commemoration of the first centenary of cinema. (d) Speeches 4, 8 and 10 were given on the occasion of the production of the miniseries on the Bible, led by the Italian company Lux Vide. (e) Finally, we find the speeches related to the three editions of the International Congress of Film Studies (numbers 7, 9 and 11) that together form a deep vision of the cinematographic medium, with a particular richness of content.

As Foley underlines:

> It is not easy, therefore, to take on an analysis of all the discourses in which the Pontiff has referred to the cinema, but it is something which will not fail to give the reader a pleasant surprise in the Pope's clear understanding of the great power of the screen, and the undeniable intuition he shows with regard to the capacity which every film carries. (Foley 2000, 10–11)

Although these words of the then President of the Pontifical Council for Social Communications may be somewhat exaggerated – many of the ideas that Saint John Paul II exhibits reflect the teaching of previous pontiffs, although he gives them new emphasis – they are correct in underlining the great richness of content in this brief body of teaching. It is my desire to reveal that 'pleasant surprise' and that 'undeniable intuition' about the power of the film medium. To do this, I will focus on a content analysis of these eleven texts, and I will systematically expound on those topics or issues that are most relevant from the ethical point of view. Although Pope Wojtyła addresses some of these points in more depth in other discourses dealing with culture, art and communication, I will limit myself to citing only those words of his included in this brief list.

3. Saint John Paul II and the cinema

3.1. Integrative vision: cinema as an artform, a mean of communication and an industry

Before succinctly expounding the main contributions that Saint John Paul II offers on the cinematographic medium, it is convenient to focus on a more comprehensive approach, which encompasses its main dimensions (cinema as an artform, as a means of communication, and as an industry). Indeed, when we approach the power of cinema from the sociocultural and ethical points of view, it is important to highlight this triple nature of the film medium: as an *artistic expression*, as an *industrial activity* subject to commercial laws and market regulations, and as a *means of communicating* ideas. So,

> those who work in this industry – screenwriters, directors, producers – are trying to achieve a difficult balance, in order to obtain a film work that must be at the same time a work of art, a form of cultural expression and a commercially profitable product … From each of these dimensions, there are derived different responsibilities and

challenges for filmmakers – and especially for producers: an artistic or aesthetic responsibility (the film should reach a minimum standard of quality), an economic responsibility (obtaining a minimum profit or, at least, recovering the investment made) and a social responsibility (being aware of the ideas and values that the film promotes). (Pardo 2001, 117–118; my own translation)

This conception of cinema, interlocked and united at the same time, is made manifest by Cardinal Poupard regarding the teachings of Saint John Paul II:

In this sense, all the interventions of the Holy Father that have dealt with the seventh art, are a heartfelt exhortation to a sincere and real awareness of the power that cinema develops and possesses as an art form, cultural phenomenon, instrument of communication, example of the art par excellence of the Third Millennium. (Poupard 2001, 110; my own translation)

Indeed, Pope Wojtyła tends to contemplate the cinematographic phenomenon in a multifaceted way, aware of the connection of its different dimensions, although he does not always explain in detail all of them. This is demonstrated, for example, by some of his words pronounced during one of the International Congresses on Cinema sponsored by the Holy See, which represent a good synthesis of his vision on the film medium:

Cinema is a particularly well adapted means of recounting the ineffable mystery which surrounds man and the world. By means of pictures, the director enters into dialogue with the spectator, transmits his thoughts to him, pushes him to confront situations in which the soul cannot remain insensitive. If (…) [the director] knows how to express [himself] with responsibility and intelligence, [he] can offer his own specific contribution to the great dialogue which exists between individuals, between peoples and between civilizations. In this way, in a certain way, as happens with every other cultural agent, [film] becomes pedagogical not only for contemporaries, but also for future generations. (John Paul II and Messori 1999, no. 5; see also John Paul II and Messori 2000b, no. 3)

Art, media and industry: three faces of the same reality. To all of them this holy Pope pays singular attention. Regarding its *artistic dimension*, Saint John Paul II does not hesitate to describe cinema as 'a true and proper art form' (John Paul II and Messori 2000b, no. 1). Within this perspective, he underlines its character as a binder of other arts, its nature as an art linked to technology, the qualities of its own form of expression (audiovisual language), and its relationship with the so-called *via pulchritudinis* (the Way of Beauty). Thus, for example, on the occasion of an academic meeting of scholars of the Seventh Art, Saint John Paul II underlined the importance of 'the language of cinema, which is frequently raised to the level of a true and proper art form, and which the [Catholic] Church regards with increasing attention and interest' (John Paul II and Messori 2000b, no. 1). And on another occasion, he abounded in these expressive possibilities:

The cinema is capable of creating moments of particular intensity, fixing in images an instant of life and lingering on it with a language that can give place to expression of real poetry. In this way, these new forms of art are able to add much of value to the inexhaustible path of knowledge which man has accomplished, expanding his understanding of both the world surrounding him and his own interior universe. (John Paul II and Messori 1999, no. 3)

In short, all forms of artistic expression are called, according to this holy Pontiff, to strengthen the ties that unite humanity, becoming 'a source of brotherhood, dialogue, understanding, solidarity and true, lasting peace' (John Paul II and Messori 2002b, no. 2).

These last ideas refer to another point of singular interest: the transcendent role that art plays in the culture of each historical period (the above-mentioned *via pulchirudinis*), seen in light of the intrinsic relationship between the transcendentals of being – *verum*, *bonum* and *pulchrum* – a topic to which this great Pope has also paid attention and which is intimately connected with the three dimensions of film we are dealing with (see Ferrer 2006; Dovere 2008; see also Pontifical Council for Culture 2008). Due to the length limits of the present article, I am forced to point towards it without delving into it (for further development, see Pardo 2019).

Regarding the *communicative and socio-cultural dimension* of this industrial art, in his message for the 1995 World Social Communications Day – the very year that the centenary of the invention of the Cinematograph was commemorated – Saint John Paul II pointed out: 'Among the media of social communication, the cinema is by now a universal and esteemed medium' (John Paul II and Messori 1997b). And he continued:

> Those that work in the sensitive field of cinema must as communicators remain open to dialogue and to the reality that surrounds them. They must undertake to highlight the most important realities with films that provoke reflection, in the awareness that this approach, which permits the drawing together of different cultures and of the people that live them, will bring about positive results for all. (John Paul II and Messori 1997b)

Finally, regarding its *industrial dimension*, Saint John Paul II demonstrates his knowledge of the filmmaking process as well as of the commercialization of films (production, distribution, exhibition). In his first meeting with representatives of this industry at the beginning of his pontificate, he invited them to reflect on the scope of their work:

> To speak of the cinema is, in the first place, to call to mind the very complex sector of creativity and of film production... Here are some subjects on which you could meditate deeply with producers and actors: do they seek the promotion of real human values? Do they give religious and specifically Christian values their rightful place? ...
>
> Another series of reflections would be necessary today, although it concerns a delicate problem, governed by the law of commerce: do the organs for the distribution of films sufficiently take into account the dignity and convictions of those for whom they are intended? (John Paul II 1979)

Likewise, in his speech to representatives of the Hollywood industry in Los Angeles years later, he expressed the need to achieve a balance between commercial and moral demands, and warned: 'Do not let money be your sole concern, for it too is capable of enslaving art as well as souls' (John Paul II 1988, no. 7).

3.2. Main ethical issues

As stated before, reading these speeches and messages reveals a great coherence of thoughts, from which some ideas often stand out. In my opinion, the doctrine of Saint John Paul II on cinema could be summarized in the following points: (1) Cinema is a

particularly suitable means to reflect on the fundamental truths of man and the world. (2) It has great influence as an agent of socialization and culturalization (pedagogical function). From this fact derives, on the one hand, (3) the responsibility of the spectators to train and acquire a critical judgment – either by themselves or with the help of parents and educators in the case of children and adolescents; and, secondly, (4) the responsibility of those who work in this industry to act with an ethical sense when promoting and distributing audiovisual content (social responsibility). Finally, and in keeping with the first two points, (5) cinema also has enormous potential at the service of evangelization. I will deal with each of these points below, using the words of this Roman Pontiff.

3.2.1. A means of communication uniquely suited to reflecting on the fundamental truths of man and the world

The artistic sensitivity of Saint John Paul II allowed him to understand very deeply the capacity that the cinematographic medium has – through its impact on human emotions – to reach the depths of the human heart and, from there, to act on reason. Thus, in one of his speeches, he comments:

> Cinema is therefore a very sensitive tool, capable of reading in the times those signs which can sometimes escape hurried observation. When well used, it is able to contribute to the growth of real humanism and, definitively, to the praise which from creation rises to the Creator. (John Paul II and Messori 1999, no. 5)

And he adds on other occasion: 'The cinema can become the interpreter of this natural propensity and be a place for reflection, for appeal to values, for invitation to dialogue and for communion' (John Paul II and Messori 2002b, no. 2). Pope Wojtyła insists – as he does all through his magisterium – on the centrality of man and on the need for an adequate anthropology on which to build the dramatic representation of human life – as all narrative art does, and cinema in a very particular way. Therefore, as the previous quote continues, 'a cinema that considers only some aspects of the amazing complexity of the human being inevitably ends up being simplistic and does not provide a useful cultural service' (John Paul II and Messori 2002b, no. 2).

It is in the richness of the cinematographic medium – images and sounds at the service of a story – where this connection with the viewer is achieved (a sort of *film reading/understanding pact*). Thus, this holy Pope explains:

> The cinema enjoys a wealth of languages, a multiplicity of styles and a variety of narrative forms that are truly great: from realism to fable, from history to science fiction, from adventure to tragedy, from comedy to news, from animated cartoon to documentary. It thus offers an incomparable storehouse of expressive means for portraying the various areas in which the human being finds himself and for interpreting his inescapable calling to the beautiful, the universal and the absolute. (John Paul II and Messori 2002b, no. 3)

Already a couple of years earlier, in his speech addressed precisely to the participants in the first Congress on Studies about the Cinematographic Medium entitled *Cinema, Vehicle of Spirituality and Culture* that was held at the end of 1997, Saint John Paul II had argued in favor of this ability to make one think, to move to reflection, to open up to transcendence:

> The cinema … continues to attract the interest of the public, who perceive it as an occasion for entertainment. However, it also has the capacity to promote personal growth, to lead men and women to higher aesthetic and spiritual levels. It is for this reason that the [Catholic] Church offers its own contribution to reflection on the spiritual and cultural values which the cinema can convey …. (John Paul II and Messori 1999, no. 2)

As can be seen in these last two texts, for this Roman Pontiff, cinema, being an ideal vehicle to express the transcendent dimension of human being, possesses a unique performative – and even salvific – quality, typical of any cultural manifestation based on a transcendent anthropology. Hence, he once again insists on the aforementioned discourse about the suitability of cinema as a means of facing the profound questions to which the human heart appeals:

> Besides films which are more markedly for entertainment, there exists a vein of cinema which is more sensitive to existential problems … These films lead the viewer to reflection, to aspects of a reality at times unknown, and his soul is examined, is mirrored in the images, is faced with different perspectives, and cannot remain insensible to the message which it is the work of the cinema to carry … Thus it follows that the art of the cinema has often known how to transmit a sublime message, contributing to the spread of respect for values which enrich the human soul. (John Paul II and Messori 1999, no. 3–4)

Likewise, on the occasion of the second edition of this international Congress of Studies on Cinema, he went even deeper into this mission of the cinematographic medium:

> The cinema can offer and accomplish much in this regard … From its birth, the big screen … is the mirror of the human soul in its constant search for God, often unknowingly. With special effects and remarkable images, it can explore the human universe in depth. It is able to depict life and its mystery in images. And when it reaches the heights of poetry, unifying and harmonizing various art forms –from literature to scenic portrayal, to music and acting– it can become a source of inner wonder and profound meditation. (John Paul II and Messori 2000b, no. 3)

It is basically about assuming the challenge of giving 'reason for our hope' (1 Peter, 3, 15), in a world where darkness often seems to reign over light. In this sense, Saint John Paul II offered this encouragement on the occasion of the centenary of the invention of cinema:

> On this day above all, on the threshold of the third millennium, it is essential to ask ourselves definite questions, not avoiding the problems but looking for answers and solutions. In this context there is no question of not giving the cinema the place and the value that is its due. However, I would appeal to the responsible persons at every level to be fully aware of the great influence that they exercise on people and of the mission that they are called upon to pursue at this present time which has such urgent need of universal assertions of peace and tolerance. This is simply to recall those values which are to be found at the heart of that dignity which has been given to each one of us by God the Creator. (John Paul II and Messori 1997b)

In sum, Saint John Paul II is convinced that cinema can and must 'make its particular contribution, within the framework of this great and extraordinary event of faith and culture, to the promotion of a humanism linked to Gospel values, and which for this reason can create an authentic culture of man and for man' (John Paul II and

Messori 2002b, no. 4). As can be seen, these ideas underline a central point of the theological anthropology of this Polish Pope, namely: the centrality of man, understood in his transcendent dimension (as *imago Dei*), origin and end (and, therefore, true parameter of measure) of all human activity. That any dramatic representation of human life – audiovisual or not – must be based on an adequate anthropology that respects the dignity of the human person and appeals to personal freedom and responsibility, is shown in the following sections.

3.2.2. The role of a pedagogue: cinema as an agent of socialization and culturalization

The concluding sentence of the previous section – cinema as 'creator of an authentic culture of man and for man', of a 'humanism linked to Gospel values' – leads us to consider the media nature of cinema as a configurator of socially shared values or, in other words, as an *agent of socialization and acculturation*. This is a crucial and much studied aspect, and also highlighted by Saint John Paul II.[6] This Holy Pope repeatedly uses the term *pedagogue* or *cultural agent*, to reinforce the idea that movie theaters (and in general all screens, large or small) have become formative instances for shaping values of individual consciousness, at the same level as family, school or church. Thus, we saw him in a previous quote, in which he refers to how 'the director enters into dialogue with the spectator, transmits his thoughts to him, pushes him to confront situations in which the soul cannot remain insensitive', and thus '[film] becomes pedagogical (…) as happens with every other cultural agent' (John Paul II and Messori 1999, no. 5). And in a more detailed way, he explains on another occasion:

> Among the media of social communication, the cinema is by now a universal and esteemed medium from which messages are often sent which are capable of influencing and conditioning the choices of the public, and especially young people, in a form of communication that is based not so much on words as on concrete events, expressed in images which impact greatly on the viewers and on their subconscious. (John Paul II and Messori 1997b)

This idea is even more rich, recalling the close relationship that exists between the role of the media and human development. Thus, affirms this holy Pope: the cinema 'is capable of influencing the reflections and behavior of an entire generation. For this reason, it is important that it knows how to present positive values and is respectful of human dignity' (John Paul II and Messori 1999, no. 3). For this reason, the film medium 'assumes a pedagogic function, which helps mankind to understand the universal values present in different cultures, and brings him to perceive rightful differences as occasions for a reciprocal exchange of gifts' (John Paul II and Messori 1999, no. 5).

Within this didactical function, Pope Wojtyła highlights the capacity of the cinematographic medium 'as a vehicle for cultural exchange and as an invitation to openness and reflection in dealing with realities foreign to our upbringing and mentality' (John Paul II and Messori 1997b), that at the same time helps 'to bring distant people together, to reconcile enemies, to promote a more respectful and fruitful dialogue

between different cultures, by showing the way to a credible and lasting solidarity, the essential premise for a world of peace' (John Paul II and Messori 2002b, no. 3).

3.2.3. Spectator responsibility: critical instruction

The capacity of cinema to exert influence at the individual and social level indirectly alludes to the need to train viewers, so that they acquire critical judgment about the way of interpreting the film medium, both in its formal aspect (language and audiovisual resources) as well as content (message and values transmitted). We have already mentioned previously how for Saint John Paul II 'cinema is capable of creating moments of particular intensity,' through 'a language that can give place to expression of real poetry,' through which man broadens 'his understanding of both the world surrounding him and his own interior universe' (John Paul II and Messori 1999, no. 3). Precisely for this reason, 'to help the public, and above all the youngest, a capacity for critical reading of the messages put forward must be developed, so that the cinema is beneficial to the complex and harmonious growth of the individual' (John Paul II and Messori 1999, no. 3).

In his speech in January 1995, he made mention of the need for audiovisual training of viewers from their childhood – both in the formal aspect and in the interpretation of the contents – encouraging the integration of this discipline into the school curricular design and promoting other initiatives such as *cineforums* (see John Paul II and Messori 1997b). In this regard, it is no coincidence that, during the pontificate of Saint John Paul II, several documents were drawn up which emphasized this need for the formation of spectators (receivers or users).[7]

3.2.4. Social responsibility of professionals

From the previous points is derived, in a logical way, towards the deontological duty of those who work in the communication and entertainment industry. The vibrant, direct and appealing tone with which Pope Wojtyła tries to stir the consciences of professionals in this sector, making them realize their great ethical commitment they have assumed, is striking.

Although all his speeches referring to cinema include some reference in this sense, there is one that is particularly relevant: the speech John Paul II addressed to representatives of the US entertainment industry that took place in Los Angeles in September 1987, during his pastoral visit to the United States. Saint John Paul II wanted to take advantage of this unique opportunity to speak in front of significant members of the Hollywood community to underline the greatness and relevance of his profession and his consequent responsibility. In this sense, he does not skimp on praise that carries –at the same time– a demand for responsibility. In this sense, he addresses them as 'collaborators of truth' (John Paul II 1988, no. 3) and 'administrators of an immense spiritual power' (John Paul II 1988, no. 8).

At the beginning of his speech, this holy Pope recognized the world dominance of American industry when it comes to shaping a popular culture worldwide, especially in the case of entertainment (film, television, music):

> My visit to Los Angeles, and indeed to the United States, would seem incomplete without this meeting, since you represent *one of the most important American influences*

on the world today. You do this in every area of social communications and contribute thereby to the development of a mass popular culture. Humanity is profoundly influenced by what you do. *Your activities affect communication itself*: supplying information, influencing public opinion, offering entertainment. The consequences of these activities are numerous and diverse. You help your fellow citizens to enjoy leisure, to appreciate art and to profit from culture. You often provide the stories they tell and the songs they sing. You give them news of current events, a vision of humanity and motives for hope. Yours is indeed a profound influence on society. Hundreds of millions of people see your films and television programs, listen to your voices, sing your songs and reflect your opinions. It is a fact that your smallest decisions can have global impact. (John Paul II 1988, no. 1; emphasized in the original)

This enormous power immediately appeals to responsibility in its use, as he indicates below:

Your work can be *a force for great good or great evil*. You yourselves know the dangers, as well as the splendid opportunities open to you. Communication products can be works of great beauty, revealing what is *noble and uplifting* in humanity and promoting what is just and fair and true. On the other hand, communications can appeal to and promote what is *debased* in people: dehumanized sex through pornography or through a casual attitude towards sex and human life; greed through materialism and consumerism or irresponsible individualism; anger and vengefulness through violence or self-righteousness. All the media of popular culture which you represent can build or destroy, uplift or cast down. You have untold possibilities for good, ominous possibilities for destruction. It is the difference between death and life –the death or life of the spirit. And it is a matter of choice. (John Paul II 1988, no. 2; emphasized in the original)

The deontological duty to respect the truth is not only incumbent on journalists, but on everyone who creates public opinion or popular culture. Thus, explains Pope Wojtyła:

The obligation to truth and its completeness applies not only to the coverage of news, but to all your work. Truth and completeness should characterize the content of artistic expression and entertainment. You find a real meaning in your work when you exercise your role as collaborators of truth –*collaborators of truth in the service of justice, fairness and love.* (John Paul II 1988, no. 3; emphasized in the original).

In the case of communication and entertainment professionals, the duty to be socially responsible also responds – according to Saint John Paul II – to the trust that the community places in them. As we will see later, those who create leisure and entertainment content – as well as those dedicated to information – can render an important service to the common good if their decisions are correct; and, on the contrary, they can be very destructive if they fall into error. He underlines it strongly in the speech that we have been commenting on:

Certainly, your profession subjects you to *a great measure of accountability* –accountability to God, to the community and before the witness of history. And yet at times it seems that everything is left in your hands. Precisely because your responsibility is so great and your accountability to the community is not easily rendered juridically, society relies so much on your good will. In a sense the world is at your mercy. Errors in judgment, mistakes in evaluating the propriety and justice of what is transmitted, and wrong criteria in art can offend and wound consciences and human dignity. They can encroach on sacred fundamental rights. The *confidence* that the community has in you

honours you deeply and challenges you mightily. (John Paul II 1988, no. 6; emphasized in the original).

At the same time, he appealed to their moral greatness in relation to the enormous capacity of influence of the film medium, to feel called to a particular mission for the benefit of all humanity:

> You yourselves are called to what is noble and lofty in human living, and you must study the highest expressions of the human spirit. You have *a great part in shaping the culture* of this nation and other nations. To you is entrusted an important portion of the vast heritage of the human race. In fulfilling your mission you must always be aware of *how your activities affect the world community*, how they serve the cause of universal solidarity. (John Paul II 1988, no. 7; emphasized in the original)

And he ended in a beautiful and moving way:

> *As communicators of the human word, you are the stewards and administrators of an immense spiritual power* that belongs to the patrimony of mankind and is meant to enrich the whole of the human community. The challenge that opens up before you truly requires generosity, service and love. I am sure that you will strive to meet it. And, as you do, I pray that you will experience in your own lives a deep satisfaction and joy. (John Paul II 1988, no. 8; emphasized in the original)

This was not the only occasion on which Saint John Paul II specifically addressed the professionals of the film industry to encourage them to be aware of their grave moral responsibility. He had already done so at the beginning of his pontificate, in his first speech to the OCIC, in which he included a particular reference to the producers, directors, actors and distributors (see John Paul II 1979), as well as in his first meeting with exhibitors (grouped in the ACEC) years then (John Paul II 1984). He would address them again on the occasion of the centenary of cinema and the international congresses on the film medium held in Rome, whose participants included screenwriters, film directors and producers (see John Paul II and Messori 1999, no. 2 and John Paul II and Messori 2002b, no. 3).

Within the broad concept of social responsibility, the magisterium of Saint John Paul II highlights five closely related aspects: first, (a) the respect that every human person deserves, and that is specified in the recognition of their dignity (and this affects professionals and the audience alike); secondly, and consistent with the above, (b) the duty to transmit positive values, consistent with that dignity. However, opposing forces often emerge, invoking (c) creative freedom or (d) the need to respond to business imperatives. Finally, it advocates for (e) the duty to contribute to the common good that is shared by all cultural industries. This Roman Pontiff answers all these questions, as we will see below.

3.2.4.1. Respect for the viewer and for themselves, based on human dignity. Within this call that Saint John Paul II makes to social responsibility, the duty to respect human dignity, both that of the viewer and that of communication professionals themselves, emerges with singular force. Thus, he said for example in the aforementioned speech in Los Angeles:

> *At the basis of all human rights is the dignity of the human person* created in the image and likeness of God (*Gen.* 1, 27). (…) In particular, *social communications must support*

human dignity because the world is constantly tempted to forget it. Whether in news or in drama, whether in song or in story, you are challenged to respect what is human and to recognize what is good. Human beings must never be despised because of limitations, flaws, disorders, or even sins. (John Paul II 1988, no. 5; emphasized in the original)

Behind these words is an invitation to propose a morally dignified cinema, which combines artistic quality and popular appeal, as opposed to a merely banal and commercial cinema. Although we will influence the type of content and messages that are transmitted through the cinema and other media, we now advance another assessment of Saint John Paul II, in which he is especially severe when faced with those films, television series or audiovisual programs that appeal to the most basic instincts of human being, and that degrade his rational nature and violate his dignity. Thus, for example, he states:

As happens with all the media of social communication, the cinema, as well as having the power and the great merit of contributing to the cultural and human growth of the individual, can oppress freedom –particularly of the most weak– when it distorts the truth, and when it presents itself as the mirror of negative types of behavior, using scenes of violence and sex offensive to human dignity and 'tending to excite violent emotions to stimulate the attention' of the viewer). John Paul II and Messori (1997b)

Another manifestation of respect for the viewer according to this Roman Pontiff – very in line with his ethics founded on the human person – is the ability to create a personal and reciprocal relationship between content creators (in this case, filmmakers) and the audience, understood not as a formless mass but as an aggregate set of individual subjects. In this regard, Saint John Paul II points out in his address to Hollywood:

In today's modern world there is always the danger of communication becoming exclusively one-way, depriving audiences of the opportunity *to participate in the communication process*. Should that happen with you, you would no longer be communicators in the full, human sense. The people themselves, the general public whom you serve, should not be excluded from having the opportunity for public dialogue.

In order to foster such a dialogue, you yourselves, as communicators, must listen as well as speak. You must seek to communicate with people, and not just speak to them. This involves learning about people's needs, being aware of their struggles and *presenting all forms of communications with the sensitivity that human dignity requires* –your human dignity and theirs. This applies especially to all audio-visual programs. (John Paul II 1988, no. 4; emphasized in the original)

As can be seen in the penultimate sentence, Pope Wojtyła recalls that respect for the spectator includes respect for oneself, since human dignity affects everyone equally. And again, he will insist again before the representatives of the Hollywood community: 'I would encourage you (…): *to respect also your own dignity*. All that I have said about the dignity of human beings applies to you' (John Paul II 1988, no. 7; emphasized in the original).

This holy Pope shows himself especially severe with the recurrent appeal to the most basic instincts of human being that many films offer, because it represents a degradation of man's rational nature and constitutes an attack on his dignity. Thus, for example, he states:

The attitude of those who irresponsibly bring about degrading imitative behavior whose harmful effects can be read about each day in the pages of the newspapers cannot be defined as free artistic expression. As the Gospel reminds us, only in the Truth are we made free. [cf. *Jn* 8, 32] (John Paul II and Messori 1997b)

And, making specific reference to pornography, he commented:

The phenomenon of the flood of pornography cannot but cause concern to every human being who has the protection of the dignity of the individual and the moral formation of the younger generation close to their heart.

You know the persuasive force of messages mediated by modem means of social communication and you know how much and how hard they try continually to undermine every system of values, and every concern for life, morals, truth, justice and basic social institutions, above all the family.

Young people and children are subjected to these alluring models of life and behaviour which are the very opposite of the Christian concept of life. (John Paul II 1984, no. 4)[8]

3.2.4.2. Transmission of positive values. Very in line with what has been seen in the previous section is the moral duty to transmit – through films and other audiovisual fiction contents – values that are in accordance with the dignity of the human person and, thus, contribute to their enrichment as well as that of the whole of society. Saint John Paul II had an impact on this point in his speech to Hollywood, glossing a few words of his predecessor:

Twenty years ago, my predecessor Pope Paul VI, speaking to a gathering much like this one, told that creative community in Rome: 'It is a fact that when, as writers and artists, you are able to reveal in the human condition, however lowly or sad it may be, a spark of goodness, at that very instant a glow of beauty pervades your whole work. We are not asking that you should play the part of moralist, but we are expressing confidence in your mysterious power of opening up the glorious regions of light that lie behind the mystery of human life.' (John Paul II and 1967).

As you do precisely this – open up the glorious regions of light that lie behind the mystery of human life – you must ask yourselves *if what you communicate is consistent with the full measure of human dignity*. How do the weakest and the most defenseless in society appear in your words and images: the most severely handicapped, the very old, foreigners and the undocumented, the unattractive and the lonely, the sick and the infirm? Whom do you depict as having – or not having – human worth? (John Paul II 1988, no. 5; emphasized in the original)

To this particular point Saint John Paul II dedicated a good part of his speech to the participants in the II International Congress of Studies on Cinema, in November 1998. For example, he commented to them at the beginning:

In these days you have paused to reflect on the cinema as a medium suited to the defence of human dignity and the value of life …. Let us think of how negative or positive an influence the cinema can have on public opinion and consciences, especially those of young people. Human life has its own sacredness, which should always be defended and promoted. It is a sublime gift of God. Here is a challenge that must be taken up responsibly by everyone: to make the cinema an appropriate vehicle for expressing the value of life, with respect for the dignity of the person. (John Paul II and Messori 2000b, no. 2)

From this perspective, those who work in the cinematographic medium elevate their profession to the highest level of dignity, becoming – in the words of Saint John Paul II – in 'heralds of authentic humanity' and promoters of 'an authentic humanism' (John Paul II and Messori 2000b, no. 4). And he concluded:

> I sincerely hope that those who work in the film industry will feel they have a great duty to promote an authentic humanism. I invite Christians take responsibility for working with them in this vast artistic and professional undertaking to defend and promote the true values of human life. This is a valuable service which they render to the task of the new evangelization in view of the third millennium. (John Paul II and Messori 2000b, no. 4)

3.2.4.3. Creativity, freedom and responsibility. The last two aspects related to social responsibility that Saint John Paul II highlights refer to possible difficulties that professionals may encounter on their way. Some may be of an internal nature – as the one we will comment on here – and others, of an external nature – as we will see in the next section. Indeed, often the lack of scruples, the misunderstanding of the function of art or the excessive desire for profit leads professionals in the entertainment industry to appeal to the lowest instincts of human being, as we have already had occasion to comment. Referring to the case of the film industry, Saint John Paul II points out:

> We have seen that masterpieces of the art of film making can be moving challenges to the human spirit, capable of dealing in depth with subjects of great meaning and importance from an ethical and spiritual point of view. Unfortunately, though, some cinema productions merit criticism and disapproval, even severe criticism and disapproval. This is the case when films distort the truth, oppress genuine freedom, or show scenes of sex and violence offensive to human dignity. It is a fallacy for film-makers to do this in the name of free artistic expression. (John Paul II and Messori 1997a, no. 2)

This is a frequent debate among those who work in creative media of popular culture: how far does freedom of expression go and how far can limits be placed on creativity. At the bottom of some arguments a confusion between freedom and the capacity to transgress, to dehumanize or degrade man and woman is perceived. Returning to the particular case of the film industry, Saint John Paul II insists on the nature of true freedom and on the role of the Catholic Church as a moral reference, which 'is not seeking to limit creativity but to liberate creative talent and challenge it to pursue the highest ideals of this art form' (John Paul II and Messori 1997a, no. 2). And he concludes: 'This is why the creative freedom of the author … is called today to be a vehicle for communicating a positive message which makes constant reference to truth, to God and to human dignity' (John Paul II and Messori 2000b, no. 3).

3.2.4.4. Resistance to commercial and ideological pressures. The consideration of cinema as a *cultural industry* (see Hesmondhalgh 2002; Caldwell 2008; Mayer, Banks and Caldwell 2009) makes it the object of multiple pressures, both economic and ideological. On the one hand, the difficult financial conditions in which any film project operates – high investment and slow recoupment – makes it difficult to avoid the temptation to include in plots and stories, as a commercial claim, those ingredients that appeal to human passions (sex and violence). At the same time, the power of social

influence that cinema has is so enormous that no ideology can resist using it as a vehicle for propaganda. Saint John Paul II was aware of these pressures. Thus, in his message on the occasion of the centenary of cinema, he launched an appeal to professionals in this industry:

> To those who work in the field of cinema, I would like to extend a warm invitation not to abandon this important cultural element, because it is not in accordance with the most authentic and deep demands and expectations of the human person to produce films which are devoid of content and which are aimed exclusively at entertainment, or have the sole motive of increasing the size of the audience. (John Paul II and Messori 1997b)

At the same time, recognizing the strong economic and competitive pressures that exist in this sector, he encourages them to maintain an upright behavior, knowing – as we saw before – that respect for the audience also implies respect for themselves. Hence, in his speech to the Hollywood community, he exhorted them:

> *Daily cares oppress you* in ways different from those arising in other kinds of work. Your industry… deals with vast amounts of money that bring with them their own problems. It places you under extreme pressure to be successful, without telling you what 'success' really is …

> At this point, you must cultivate *the integrity consonant with your own human dignity.* You are more important than success, more valuable than any budget. Do not let your work drive you blindly, for if work enslaves you, you will soon enslave your art. Who you are and what you do are too important for that to happen. (John Paul II 1988, no. 7; emphasized on the original)

3.2.4.5. Promotion of the common good. In conclusion, the social responsibility of film and audiovisual media professionals – stated in the previous points – contributes to promoting the common good. Indeed, the defense of the truth and dignity of the human person, the effort to present positive themes and values, and the resistance against pressures of all kinds, combining freedom and creativity, not only benefit each person (professionals and spectators), but also to the whole of society. This is what this Roman Pontiff had made manifest in his speech to Hollywood: 'You help your fellow citizens to enjoy leisure, to appreciate art and to profit from culture' (John Paul II 1988, no. 1). At the same time, while performing their professional duties, he encouraged them to 'be always aware of how your activities affect the world community, how they serve the cause of universal solidarity' (John Paul II 1988, no. 7). And he concluded with an explicit appeal: 'I ask you to choose the common good. It means honoring the dignity of every human being' (John Paul II 1988, no. 7).

In short, it can be affirmed, following the teachings of Saint John Paul II on the film medium, that leisure and entertainment – of which cinema is a part as one of the preferred options for the general public – fulfills a necessary social function – in in this case, instruct and entertain – which contributes to the well-being of the entire human community.

3.2.5. Vehicle for evangelization

It is quite coherent that someone who understands so deeply the nature of the film medium and its ability to penetrate the interior of men and women more effectively

than other forms of artistic expression and of communication, does also think about cinema as a powerful vehicle for transmitting positive messages and, more specifically, contents related to Catholic faith and beliefs. For example, this holy Pope said in 1995:

> The [Catholic] Church has often pointed out the importance of the communications media in transmitting and promoting human and religious values and the special responsibilities that ensue for those who work in this difficult field. The Church, in fact, considering the progress that has been made and the developments that have taken place in the world of social communication in recent decades, is well aware both of the dangerous conditioning power enjoyed by the mass media as well as of the capacity that they offer, if wisely used, of being useful for evangelization. (John Paul II and Messori 1997b; see also John Paul II and Messori 1997a, no. 1)

And paraphrasing a few words of his on the occasion of a World Communications Day, he added: '[T]he question confronting the Church today is not any longer whether the man in the street can grasp a religious message but how to employ the communications media so as to let him have the full impact of the gospel message' (John Paul II and Messori 1997b). This being so, for this holy Pope, the cinematographic medium is a means to attain the latter. Thus, he concluded in that same speech:

> The cinema, with its vast possibilities, could become a powerful means of evangelization. The [Catholic] Church urges directors, film-makers and all those involved who profess themselves to be Christians and who work in the complex and unique world of the cinema, to act in complete consistency with their own Faith and to take courageous initiatives –even in the area of production– in order that through their professionalism the Christian message that is for each man and woman the good news of salvation might be more present in the world. (John Paul II and Messori 1997b; see also John Paul II 1979)

Far from pronouncing a mere compliment on the occasion of the centenary of cinema, Saint John Paul II is thinking of an innovative catechetical impulse, in keeping with the audiovisual culture in which we operate. Regarding this unique medium, Saint John Paul II stops to explain some peculiarities of evangelizing in a society that is itself audiovisual, and to express a series of criteria for carrying out adaptations of the Bible to the small and the big screens.

3.2.5.1. Evangelizing in the image civilization. This concern for using the cinematographic medium to spread the Christian message was already present at the beginning of his pontificate. In his first speech to the OCIC on the occasion of its fiftieth anniversary, he recognized that 'the challenge of evangelization … should also bring forth more numerous initiatives in this field of the cinema' (John Paul II 1979). Hence, he requested the collaboration of this organization to 'help the Church to understand and use better the resources of this 'seventh art' for her mission of salvation' (John Paul II 1979). And it specified: 'Christian communities, in spite of the poverty of their means, should not hesitate to invest more in this important sector, at the time of the 'civilization of the image'' (John Paul II 1979).

Thus, Saint John Paul II encourages the use of cinema and audiovisual media for an innovative catechetical impulse, in accordance with the audiovisual culture

in which we live. In this regard, it is very striking that, in the first speech of his pontificate addressed to representatives of this industry, he raised the following challenge:

> In the past, our sanctuaries were filled with religious mosaics, paintings, and sculptures, to teach the faith. Shall we have enough spiritual strength and genius to create 'moving images', of great quality, and adapted to the culture of today? It is a question not only of the first proclamation of the faith in a world that is often very secularized, or of catechesis to deepen this faith, but it is a question of the inculturation of the Gospel Message at the level of each people, of each cultural tradition. (John Paul II 1979)

And going even further, he established on another similar occasion – this time in a message addressed to managers of small parochial and neighborhood cinemas – a parallel between the movie theater and the temple:

> In this way your halls have become passageways to the church, points of reference and interest even for those at a distance, serving not only the People of God, but also 'all the children of God wherever they are dispersed' … I cordially congratulate you on this ministry and hope that 'community halls' become for all parishes the complement of the temple, a place and a space for a first encounter with the mystery of the Church and a place and a space for mature Christians for reflection, a sort of catechesis. (John Paul II 1984, nos. 3 and 4).

In short, as Pope Wojtyła affirms in another moment of this same discourse, movie theaters can become 'places of encounter and dialogue, spaces of culture and commitment, to carry out a wise action of cultural recovery, pre-evangelization and full evangelization' (John Paul II 1984, no. 3). And, applying it to all professionals in the film industry, he would reaffirm many years later: 'This is a valuable service which they render to the task of the new evangelization in view of the third millennium' (John Paul II and Messori 2000b, no. 4).

3.2.5.2. Criteria for adapting the bible to the screen. For Pope Wojtyła, a particularly important aspect in this evangelizing task through audiovisual media is the adaptations of biblical stories, the life of Jesus or the saints for the small or big screens, and, particularly, the so-called *religious cinema.*[9] The pontificate of Saint John Paul II has witnessed a particular milestone in this regard: the realization of an adaptation of the Bible for the small screen, carried out with cinematographic standards. It was an international co-production, led by the Italian company Lux Vide and the Italian national television network (RAI).[10] Saint John Paul II encouraged this project. In fact, during the long period of production he received the representatives of the production companies on three occasions. In one of them, in addition, Lux Vide – the main production company behind the project – promoted a conference on *Biblical Language and contemporary communication*, a circumstance that was used by this holy Pope to expose some considerations and criteria of great interest when bringing to the screen stories based on Sacred Scripture or biographies of saints (see John Paul II and Messori 1995b, John Paul II and Messori 2000a; John Paul II and Messori 2002a). It is also worth mentioning that, under his pontificate, the Pontifical Biblical Commission published the document entitled *The Interpretation of the Bible in the [Catholic] Church*, which

includes a brief reference to audiovisual adaptations (Pontificia Bíblica Comisión 1995, 118). Thus, for example, addressing the group of audiovisual co-producers involved in the making of this biblical miniseries, he acknowledged:

> Your visit offers me the welcome opportunity to express my esteem and appreciation for your professional commitment to studying and spreading the biblical message among a broader public by the powerful means of communication, in particular through cinema and television. This is a service of high human and spiritual value, which deserves to be increasingly broadened and enhanced. For this reason, an international study conference on the subject cannot fail to arouse interest. Providentially, it is one of the many hermeneutical efforts which at various levels today are leading to ever new ways of expressing the sacred text in contemporary form. (John Paul II and Messori 2000a, no. 1)

He then explained the enormous potential of combining such a powerful message with such persuasive dramatic form:

> When the meeting between divine Revelation and the modern media is conducted with respect for the truth of the biblical message and the correct use of technical means, it bears abundant good fruits. On the one hand, it means elevating the *mass media* to one of its noblest tasks, which in some way redeems it from improper and sometimes trivializing uses. On the other, it offers new and extraordinarily effective possibilities for introducing the general public to God's Word communicated for the salvation of all mankind (John Paul II and Messori 2000a, no. 2).

At this point, Saint John Paul II offers two criteria that can guide any audiovisual adaptation of the Sacred History or the lives of the saints:

> It should immediately be noted that the nature of Sacred Scripture has two basic features which differ from one another but are closely connected. They are, on the one hand, the absolutely transcendent dimension of God's Word, and, on the other, the equally important dimension of its inculturation. Because of the first characteristic, the Bible cannot be reduced to human words alone and, therefore, to a mere cultural product. However, because of the second characteristic, it inevitably and profoundly shares in human history and reflects its cultural co-ordinates. (John Paul II and Messori 2000a, no. 2)

Regarding the first aspect – the *transcendent dimension* that any adaptation of this nature must preserve – Pope Wojtyła recognizes the difficulty of achieving it:

> Clearly it is not easy to reflect properly, with the tools of television and film arts, the impact of the supernatural in history. At every step there is a risk of trivialization. And unfortunately, in the current panorama of cinema, there is no shortage of audiovisual works that are based on the biblical text without due respect to its message and to the very historical truth. (John Paul II and Messori 1995b, no. 2)

However, if any audiovisual medium has in itself the capacity to do so, as we have seen, it is the cinema, a *vehicle of spirituality and culture*, capable of 'leading men and women to higher aesthetic and spiritual levels' (John Paul II and Messori 1999, no. 2). Hence, in the congress to which we referred, after listing these criteria, he also expressed his confidence in the cinematographic medium:

> This general principle finds a particular application in the mass media. It is a question of aiding the shift, or more precisely, the transposition from one form of language to another: from the written word, largely dormant in the hearts of believers and in the

memory of a great number of people, to the visual communication of cinematic 'fiction', apparently more superficial, but in some respects even more powerful and gripping than other languages (John Paul II and Messori 2000a, no. 3).

Regarding the need to achieve an adequate cultural product, which allows the *inculturation* of this transcendent message, he added:

I hope that your service of promoting an ever greater dissemination of the biblical message will continue with renewed commitment, with the intention of producing works which can combine the artistic aspect with profound religious inspiration, and which can arouse in the audience not only aesthetic admiration but also interior participation and spiritual growth. (John Paul II and Messori 2000a, no. 3; see also John Paul II and Messori 1995b, no. 3)

In sum, in the opinion of this holy Pope, the cinematographic or television medium can become 'an effective aid in the indispensable dialogue that is developing between culture and faith in our time' (John Paul II and Messori 2002a, no. 2), so that they contribute to cover that gap between Gospel and culture to which we alluded before.

4. Conclusions and further discussion

The magisterium of Saint John Paul II on cinema, as a direct object of study, is undoubtedly short (only eleven texts). However, it has a striking depth when it comes to offering keys for reflection on its power of influence and on the responsibility that is derived for those who work in the film industry (directors, producers, distributors, exhibitors) as well as for spectators (consumers). It is important to underline that this set of teachings finds its hermeneutical key in the broader context of his magisterium on culture, art and the mass media.

The capacity that Saint John Paul II shows for understanding the cinematographic medium is explained by his particular artistic sensitivity, by his anthropological and cultural vision, and by his pastoral concern – together with his phenomenological background, particularly appropriate in the case of a medium such as the cinema. All of this explains why his thoughts reveal a solid personal conviction. Specifically, Saint John Paul II shows a clear conscience about the leading role that cinema plays within that 'modern areopagus' that is Communication – especially as it influence culture. Pope Wojtyła understands the scope that audiovisual fiction has in this sense, and for this reason he has not stopped encouraging those who work in this industry to take advantage of the enormous possibilities of this popular entertainment medium in a responsible way. In this sense, it manifests a positive vision, which combines respect and admiration with critical analysis, trust and warnings, the defense of freedom and the call to responsibility.

A careful reading of the documents that form the magisterium of Saint John Paul II on cinema shows that this Pope contemplates the cinematographic phenomenon in a multifaceted way – as art, as an industry and as a means of communication, although he does not always make explicit or pay equal attention to each of them. Thus, he does not hesitate to classify cinema as authentic art, and highlights – among other aspects – its character as a 'melting pot' and unifier of other arts, its nature as art linked to technology, the qualities of its own form of expression (audiovisual language), and its

relationship with the *via pulchritudinis*. Regarding its industrial dimension, Pope Wojtyła is aware of the difficulties posed by a business activity, subject to a difficult economic balance, which usually requires the intervention of a network of companies belonging to various sectors (production, distribution, exhibition-broadcasting). Finally, Saint John Paul II understands cinematographic discourse as a communicative process, in which movie makers (producers, distributors and television channels) transmit messages (films) through a specific channel (movie theaters, television sets or the Internet) within a determined social, cultural, economic and political context, which shape individual and social ways of thinking (public opinion). In his teaching on cinema, this Roman Pontiff develops above all the artistic and socio-cultural (communicative) dimensions.

Likewise, the analysis of the texts that make up his teaching on the cinematographic medium reveals a great coherence of thought. Specifically, it is based on some essential points, which can be considered recurrent in his teaching: the centrality of the human being – understood in a transcendent way as *imago Dei* – as the measure (origin and end) of all cultural activity; the need for an adequate anthropology on which to build the dramatic representation of human life (the defense of the dignity of the human person); and the appeal to personal freedom and responsibility.

In addition, Saint John Paul II places special emphasis on underlining the moral dimension of all forms of artistic or cultural expression. Being at the crossroads of all these areas, the cinema offers an ethical perspective of singular importance. In this sense, in his teaching on the cinematographic medium there are some ideas that stand out with deliberate frequency, and that show this clear ethical and deontological concern. Specifically: (1) it is a particularly suitable means to reflect on the fundamental truths of man and the world; (2) it has great influence as an agent of socialization and acculturation (pedagogical function); From this fact derives on the one hand (3) the responsibility of the spectators to train and acquire a critical judgment – either by themselves or with the help of parents and educators in the case of children and adolescents; and on the other (4) the responsibility of those who work in this industry to act with an ethical sense when promoting and disseminating certain audiovisual content (social responsibility). Finally, and in line with the first two points, (5) cinema also has enormous potential at the service of evangelization.

Here I conclude this synthesis of the teachings of Saint John Paul II on cinema with the clear awareness of having just sketched a first systematic exposition, which may open the way to future research. In this sense, I endorse the words with which the then President of the Pontifical Council for Social Communications, Archbishop Foley, concluded his presentation of the volume that brought together this magisterium for the first time:

The messages of the Holy Father collected together here are a starting point for reflection and remind us once more how much attention John Paul II has given to the large screen. It is an appeal to the sense of responsibility of all those who work in the film industry, and an encouragement to all of them to follow the road which many have already taken. This is particularly important given the fact that the cinema is an integral part of popular culture, representing its anxieties, its fears, and its expectations,

and every film will remain a testament of this culture which will be able to speak to future generations, bringing again to mind forgotten moments or moments never known. (Foley 2000, 10–11)

It is therefore my aim that this article may serve as a starting point for further research on the contribution of Saint John Paul II to the study of the nature of the cinematographic medium and its power for social and cultural influence. To mention just some of them – those which I am working on: Firstly, a comprehensive comparative study to assess in its proper measure the continuity and/or discontinuity that the pontificate of Pope Wojtyła represents with respect to the Catholic Church's teaching on cinema. Secondly, to explore in greater detail the remarkable harmony that exists between the teaching of Saint John Paul II on cinema – and, more specifically, his vision of the cinematographic medium as a pedagogue and social and cultural configurator – and the thinking of some experts in social sciences, pertaining to the academic field of Cultural Studies, and more specifically, to the relationship between cinema and society. Finally, the re-interpretation of the magisterium of Saint John Paul II on cinema – as part of his wider thoughts on culture, art and communication – from the perspective of the transcendentals of being (specifically, the *verum*, the *bonum* and the *pulchrum*) and the establishment of the links of each one of them with the different dimensions from which the cinematographic medium is most commonly approached: the artistic dimension (which is related to beauty), the socio-cultural dimension (which implies the search for the truth and the good) and the industrial dimension (which includes the promotion of the common good).

In sum, Saint John Paul II's teachings on cinema not only reconcile the Catholic Church with this Seventh Art, but also offer very useful ethical considerations for those who make movies and for those who enjoy them.

Notes

1. All the bibliographical references of the speeches of Saint John Paul II are taken from the original Vatican source on the papal magisterium (*Insegnamenti*). As will be appreciated from now on, there is a lag between the year in which the speech was delivered and the year of publication in this official source.
2. Another proof of the relevance of this teaching is the international conference that took place in mid-December 2000 in Rome on the theme *Giovanni Paolo II and il Cinema: Un itinerario di fede, cultura, arte e comunicazione*, and in whose organization the Pontifical Salesiana University of Rome, the Pontifical Councils for Culture and Social Communications, and the Vatican Film Library collaborated. The Proceedings of this international meeting were later published and constitute another valuable testimony of the interest aroused by the teachings of this Roman Pontiff on the cinematographic medium (see Siniscalchi 2001) This book includes the same compilation of speeches from the previous volume of this author, and adds the 24 interventions of the congress, in charge of academics and professionals of communication and cinema - among whom was a compatriot of the Pope, the Polish film director Krzysztof Zanussi.
3. We are referring specifically to the speech addressed to the members of the production team of *Quo Vadis?*, a Polish adaptation of the novel by Henryk Sienkiewicz, in which the film itself is not properly discussed, but rather the literary work in the context of the recent jubilee of the year 2000 (see John Paul II and Messori 2003).
4. See Viganò 2002 and Sartori 2011. The first includes 27 texts from Saint John Paul II – plus others from agencies of the Holy See and the Italian Episcopal Conference. The

second, with a more restrictive criterion, brings together 15 fragments of different magisterial texts.

5. Unda does not correspond to any acronym. It refers to the International Catholic Association for Radio and Television.
6. Specifically, it is worth highlighting the remarkable harmony that exists between the thought of Saint John Paul II and that of those academic experts who have studied the relationship between cinema and society in the field of Cultural Studies (among others, see Huaco 1965; Jarvie 1970; Tudor 1974; Jowett 1976; Monaco 1976; Turner 1988; Jowett & Linton 1989; Curran and Gurevitch 2005).
7. See, for example, Congregation for the Catholic Education 1986 (nos. 10b and 14–19); Congregation for the Catholic Education 1989 (nos. 8, 9, 41); Pontifical Council for Social Communications (1996).
8. Specific references to pornography and violence abound in messages and speeches addressed to the media, as well as the need to protect, especially, children and young people (see texts compiled by Fiestas 1991, 36 *ff*., 89 *ff*., 106 *ff*.; Aspíllaga 1994, 48 *ff*., 299 *ff*.). One can also recall here the catechesis on the *ethos* of the human body (known as the "Theology of the Body"), developed in several audiences from April 1981 onwards and published later as a book (see John Paul II 2006), and the document of the Pontifical Council for Social Communications entitled *Pornography and Violence in Social Communications: A Pastoral Response* (Pontifical Council for Social Communications 1991).
9. In respect to this, he offers this assessment: "I would like to recall here, for example, the numerous film presentations of the life and passion of Jesus and of the lives of the saints, still available in many film libraries, and which are useful, above all, to animate numerous cultural, recreational and catechetical activities undertaken by many dioceses, parishes and religious institutions. From those beginnings a rich body of religious cinema has been produced, with a large number of films that have had significant influence on many people, albeit with the limitations that the passage of time, inevitably, tends to highlight". (John Paul II and Messori 1997b)
10. Apart from this Italian company, other main co-producers were Beta (Italy) and Lube (Germany). This TV series consists of thirteen episodes presented as independent mini-films (90 mins. long) about some characters from the Old Testament, together with Jesus, Saint Paul, plus the books of Genesis and Revelation. It was produced between 1993 and 2002, shot in English with an international cast and renowen directors, and achieved great critical acclaim and audience success. The thirteen chapters were: *Genesis* (1994), *Abraham* (1993), *Jacob* (1994), *Joseph* (1995), *Moses* (1995), *Sansom and Delilah* (1996), *David* (1997), *Salomo* (1997), *Jeremiah* (1998), *Esther* (1999), *Jesus* (1999), *Saint Pablo* (2000) and *Revelation* (2000). Cf.: www.luxvide.it; www.imdb.com.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Notes on contributor

Alejandro Pardo graduated with a Ph. D. in Audiovisual Communication from the University of Navarra (Spain). He has worked for more than 25 years as Assistant and then Associate Professor of Production for Film & TV and Audiovisual Project Management at the School of Communication of this University. Author of half a dozen books on the film industry, as well as a number of contributions for collective books and journal articles. He made then a turning-point in his career and graduated in Theology at the University of Navarra, got a Doctorate in Moral Theology at the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross (Rome) and was

ordained priest. His current research is on Cinema and Religion, and on John Paul II's teachings on Culture, Art and Communications.

References

Aspíllaga, Carmela. 1994. *La Información en el Pensamiento de Juan Pablo II*. Piura: Publicaciones Universidad de Piura. Facultad de Ciencias de la Información.

Biltereyst, Daniël, and Daniela Treveri Gennari eds. 2015. "*Moralizing Cinema: Film, Catholicism and Power*." In Routledge Advances in Film Studies 37. New York; London: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.

Black, Gregory D. 1996. *Hollywood Censored: Morality Codes, Catholics, and the Movies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Buttiglione, Rocco, Carlo Fedeli, and Angelo (Card.) Scola, eds. 1984. *Karol Wojtyła Filosofo, Teologo, Poeta*. Atti del I Colloquio Internazionale del Pensiero Cristiano organizzato da ISTRA (Istituto di Studi per la Transizione), Università Lateranense, Roma, 23-25 settembre 1983. Città del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana.

Caldwell, John Thornton. 2008. *Production Culture: Industrial Reflexivity and Critical Practice in Film and Television*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Casebier, Allan. 1991. *Film and Phenomenology: Toward a Realist Theory of Cinematic Representation*. Cambridge-New York: Cambridge University Press.

Cebollada, Pascual. 2005. *Del Génesis a Internet: Documentos Del Magisterio Sobre Las Comunicaciones Sociales*. Madrid: BAC.

Congregation for Catholic Education. 1986. Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis (19-III-1985)." In *Enchiridion Vaticanum*, n. 51, 9:918–1072. Bologna: EDB. http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_19850319_ratio-fundamentalis_it.html

Congregation for Catholic Education. 1989. "Guide to the Training of Future Priests Concerning the Instruments of Social Communication (19-III-1986)." In *Enchiridion Vaticanum*, 10, 58–116. Bologna: EDB. http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/pccs/documents/rc_pc_pccs_doc_19031986_guide-for-future-priests_sp.html

Curran, James, and Michael Gurevitch, eds. 2005. *Mass Media and Society*. London: Hodder Arnold.

Di Bella, Teodoro. 2015. *La Centralità Della Persona Nella Filosofia Fenomenologica di Karol Wojtyła*. Studi e Ricerche. Nuova Serie. Roma: Collegio S. Lorenzo da Brindisi.

Dinan, Stephen A. 1981. "The Phenomenological Antropology of Karol Wojtyła." *The New Scholasticism* 55 (3): 317–330.

Dovere, Ugo. ed. 2008. *Arte e Beni Culturali Negli Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II*. Città del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana.

Fazio, Mariano. 1997. "La Sociedad de la Comunicación en el Pensamiento de Juan Pablo II." *Comunicación y Sociedad* X (2): 165–183. https://dadun.unav.edu/handle/10171/8780.

Ferrer, María Pilar. 2006. *Intuición y Asombro en la Obra Literaria de Karol Wojtyła*. Pamplona: Eunsa.

Fiestas, Eulalio, ed. 1991. *Juan Pablo II y Los Medios de Comunicación Social. NT Religión*. Pamplona: Eunsa.

Foley, John P. 2000. "Preface." In *Giovanni Paolo II e il Cinema: Tutti i Discorsi*, edited by Claudio Siniscalchi and John P. Foley, 10–12. Roma: Ente dello Spettacolo.

Caballero, García, and Juan Carlos. 2008. "Juan Pablo II y Los Medios de Comunicación." *Studium Legionense* 49: 231–249.

Gómez-Haces, José Antonio. 1996. "Orientaciones Pastorales y Disposiciones Pontificias Sobre Cinematografía 1895-1995." *Tesis Doctoral*, Pamplona: Facultad de Teología, Universidad de Navarra,.

Hesmondhalgh, David. 2002. *The Cultural Industries*. London: SAGE.

Huaco, George A. 1965. *Sociology of Film Art*. New York: Basic Books.

Jarvie, Ian C. 1970. *Towards a Sociology of the Cinema: A Comparative Essay on the Structure and Functioning of a Major Entertainment Industry*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

John Paul II and Vittorio Messori. 1994. *Cruzando el Umbral de la Esperanza*. Barcelona: Plaza & Janés.

John Paul II and Vittorio Messori. 1995a. "Address to the Participants at the Plenary Assembly of the Pontifical Council for Social Communications (12 March 1993)." In *Insegnameti di Giovanni Paolo II*, XVI.1, 1993: 618–21. Città del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana. http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/1993/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19930312_plen-pccs.html

John Paul II and Vittorio Messori. 1995b. "Address to the Representatives of the Production Companies involved in *The Bible* TV Series (9 December 1993)." In *Insegnameti di Giovanni Paolo II*, XVI.2, 1993: 1440–42. Città del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana. http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/it/speeches/1993/december/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19931209_antico-testam.html

John Paul II and Vittorio Messori. 1997a. "Address to the Participants at the Plenary Assembly of the Pontifical Council for Social Communications (17 March 1995) [Cinema first centennary]." In *Insegnameti di Giovanni Paolo II*, XVIII.1, 1995: 522–25. Città del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana. http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/1995/march/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19950317_plen-pccs.html

John Paul II and Vittorio Messori. 1997b. "Message for the 29th World Communications Day: *Cinema: Communicator of Culture and of Values* (6 January 1995/28 May 1995) [Cinema first centennary]." In *Insegnameti di Giovanni Paolo II*, XVIII.1, 1995: 33–38. Città del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana. http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/messages/communications/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_06011995_world-communications-day_sp.html

John Paul II and Vittorio Messori. 1999. "Address to the Participants at the I International Conference of Cinema Studies on *Cinema: A Vehicle for Spirituality and Culture* (1 December 1997)." In *Insegnameti di Giovanni Paolo II*, XX.2, 1997: 904–7. Città del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana. http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/speeches/1997/december/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19971201_cinema_sp.html

John Paul II and Vittorio Messori. 2000a. "Address to the Participants at the Conference on *Biblical Language and Contemporary Communication* (28 September 1998)." In *Insegnameti di Giovanni Paolo II*, XXI.2, 1998: 576–79. Città del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana. http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/es/speeches/1998/september/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19980928_linguagem-biblica.html

John Paul II and Vittorio Messori. 2000b. "Address to the Participants at the II International Conference of Cinema Studies on *Art, Life and Representation in Cinema: Aesthetic Sense, Spiritual Needs and Cultural Roles* (19 November 1998)." In *Insegnameti di Giovanni Paolo II*, XXI.2, 1998: 1037–40. Città del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana. http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/es/speeches/1998/november/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19981119_cinema.html

John Paul II and Vittorio Messori. 2002a. "Address to the Representatives of the Lux Vide Company (25 November 1999)." In *Insegnameti di Giovanni Paolo II*, XXII.2, 1999: 1019–20. Città del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana. http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/speeches/1999/november/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_25111999_lux-vide_sp.html

John Paul II and Vittorio Messori. 2002b. "Address to the Participants at the III International Conference of Cinema Studies on *Cinema: Images for a Dialogue between Peoples and a Culture of Peace in the Third Millennium* (2 December 1999)." In *Insegnameti di Giovanni Paolo II*, XXII.2, 1999: 1061–63. Città del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana. https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/1999/december/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_02121999_convegno-cinema.html

John Paul II and Vittorio Messori. 2003. "Address at the World Première of the new Polish Version of the Film *Quo Vadis?* (30 August 2001)." In *Insegnameti di Giovanni Paolo II*, XXIV.2, 2001: 221–22. Città del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana. http://www.vatican.va/

content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/2001/august/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_20010830_quo-vadis.html

John Paul II. 1979. "Message for the 50th Anniversary of The International Catholic Film Organization (OCIC) (31 October 1978)." In *Insegnameti di Giovanni Paolo II*, I, 1978: 83–86. Città del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana. https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/letters/1978/documents/hf_jp-ii_let_19781031_ocic.html

John Paul II. 1980. "Address to Artists and People from the Advertising Industry at the Herkules-Saal Der Residenz in Múnich (19 November 1980)." In *Insegnameti di Giovanni Paolo II*, III.2, 1980: 1354–64. Città del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana. http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/de/speeches/1980/november/documents/hf_jp_ii_spe_19801119_artisti-giornalisti.html

John Paul II. 1984. "Address to the IV Conference of the Catholic Association of Cinema Exhibitors (24 May 1984)." In *Insegnameti di Giovanni Paolo II*, VII.1, 1984: 1486–89. Città del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana. http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/speeches/1984/may/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19840524_esercenti-cinema-cattolici_it.html

John Paul II. 1988. "Address to the People of the Communications Industry (Hollywood) at Los Angeles (15 September 1987)." In *Insegnameti di Giovanni Paolo II*, X.3, 1987: 534–41. Città del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana. http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/speeches/1987/september/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19870915_operatori-mass-media_en.html

John Paul II. 1993. "Message for the 25th World Communications Day: *The Communications Media and the Unity and Progress of the Human Family* (24 January/12 May 1991) [20th Anniversary of the Pastoral Instruction *Communio et Progressio*]." In *Insegnameti di Giovanni Paolo II*, XIV.1, 1991: 178–83. Città del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana. http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/messages/communications/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_24011991_world-communications-day.html

John Paul II. 2006. *Man and Woman He Created Them: A Theology of the Body*. Boston: Pauline Books & Media.

Jowett, Garth, and James M. Linton. 1989. *Movies as Mass Communication*. 2nd ed. The Sage Commtext Series, v. 4. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Jowett, Garth. 1976. *Film: The Democratic Art*. 1st ed. American Film Institute Series. Boston: Little, Brown.

Leuzzi, Lorenzo, ed. 1997. *Etica e Poetica in Karol Wojtyła*. Colloquio sull' "Etica e poetica: la concezione della persona in Karol Wojtyła," in Occasione del cinquantesimo anniversario dell'ordinazione sacerdotale di Giovanni Paolo II, Pontificia Università Gregoriana, 19 ottobre 1996. Torino: SEI.

Mayer, Vicki, Miranda J. Banks, and John Thornton Caldwell, eds. 2009. *Production Studies: Cultural Studies of Media Industries*. New York, London: Routledge.

Mazza, Giuseppe, ed. 2006. *Karol Wojtyła, Un Pontefice in Diretta: Sfida e Incanto Nel Rapporto Tra Giovanni Paolo II e La TV. Atti Del Convegno* "Evento Religioso, Evento Televisivo: Giovanni Paolo II." Roma, Pontificia Università Gregoriana, 6-7 aprile 2006. Roma: RAI-ERI.

Monaco, Paul. 1976. *Cinema and Society*. New York: Elsevier.

Negri, Luigi, and Giovanni Paolo, II. 1988. "*L'uomo e la Cultura Nel Magistero di Giovanni Paolo II*." *Già e Non Ancora*. Milano: Jaca Book.

Pardo, Alejandro. 2001. "El Cine Como Medio de Comunicación Social y la Responsabilidad Social Del Cineasta." In *La Ética Desprotegida: Ensayos Sobre Deontología de la Comunicación*, edited by Mónica Codina, 117–141. Pamplona: Eunsa.

Pardo, Alejandro. 2005. "Juan Pablo II y el Cine." *Nuestro Tiempo*, August 2005.

Pardo, Alejandro. 2019. "El Magisterio de San Juan Pablo II Sobre el Cine: Una Interpretación Ética Desde Los Trascendentales Del Ser." Tesis Doctoral. Pontificia Università Della Santa Croce. Roma: Autoedición.

Paul VI. 1967. "Discurso a representantes del espectáculo, la prensa y los medios audiovisuales (6-V-1967)." In *Insegnamenti di Paolo VI*, V:209–15. Città del Vaticano: Libreria

Editrice Vaticana. https://w2.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/it/speeches/1967/may/documents/hf_p-vi_spe_19670506_stampa-tv-spettacolo.html

Pérez-Latre, Francisco J., ed. 2003. *Los Nuevos Areópagos: 25 Textos de Juan Pablo II en Las Jornadas Mundiales de Las Comunicaciones Sociales, 1979-2003*. Pamplona: Eunsa.

Pius XII. 1955. "Apostolic Exhortations to Representatives of the Cinema World o the Ideal Film (21 June 1955/28 October 1955)." In *AAS*, 47: 501–512. Civitas Vaticana: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis. http://www.vatican.va/content/pius-xii/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_p-xii_exh_25101955_ideal-film.html

Pius XII. 1957. " "Encyclical Letter *Miranda Prosus* on Motion Pictures, Radio and Television (8 September 1957)." In *AAS*, 49: 765–805. Civitas Vaticana: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis. http://www.vatican.va/content/pius-xii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xii_enc_08091957_miranda-prorsus.html

Pontifical Council for Culture. 2008. *The Via Pulchritudinis, Way of Beauty*. Documento final de la Asamblea Plenaria de 2006. Madrid: BAC. http://www.cultura.va/content/cultura/en/pub/documenti/ViaPulchritudinis.html

Pontifical Council for Social Communications. 1991. "Pornography and Violence in the Communications Media: A Pastoral Response (7 May 1989)." In *Enchiridion Vaticanum*, n. 59, 11:1406–1416. Bologna: EDB. http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/pccs/documents/rc_pc_pccs_doc_07051989_pornography_en.html

Pontifical Council for Social Communications. 1996. "100 Anni Di Cinema (1 January 1996).". http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/pccs/documents/rc_pc_pccs_doc_19960101_100-cinema_it.html

Pontificia Bíblica Comisión. 1995. "La Interpretación de la Biblia en la Iglesia (15-IV-1993)." In *Enchiridion Vaticanum*, n. 55, 13:1554–1733. Bologna: EDB. http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/pcb_doc_index_sp.htm

Poupard, Paul (Card.). 2001. "Saluto Del Cardinale." In *Giovanni Paolo II e il Cinema: Un Itinerario di Fede, Cultura, Arte e Comunicazione*, edited by Claudio Siniscalchi, 109–111. 36. Roma: Ente dello Spettacolo.

Sartori, Alessandro, ed. 2011. *I Papi e Il Cinema: Documenti e Interventi Sul Cinema Dei Sommi Pontefici*. Città del Gubbio: Unaluna-Ente dello Spettacolo.

Second Vatican Council. 1966. "Pastoral Constitution Gaudium et Spes on the Catholic Church in the Modern World (7 December 1965)." In *AAS*, 58: 1025–1120. Civitas Vaticana: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis. https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html

Siniscalchi, Claudio, and John P. Foley, eds. 2000. *Giovanni Paolo II e il Cinema: Tutti i Discorsi*. Immagini allo Specchio 35. Roma: Ente dello Spettacolo.

Siniscalchi, Claudio, ed. 2001. *Giovanni Paolo II e il Cinema: Un Itinerario di Fede, Cultura, Arte e Comunicazione*, 36. Roma: Ente dello Spettacolo.

Sobchack, Vivian. 1992. *The Address of the Eye: A Phenomenology of Film Experience*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Staglianò, Antonio. 2008. *Ecce Homo: la persona, l'idea di cultura e la "Questione Antropologica" in Papa Wojtyła*. Siena: Cantagalli.

Trasatti, Sergio, ed. 1988. *Il Papa a Hollywood: Il Discorso di Giovanni Paolo II. 25 Commenti Italiani. Immagini Allo Specchio*. Roma: Ente dello Spettacolo.

Tudor, Andrew. 1974. *Image and the Visual Arts: Studies in the Sociology of Film*. London: Allen & Unwin.

Turner, Graeme. 1988. *Film as Social Practice*. London: Routledge.

Viganò, Dario Edoardo. 2002. *Cinema e Chiesa: I documenti del Magistero*. Accademia 9. Cantalupa (Torino): Effatà.

Wolpiuk, Kazimierz. 2001. "Il Mondo Della Comunicazione: il Primo Areopago di Giovanni Paolo II." Roma: Pontificia Studiorum Universitas a S. Thoma Aq. in Urbe.