

The dissertation describes the development of the Catholic Church's view on the human rights problems during the period from the time of Great French revolution until pontificate of John XXIII. Different perspectives and its views on human rights of every pope are reflected in the encyclicals.

It is explained in the introduction, that the idea of the human rights was not new to the Catholic Church. It considered human's freedom a gift from God. According to the Catholic Church people had duties towards God and had to listen to him and therefore the Catholic Church was against unlimited freedom during the period of the Enlightenment and Great French revolution. The Catholic Church was afraid of destroying Catholic religion and as a result it was against revolutionary propagation of human rights and modern ideas. Pope Pius IX. announced all modern ideas and new movements as nonsense.

There was a change in the approach of Leo XIII. when he started to dedicate to social problems, particularly the social question. His successor Pius X. came back to tradition of Pius IX., who interfered against modernism in the Catholic Church.

The Catholic Church was forced by the First World War, totalitarian ideas and the Second World War to protect human being. Pius XI., Pius XII. and John XXIII. stopped talking about human being as an individual, but talked about human being as a person. They strived for not to dishonour human's dignity. Pius XII. and John XXIII. emphasized that it is important for people to be aware of their own dignity and to ask for their own rights. John XXIII. added human duties to the human rights, because he wanted an order in society not anarchy.

During the pontificate of John XXIII. opening Catholic Church to modern society was finished and the Catholic Church has become an important supporter of human rights and freedom.