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*Freedom as the basic right of man in the social teaching of John Paul II.*

**Abstract:**

The paper-based on John Paul II’s three encyclicals: *Laborem exercens*, *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, *Centesimus annus* – undertakes the issue of defence of human freedom, which is the founding block of all human rights. Human freedom and personal dignity can be ensured only by the Gospel, which rejects any bondage or captivity, and preaches human rights. It should become the essential criterion in shaping a state policy as well as in evaluating ideologies, political systems and action programmes. To begin with, the issue of freedom is presented as a basic human right. Next, the issue of freedom with reference to the spiritual life and, more generally, to the right to life, is analysed. Finally, the issue of the relation between freedom and economic activity is raised, where the right to work and the right to unite are given ample consideration.

**Key words:** John Paul II, freedom, work, human rights