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Joni Manumpak Parulian Gultom

Department of Theology,
Real Theological Seminary

iD 0000-0001-6195-5781

Otieli Harefa

Department of Theology,
Real Theological Seminary

iD 0000-0002-3034-4264

Vicky BGD Paat

Department of Theology,
Real Theological Seminary

iD 0000-0001-7782-4655

Christian Parents' Strategies for Passing on Spiritual Life to Generation Alpha: Theological Study of Psalm 78: 3-11

This study aims to explain the strategy of parents in passing on a spiritual life to the Alpha generation according to Psalm 78: 5-11. The Alpha generation has experienced spiritual decline due to technological developments, cultural changes, the impact of globalization, and shifts in social values since childhood. The argument is that although the full responsibility for a person's spiritual life lies with each individual, the Church is also responsible for passing on spiritual life in synergy with parents and families to the Alpha Generation. The study used a qualitative approach with a literature study method. The conclusion is that parents base their spiritual heritage on the Bible, family-based discipleship in homes, sharing parents' spiritual life experiences with their children, and wise use of media technology as a teaching tool.

Key words: parents, generation alpha, spiritual heritage, faith, discipleship.

Introduction

The Old Testament mentions the God of worship as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Exo 3: 6; 15-16; 4: 5; 1 Kings 18: 38; 1 Chro 29: 18; Deu 9: 5), referring to one lineage with three generations. This

mention is very special because it indicates that God's promise that Abraham believes in is passed on to his son Isaac, his grandson Jacob, and finally to the whole nation of Israel. Paul also explicitly mentions faith in his spiritual son Timothy, whose faith comes from the teaching of his mother Eunike and grandmother Lois (2 Tim 1: 5). Acts 2: 46-47 states that the early Church's life was a whole of unity, joy, and rapid spiritual growth, sharing the Word and praying regularly in spiritual meetings in the community. In this community, parents and children live in peace, sharing fellowship and worshipping God together. Personal and family spiritual growth occurred rapidly, and they became living witnesses that drew many people to be saved (Acts 2: 46). The hypothesis states that parents are responsible for accompanying their children to continue to grow in faith and have a leading role in passing on their spiritual life on an ongoing basis to the next generation.

Generation Alpha is facing spiritual issues. They are due to technological developments, cultural changes, the impact of globalization, and shifts in social values since childhood. The main problem is the influence of social media, digital games, and instant Internet access that is not controlled. Cassandra, a group specializing in young consumer studies, reports that 58% of Gen Alpha, ages 7 to 12, identify themselves as "gamers." The Institute for Family Studies and the Wheatley Institute survey also revealed that children aged 11-18 spend an average of 10 hours a day using digital media to play games, social media, video chat, and send text messages, and that does not include watching television[1]. This condition makes them focus on things that are instant and superficial. The convenience of cyberspace has sucked up their time and attention, resulting in a decrease in interest in engaging in spiritual activities that require a considerable amount of time for reflection and tranquillity.

The following fact is that Gen Alpha has an attitude of doubt and excessive criticism of religion. This generation is very comfortable with digital communication and expects seamless integration of technology in all aspects of their lives, including religious practices[2]. This generation can be challenging if the spiritual teaching is not supported by the correct logic of theological study and the relevant pastoral approach. In addition, the lack of personal self-reflection and a fast-paced

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[1]   K. Valatton, *Unlocking the Destiny of Gen Z and Gen Alpha*, Www.Krisvallotton. Com, last modified 2023, (date of access: 21.05.2024), https://www.krisvallotton. com/unlocking-the-destiny-of-gen-z-and-gen-alpha.

[2]   R. Hoskins, *What You Should Know About Gen Alpha*, Goodnewsfl.Org, last modified 2023, (date of access: 29.09.2023), https://www.goodnewsfl.org/ what-you-should-know-about-gen-alpha/.

lifestyle make Generation Alpha rarely take the opportunity to reflect or explore spiritual values. Spiritual activities that require contemplation and silence will be difficult to do. Lastly, the Alpha generation is susceptible to the influence of moral relativism caused by the influence of parents who do not direct their spirituality. The survey results show that only 49% of the Millennial Generation (The Gen Alpha's parent) are affiliated with Christianity, while 40% are not at all[3]. They allow children to develop themselves and create without strict supervision with spiritual values[4]. Even Quart coined a term called "Baby Jenius Edutainment Complex", which refers to the actions of modern parents to force their children always to learn every minute to have specific intelligence and skills[5].

The research by Casson, Woolley, Pittaway et al. shows that children's spiritual qualities are relational, based on current circumstances, and influenced by the environment. Indicators to measure come from the exploration of church toddler groups, the lens of ownership, behaviour, and trust levels[6]. Frady offers the concept of "Godly Play" with a fundamental theory that provides the idea of theological rendering to children who are 2 years old. The goal is to build an environment that offers language choices and play interactions to capture theological understanding from a child's point of view[7]. Zarzycki sees the Church as expressing the quality of the Scripture as the truth of the Gospel and the history of salvation, culminating in faith in Jesus Christ as it builds the spirituality of humanity. This research offers a different approach by referring to the strategies of parents who are fully responsible in passing on spiritual life to their children who are the Alpha generation in the era of technological advancement and social media.

Biblical Theology

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[3]   C.W. Brant, *Navigating the Faith Generation Gap*, www.Cindywangbrandt. Com, last modified 2019, (date of access: 3.05.2024), https://cindywangbrandt. com/navigating-the-faith-generation-gap/.

[4]   S. Cottrell, *A Year-by-Year Guide to the Different Generations*, www.Parents.Com, last modified 2024, (date of access: 3.05.2024), https://www.parents.com/parenting/ better-parenting/style/generation-names-and-years-a-cheat-sheet-for-parents/.

[5]   HH. Stewart, *Helicopter Parenting May Lead to "Hothouse Children"*, Www.Familyeducation.Com, last modified 2023, (date of access: 3.05.2024), https://www.familyeducation.com/toddlers/behavior-discipline/ helicopter-parenting-may-lead-to-hothouse-children.

[6]   A. Casson et al., *Paying Attention to the Spiritual Flourishing of Young Children in Church Toddler Groups: A Scoping Study Evaluating the Feasibility of a Research Study in This Context*, "Religions" 14, no. 2 (2023), pp. 1-13.

[7]   K. Frady, *Rendering Theology with 2-Year-Old Children: A Godly Play and Grounded Theory Combination*, "International Journal of Children's Spirituality" 24 (2019), pp. 183-201, https://api.semanticscholar.org/CorpusID:181567193.

The purpose of this study is to explain the strategies parents use to pass on a spiritual life to their Alpha Generation children based on Psalm 78: 5-11. Parents become the main subjects essential in passing on a spiritual life to their children. The offered reconstruction is the first, parents base all forms of teaching on the Word of God as the best source of spiritual heritage. Secondly, special meetings are necessary for discipleship in homes. Thirdly, the best testimony of spiritual heritage for children is not material possessions and all forms of success but the historical value of the journey of the growth of the parents' Christian life that must be told and shared.

Method

The research uses a qualitative approach with a literature study method. Qualitative research explores and provides deeper insights into real-world problems, using its ability to explain processes and patterns of human behaviour that are difficult to measure[8]. The first discussion is about the Alpha generation with all the characteristics it has, especially the understanding of spirituality and the possessed spiritual qualities. Then, it was continued by describing and explaining the strategies of parents to pass on spiritual heritage to the Alpha generation, which was carried out through steps to make God's Word the primary source of spiritual inheritance, conducting family-based discipleship in the home in daily life, setting an example through living testimony and spiritual journey with Christ. After that, the author offers other practical steps for parents to use media technology wisely, resulting in conclusions.

Findings and results

The Alpha generation was born in 2010. Their growth demographics are expected to reach 2.2 billion people by 2025. This generation has not had a close relationship with the Church since childhood. The world recognizes this generation as trendsetters in life because of their rapid progress[9]. The characteristics of this generation are very

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[8]   S. Tenny, J. M. Brannan, G.D. Brannan, *Qualitative Study*, StatPearls Publishing, Treasure Island (FL), 2023, http://europepmc.org/books/NBK470395.

[9]   S. Uhrig, *Generation Alpha: Diapers, Training Wheels, and Artificial Intelligence*, in: *Real. Deal. Heal. Gen Z and Social Issues*, Lincoln, NE: Advent Source, 2021, pp. 87-90, https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/cye-pubs/12/?fr=operanews%0Ahttps://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1011&context=cye-pubs.

different from those of their parents, who are millennials. The difference can be seen in social life patterns, thinking patterns, emotional and motor development, and social behaviour patterns[10]. This generation tends to be innovative and masters technology and media. Still, it is severely lacking in spiritual knowledge and life skills. In addition, this generation lacks practical skills and the ability to make the best decisions. Parents teach social, economic, and innovative skills that children love in addition to the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics[11]. This generation grows up with a high level of technological literacy and innovation and has been a part of their lives since childhood.

Here are some things to note about this generation. At first, the Alpha generation is experiencing an identity crisis and weakening of spiritual qualities. This generation is exposed to unlimited global cultural ideas through the Internet, so they tend to experience confusion in finding spiritual identity and the actual value of life. This generation also questions the true meaning of life, purpose, and the value of eternity. They are called "screamagers"; a term that describes grumpy behaviour and develops into stereotypes[12]. Secondly, this generation is prone to anxiety and depression. This generation has high social expectations with pressure and competition from social media. The phenomenon is called "Hothouse children", meaning that the Alpha gen is forced to excel academically faster than the cognitive and intellectual standards corresponding to the usual child development standards. Stress also occurs due to the competitive nature of parenting[13]. Thirdly, this generation has difficulty connecting with the spiritual community. This generation is physically isolated. They tend to rarely gather in person in certain groups, thus having the effect of missing out on the opportunity to feel the support and closeness of the Church community

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[10]   M. Vlasuk, *Generation Alpha: Online, Dependent, and Depressed*, in: *The Lancet Child & Adolescent Health*, vol. 6, Elsevier Ltd, 2022, p. 363, DOI: 10.1016/S2352-4642(22)00130-4.

[11]   G. Perry, *Generation Alpha: Understanding Our Children and Helping Them Thrive*, "TEACH Journal of Christian Education", vol. 16, 2022.

[12]   M. Drugaş, *Screenagers or "Screamagers"? Current Perspectives on Generation Alpha*, "Psychological Thought" 15, no. 1 (2021), pp. 1-11, https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Marius-Drugas/publication/360313636_SCREENAGERS_OR_SCREAMAGERS_CURRENT_PERSPECTIVES_ON_GENERATION_ALPHA/links/6310773eacd814437ff2c80d/SCREENAGERS-OR-SCREAMAGERS-CURRENT-PERSPECTIVES-ON-GENERATION-ALPHA.pdf?_sg%5B0%5D=.

[13]   HH. Stewart, *Helicopter Parenting May Lead to "Hothouse Children"*.

or other spiritual groups. Most likely, it was the parents who restricted them from moving. Otto stated that Gen Alpha's relationship with the religious, spiritual community is more sporadic and virtual because the majority of Gen Alpha parents do not facilitate activities to build relationships with the Church from childhood[14].

Another unique designation for the Alpha generation is the Glass generation. It is a generation similar to mobile phone and laptop screenshots from the beginning. It is significant that this generation is experiencing the development of early adolescence influenced by consumerism, physical sophistication, social psychology, and advanced education. However, the reality in the field is that the level of maturity quality is more backward than it should be[15]. If this Alpha generation is not optimally prepared to adapt to the current situation, this generation is vulnerable to isolation and has problems with mental health. More excellent physical encounters will be necessary for this generation to adapt[16]. Generation Alpha also has problems with developmental psychology. Firstly, attention span and concentration are disrupted due to a lifestyle that simultaneously looks at many Internet screens. Secondly, this generation is more active on social networks, so they interact less in the real world with face-to-face communication patterns. Thirdly, the development of the imagination and creativity of the Apha generation is highly dependent on technology, never coming from their efforts. Eventually, this gene is prone to depression, anxiety, and loneliness[17].

Definition, theological foundations and forms of spiritual life

Spiritual life refers to the inheritance of religious beliefs and practices from generation to generation within a family, community, or religious group. These spiritual values include teachings, traditions, and values rooted in the Scripture and the life experiences of believers.

[14]   A. Otto, *He Spirituality of Generation Alpha: A Look Ahead*, Www.Godinallthings.Com, last modified 2023, (date of access: 2.05.2024), https://godinallthings.com/2023/10/31/the-spirituality-of-generation-alpha-a-look-ahead/.

[15]   Mc Crindle, *Understanding Generation Alpha*, Generationalpha.com, 2022, p. 7.

[16]   P.T. Diane Warns, *Generation Alpha and Mental Health*, Therapist.Com, last modified 2023, https://therapist.com/generations/generation-alpha/.

[17]   Team Iberdrola, *Generation Alpha Will Lead a 100% Digital World*, www.Berdrola.Com, last modified 2023, (date of access: 20.07.2023), https://www.iberdrola.com/talent/alpha-generation#:~:text=PROBLEMS OF GENERATION ALPHA&text=Some neuroscientists and psychologists point,Reduced attention span and concentration.

This spiritual life is seen as an essential component of one's spiritual identity and journey, influencing personal faith and shared worship[18,19]. The meaning of Psalm 78: 4 states that believers have a responsibility to pass on spiritual truth – not to keep the story of God's goodness private or forgotten. Another verse in Deuteronomy 4: 9 emphasizes the act of being aware of the Israelites' negligence in the lost memory of God's inclusion in the nation's journey to the Promised Land. Every event must always be remembered and taught to generations. Deuteronomy 11: 8-20 also emphasizes obedience that brings blessings and disobedience that brings curses. The Israelites were instructed to keep God's promises (v. 8a) by committing to worship with all their hearts (v. 13). In verse 19, it is clearly said that the command for parents is to teach their children and talk about it in four conditions of daily life: at home, on the way, when resting, and when waking up from sleep.

Barna released the results of a 2019 survey, which stated that children inherited faith from their mothers (68%), fathers (46%) and grandparents (37%)[20]. Parents and the home are the best subjects and places in the quest to pass on this legacy of faith. Parents make the home the most suitable place for everyday activities and a place to gather and discuss the current spirituality-related issues. These discussions can be done either in the dining room, in the living room, or even in the bedroom. Ziatdinov and Cilliers identified Gen Alpha, who are influenced by social media, social connections, high levels of perception, and the ability to interpret information as strengths to consider in the learning approach[21]. Parents seek to direct Generation Alpha in their innocence to be good discussion partners and form a gradual and continuous mindset based on the Bible.

The second form is the inheritance of faith experience in the process of life journey. The quality of parents' faith has certainly experienced

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[18]   J.M.P. Gultom et al., *Strategi Musik Dan Kerygma Influencer Kristen Berdasarkan Kepemimpinan Daud Dalam Membangun Motivasi Diri Native Digital [Christian Influencer Music and Kerygma Strategy Based on David's Leadership in Building Native Digital Self-Motivation]*, "Epigraphe" 5, no. 2 (2021), pp. 161-175.

[19]   Team Biblehub, *Spiritual Heritage*, Biblehub.Com, https://biblehub.com/topical/s/spiritual_heritage.htm.

[20]   Team Barna, *How Faith Heritage Relates to Faith Practice*, Barna.Com, last modified 2019, (date of access: 12.01.2025), https://www.barna.com/research/faith-heritage-faith-practice/.

[21]   R. Ziatdinov, J. Cilliers, *Generation Alpha: Understanding the Next Cohort of University Students*, "European Journal of Contemporary Education" 10, no. 3 (2021), pp. 783-789, https://arxiv.org/pdf/2202.01422.

long ups and downs of formation and is full of challenges. This kind of experience needs to be retold and explained to their children as a valuable life reference and spiritual value. The goal is for this spiritual experience to be used in the practice of children's spiritual growth in the future. With all the achieved results, developing parents' faith can provide an overview so children can easily understand the spiritual life. There are three reasons for this action. Firstly, it is a form of parental humility in giving the best response. Parents are often portrayed as senior personalities and feared in certain tribes or ethnicities. The result is the emergence of a large gap between parents and children. The transfer of spiritual experience is also hampered. Secondly, the life experience between parents and children is very different. However, the basic concepts and spiritual built values, such as patience, commitment, loyalty, and so on, are lessons that can be emulated. Thirdly, it is a form of responsibility. Parents' call is to prepare their children to be resilient and ready to face the next life in the future both mentally, outwardly and spiritually. Therefore, any experience, including the experience of the spiritual journey, becomes the essential material for the principal capital of their children's lives. The mental quality of children also needs serious attention.

Family-based religious discipleship

The Alpha Generation must be helped to recognize the true meaning of life. A necessary action that parents always do is to set an example. By building a family altar, parents reflect on everyday deeds that show life's meaning and faith's value, which is far more effective than a million spiritual words. Parents hold family meetings at mutually agreed-upon gathering times. They try to encourage parents to make time for warm and straightforward discussions. The discussion aims to train children's openness and thinking by allowing them to express their opinions and judgments. Parents can practice attitudes by agreeing, disagreeing or finding the best middle way when a solution has not been reached. The goal is for churches and pastors to anticipate the current limitations and inhibiting factors. So that parents can be refreshed specifically through a special meeting or prayer.

Parents can create a loving atmosphere by giving their children space to freely express their feelings, share life experiences or ask questions about spiritual matters. Support and encouragement are given when children experience specific challenges or difficulties at school and in daily life through attitudes that build their confidence in God. This support is critical because the Alpha generation grew up

under social and technological pressures, so every word of encourage-ment and parental assistance can help them and give them a sense of comfort, security and courage. Transpersonal action from parents to children requires a revitalizing and growth initiative tailored to the family's needs. It involves the development of personalized spiritual practices. Essentially, parents are at the center of a comprehensive strategy for the children's spiritual growth[22].

When implementing family-based discipleship to provide emotional support, there are several things to consider. At first, create a safe and inclusive environment. Parents ensure that home becomes an emotionally safe place for Gen Alpha to fellowship. Children will feel comfortable sharing feelings and experiences through open, non-judgmental communication. Parents open the Word as the primary teaching material and teach children to know the Person of the Holy Spirit and to experience His presence. It also aligns with Stout and Dein's research, which states that fellowship follows the pattern of Jesus teaching His 12 disciples. The goal is to teach the disciples to

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[22]   J.M.P. Gultom, *Protestant Church Strategy in Building Spiritual Identity for Generation Alpha*, "Verbum Vitae" 41, no. 4, (date of access: 19.12.2023), pp. 1027-1046, https://czasopisma.kul.pl/index.php/vv/article/view/16531. The generation is navigating the complex terrain of a postmodern era character-ized by the pervasive dissemination of concepts such as skepticism, subjectiv-ism, and relativism. Gen Alpha has experienced a profound shift in cultural values, with a marked transition from religiosity to secularity. Consequently, the Church must direct her attention towards the ideological and spiritual well-being of the generation. The influence of distortionary forces on the perception of reality is a matter of concern, stemming from various sources such as peers in the community, the educational system, social media, and the vast expanse of the Internet. The result show that Gen Alpha has been raised in the context of post-Christian and post-Church cultural environments. In this research, a qualitative research approach is used, predominantly through an extensive review of pertinent literature. The examination commences with an in-depth exploration of Gen Alpha and the formation of spiritual identity. Subsequently, the strategic initiatives conducted by the Protestant Church are examined and the initiatives include worship services, fatherly mentorship, and cultivating a strong Christian identity. The conclusion shows the collaborative efforts of the Church with the pastoral team, in the construction of its ministry. This is characterized by the implementation of transpersonal actions, the guiding of healing initiatives for the needs of families, and the cultivation of personalized spiritual practices. An important component of the comprehensive strategy includes the training and education of fathers to assume a central role in build-ing the spiritual development of children. Furthermore, the Church values the spiritual building of children aged between 4 and 14 years to fortify the Christian identity.

receive and experience the Holy Spirit and to be committed follow-
ers of Christ[23]. Secondly, parents enlarge their capacity in the art of
listening. Parents give their full attention and are not quickly inter-
rupted. They respond in empathy when Gen Alpha shares something.
A healthy emotional connection and a strong bond between children
and parents will be built when parents listen actively. Thirdly, parents
creatively take specific actions so that children can express their emo-
tions optimally by drawing, telling stories or role-playing. The goal is
for children to learn to express their feelings, which may sometimes
be challenging to convey in words. Casson et al. show that a creative
environment will open children's paradigms to learn and show their
understanding of ideas. An understanding of children's spirituality
as relational, based on the here and now, and shaped by the environ-
ment[24]. Fourthly, parents direct skills in managing children's emotions.
The step is to teach children to recognize and name every response
that appears and provide strategies for calming down when their feel-
ings are disturbed or they are sad. Parents emphasize the importance
of praying and seeking God's guidance when faced with uncontrolled
emotions. Mocanu and Clima refer to emotional intelligence that con-
tributes to accurate assessment and expression of emotions in oneself
and others, to effective regulation of emotions in oneself and others,
and to the use of feelings to motivate, plan, and achieve goals in one's
life[25]. Emotional intelligence emphasizes the importance of teaching
parents to children in managing emotions from an early age by devel-
oping self-control and empathy both for themselves and others to be
able to live well in a social community.

Theological study of Psalm 78: 3-11

Psalm 78 is the teaching song of Asaph, a Levite who was gifted with
music and prophecy in the court of King David. This Psalm addresses
the theme of God's faithfulness and human disobedience, focusing
on the responsibility to pass on faith and worship from one generation
to the next. Its teaching serves as a generational warning, warning
the Israelites not to repeat the unfaithfulness of their ancestors, and

[23]   A. Stout, S. Dein, *Alpha and Evangelical Conversion*, "Journal of Beliefs & Values" 34, no. 2, (date of access: 1.08.2013), pp. 256-261, DOI: 10.1080/13617672.2013.808032.

[24]   A. Casson et al., *Paying Attention to the Spiritual Flourishing of Young Children in Church Toddler Groups: A Scoping Study Evaluating the Feasibility of a Research Study in This Context.*

[25]   L. Mocanu. C.E. Clima, *Emotional Intelligence*, "New Trends in Psychology" 3, no. 1 (2020), pp. 30-34.

a commitment to share God's work with future generations[26]. In particular, Psalm 78: 3-11 contains an important message to the Israelites regarding the history and deeds of God as well as the dangers that will occur if they forget His works. These verses also teaches children the history of God's deeds to always remember God's miraculous deeds on the journey from Egypt to the Promised Land. In general, Psalm 78 gives important points, firstly, that history and God's work are important things to teach children and the next generation. Hays states wisdom and history can create a safe environment for healing communities to recover and reorient themselves to the reality of a covenant relationship with God[27]. Secondly, it warns of the apparent danger to God's people of forgetting God's deeds. People will lose focus and make various mistakes. Warnings will give memory space to the hearing ear. Boyd reveals an understanding of the "remembering" step used rhetorically in influencing the formation of identity in ancient Israel[28]. Thirdly, it is a warning to avoid rebellion resulting from disobedience and violation of God's teachings.

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Passing on living testimony through oral tradition and example (v. 3-4)

The beginning of verse 3 emphasizes: "What we have heard and known..." It indicates that faith can be passed on to children primarily through parents' lived experiences and testimony. It is also stated in Deuteronomy 6: 6-7, which commands parents to teach the Word to their children repeatedly. This repetition is clearly demonstrated at home or on the road, while resting or engaged in activities. In 2 Timothy 1: 5, it is clearly stated that Timothy's faith lived on because it was inherited from his grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice. It demonstrates that the testimony of faith is not a matter of words, but of consistent living in everyday life. Burggraeve emphasizes the attention given to the transition from the implicit to the explicit religious

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[26]   B. Weber, *Song, Prayer, Scripture: Aspects of the Reception of the Book of Psalms from the Hebrew Bible to the 21st Century*, in: *Song, Prayer, Scripture: Aspects of the Reception of the Book of Psalms from the Hebrew Bible to the 21st Century*, ed. D. Davage, L.-S. Tiemeyer 2025, pp. 167-186, https://www.bloomsburycollections.com/monograph-detail?docid=b-9780567711854&tocid=b-9780567711854-chapter10.

[27]   R.W. Poe Hays, *Trauma, Remembrance, and Healing: The Meeting of Wisdom and History in Psalm 78*, "Journal for the Study of the Old Testament", vol. 41, no. 2 (2016), pp. 183-204, DOI: 10.1177/0309089216628420.

[28]   S.L. Boyd, *The Rhetoric of Memory and the Formation of Identity in Psalm 78 and Deuteronomy 32*, "Biblical Research" 66 (2021), pp. 7-30.

meaning of blessing as a gift expressed in its two-dimensional modalities, namely speech and gesture. It indicates that verbal testimony is significant and must be considered in the inherited faith[29].

Narrative and storytelling of faith are used to pass on faith to children. Therefore, telling the story to future generations (children and grandchildren) must be based on novels or scripts that convey faith, not just rigid doctrine. King David's praise in Psalm 145: 4 demonstrates David's commitment to glorify God with all His power and might forever. It shows David's determination to teach and share with everyone, including children, about God's mercy and goodness. Even when we trace back to the Israelites' miraculous entry into the Promised Land by crossing the Jordan River, memorial stones are placed as historical narratives commemorating it (Jos 4: 6-7). Therefore, the teaching of the faith cannot stop with just one or two generations but must be passed on as a valuable communal legacy. The prophet Joel instructed that the act of telling the story of the journey of faith with God must continue from one generation to the next (Joel 1: 3). This emphasizes that the children of Israel should not become arrogant and should always be well-educated according to the path of righteousness that has been determined for them.

Today, children grow up within community networks in schools, churches, and even online media spaces. Therefore, parents must involve their children in the faith community and patiently monitor their growth. Parents' understanding of spirituality has also transformed. They believe that experiences with God extend beyond the physical space of the church to virtual reality. Sopacoly and Lattu refer to this as "clique activity," forming a new faith community defined by cliques and spiritual experiences whose power lies in the imagination of the community and the individual[30]. Children need to be introduced to concrete spiritual experiences through prayer, shared spiritual services, social activities, creative worship, and so on, so their faith can grow and mature.

In conclusion, a testimony of faith can be passed on through daily life examples using simple methods of faith storytelling in narratives,

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[29]   R. Burggraeve, *Blessing: Exploring the Religious, Anthropological and Ethical Meaning*, "Religions" 14, no. 5 (2023), pp. 1-12, https://api.semanticscholar.org/CorpusID:258526856.

[30]   M.M. Sopacoly, I.Y.M. Lattu, *Kekristenan Dan Spiritualitas Online: Cybertheology Sebagai Sumbangsih Berteologi Di Indonesia [Christianity And Spirituality Online. Cybertheology as Contribution to Theology in Indonesia]*, "Gema Teologika: Jurnal Teologi Kontekstual dan Filsafat Keilahian" 5, no. 2 (2020), pp. 137-154, https://journal-theo.ukdw.ac.id/index.php/gemateologika/article/view/604.

testimonies, or digital media. Therefore, Gen Alpha must be involved in communal contexts with families, churches, and other faith-building communities. Gen Alpha can focus on God's praise, power, and deeds, not just rules.

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The Word of God as the basis of the primary teaching (v. 5)

In this context, the Word refers to the law of the Torah, which refers to Divine regulations and the testimony of the character of God Himself. The law of the Torah is the basis of the central relationship between God and His people and is the primary material to be passed on to their children. Beyond moral standards, ethical education remains essential amid artificial intelligence, data collection, and communication[31]. Children's identity is a crucial thing that must be forged and formed seriously[32]. The main approach is to reclaim learning with the concept of spiritual human identity through the Word of God.

The author provides several approaches, namely, coaching in attitudes and behavior. The Word of God is heard and becomes a reminder or alarm. Introduction, knowledge, and reflection on the Word of God do not happen quickly. However, patience is needed to repeat it in daily activities such as before bed, while playing, when with family, or even when in Sunday school (Deu 6: 6-7). In the Israelite tradition, the process of enculturation of children with religion every day will produce children who are active participants in the household cult[33]. It means that children will continue practicing the religion taught daily when they become adults and have more children. The second is the action of speaking and reflecting on the Word of God. The success of a child in understanding the Bible is not only by remembering as knowledge but a method of remembering and reflecting on the true meaning as one (Jos 1: 8). Memorizing not only trains memory since childhood but also has positive implications for the quality of a person's spirituality[34].

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[31]   M. Vlasuk, *Generation Alpha: Online, Dependent, and Depressed.*

[32]   A. Aghnaita et al., *Rekonstruksi Pembelajaran Bagi Anak Usia Dini Melalui Konsep "Jati Diri" [Reconstructing Learning for Early Childhood Through the Concept of "Core Self"],* "Jurnal Obsesi : Jurnal Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini" 6, no. 4 (2022), pp. 3253-3266, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/359052567_Rekonstruksi_Pembelajaran_Bagi_Anak_Usia_Dini_Melalui_Konsep_Jati_Diri.

[33]   K. Garroway, *Children and Religion in the Archaeological Record of Ancient Israel,* "Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Religions" 17, no. 2 (2017), pp. 116-139, https://brill.com/view/journals/jane/17/2/article-p116_116.xml.

[34]   M. Hamiz et al., *Repetitive Memorization Mobile Application Development for Elderly Memory Recall*, in: *2014 IEEE Conference on E-Learning, e-Management and e-Services (IC3e)*, 2014, pp. 150-155.

Furthermore, children are trained to have a wise and careful attitude from an early age. When children have trained themselves to consider every decision based on the truth of the Word they believe in, then life's moral and ethical quality and holiness have flowed within them. The third is retelling history and stories about God and his work. For example, the story of the Israelites leaving Egypt, along with the story of the 10 plagues, crossing the Red Sea and traveling around the desert for 40 years tell the best of God's deeds about care, help, the pillar of cloud and fire, the miracle of manna that fell from heaven, and other things (Exo 12: 26-27; 13: 8,14; Deu 11: 19; Jos 4: 6-7). A contextual understanding of spirituality that combines insights from a particular context's history, culture, and traditions can inform effective ways to provide spiritual support in clinical practice[35].

The role of parents in passing on faith to children and next generations (v. 6-7)

The purpose of teaching the Torah is so that future generations, including children and grandchildren, will continue to know God. The emphasized categories are a heart that trusts, a full and vital memory of God's works, and high discipline in adhering to His commands. It is a vision of spiritual teaching related to the inheritance of faith, which is the responsibility of the head of the family to their children. The first education that children receive is from family life. Parents are responsible for their children by teaching obedience to religious, moral, and intellectual teachings, and this is a habit that children learn in their family environment[36].

Parents' role is crucial in building children's spirituality from an early age. The history and deeds of God must be preserved and conveyed to children and the next generation. This action is a form of faith regeneration and teaching about God's power and goodness (v. 6). Regeneration of faith is carried out by guiding values in children's moral development, identity development, and self-image from an early age. Parenting has been influenced since the womb, meaning

35   H. Inbadas, *History, Culture and Traditions: The Silent Spaces in the Study of Spirituality at the End of Life*, "Religions" 7, no. 5 (2016), https://www.mdpi.com/2077-1444/7/5/53.

36   A.F. Sari, *The Role of Parents in Building Spiritual, Moral, and Intellectual Mentality in Children*, "Journal of Childhood Development" 3, no. 1 (2023), pp. 84-91.

parenting begins before birth[37]. One characteristic of parenting itself is communication. Open and empirical communication can make children comfortable and close to their parents[38]. Therefore, parents must prepare themselves to teach their children Christianity systematically and regularly. They can improve their ability to educate and teach through informal institutions or Christian religious education seminars. Viktor and Febe emphasized that parental example, when combined with the application of the contextual Christian religious education, can form a conceptual foundation for a model of faith education based on collaboration at home, school, and in church[39].

Biblical Theology

The next thing is to communicate the purpose of conveying the history and deeds of God that build children's faith to learn to trust God and to obey His commandments (v. 7). The emotional bond between children and parents is a solid foundation for facing challenges of faith in the future. The role of parents can begin through acts of praise, worship, and prayer. Parents are the best models for their children since childhood, but they must also continuously be the praise, worship, and prayer teachers. It anticipates concerns about the decline of both practices, which has caused a loss of sensitivity to the supernatural dimension of children's faith since childhood[40]. Prayer with Praise Worship is a commitment to gratitude and awakening faith. The main goal is to create a strong spiritual foundation for children. Building a spiritual bond from childhood with Gen Alpha will facilitate acts of obedience and commitment in their growth towards adulthood.

The next thing is that parents connect their children with the tradition of faith by introducing them to the liturgy and Christian tradition

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[37]   V. Glover, L. Capron, *Prenatal Parenting*, "Current Opinion in Psychology" 15 (2017), pp. 66-70, https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2352250X16301671.

[38]   R. Adawiyyah, *Menghadapi Tantangan Generasi Z: Mengapa Parenting Anak Sejak Dini Penting Untuk Menghindari Pergaulan Bebas [Facing Generation Z Challenges: Why Early Parenting Is Important to Avoid Free Association]*, Www. Psga.Uin-Malang.Ac.Id, last modified 2024, (date of access: 15.007.2024) , https://psga.uin-malang.ac.id/alda/tajuk-rencana/menghadapi-tantangan-generasi-z-mengapa-parenting-anak-sejak-dini-penting-untuk-menghindari-pergaulan-bebas/.

[39]   V.E. Dethan, F.F. Irawati Wanggai, *Peran Keteladanan Orang Tua Dan Pendidikan Agama Kristen Bagi Anak Dalam Kehidupan Sehari-Hari*, "Real Didache" 5, no. 2 (2025), pp. 96-111, https://ojs.sttrealbatam.ac.id/index.php/didache/article/view/654.

[40]   D. Setran, *Priests and Prophets in the Home: Cotton Mather and Parental Prayer*, "Journal of Spiritual Formation and Soul Care" 8, no. 1 (2015), pp. 28-52, DOI: 10.1177/193979091500800103.

(Eph 6: 4; 2 Tim 1: 5; 3: 14-15; Mark 10: 14; Acts 2: 39). Barna mentions four approaches, namely by helping them develop a commitment to become disciples of Jesus, guiding them in exploring biblical principles towards correct and holistic thinking, facilitating actions of obedience and obedience through the application of the Gospel values, and finally by introducing personal accountability and stability regarding essential values in life that strengthen growth[41]. Another part is the action of parents to bless and protect their children when parents ask for God's blessing and protection. Parents ask for a peaceful, calm, and positive atmosphere that influences children's emotional and spiritual development from an early age. Deuteronomy 6: 6-7 explains that parents regenerate faith and tell of God's miraculous deeds through mentoring and faith teaching sessions. They teach about the truth and show the way of life at home and when traveling. Discipline needs to be applied proportionally with love and with the correct pattern. Discipline can build a child's character from an early age (Pro 22: 6). In a survey on Families, in general, 14% of respondents stated the need for Effective discipline strategies for children[42].

Parents also show a strong capacity for faith so that children can imitate and emulate it. For example, Timothy's faith came from his grandmother and mother (2 Tim 1: 5) and Jacob to his 12 children (Ps 78: 5-7). Parents must learn to listen attentively, understand the child's perspective, and provide wise views without judgment[43]. Christian education is considered one approach that can provide a solid moral foundation for parents of Gen Z in dealing with various pressures and temptations in their environment[44]. Parents can even build interactions with children through open communication, active supervision, spiritual teachings, and healthy relationships. Zega wrote that parents must be able to teach their children Christian religious

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[41]   G. Barna, *Release #02: Four "Disciple-Making Practices" to Shape Children into "Spiritual Champions", More about the Book*, 2023, https://www.arizonachristian. edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/CRC_RSC_Release_2.pdf.

[42]   K. O'Toole, K. Walker, *Family Matters; Understanding the Reality of Parents in the West*, Family Matters Research, 2022.

[43]   R. Adawiyyah, *Menghadapi Tantangan Generasi Z: Mengapa Parenting Anak Sejak Dini Penting Untuk Menghindari Pergaulan Bebas [Facing Generation Z Challenges: Why Early Parenting Is Important to Avoid Free Association]*.

[44]   A. Armila, *Pendidikan Kristen Dalam Keluarga Dalam Upaya Membangun Karakter Anak Generasi Z [Christian Education in the Family in an Effort to Build the Character of Generation Z Children]*, "Adiba" 3, no. 4 (2023), pp. 510-519, https://adisampublisher.org/index.php/adiba/article/view/495.

education as a strong foundation of faith more than the faith education that exists in schools[45].

Faithfulness and loyalty to God as a requirement (v. 8)

Under certain conditions and circumstances, Christians often abandon their faith and turn to the world. The Psalm reminds the next generation to remain steadfast in maintaining the best quality of faith. Someone abandoning the faith after knowing the truth risks losing salvation (Heb 6: 4-6). Even believers who return to the old sins are described as a dog returning to its vomit. Something is disgusting and out of place (2 Pet 2: 20-22). Believers are called to be loyal to God, not to be friends with "the world" (1 John 2: 15-17; Jam 4: 4). Early warnings to children must be implemented so that they do not rebel or disobey, and remain loyal to God. Children are expected not to repeat the mistakes of previous generations when they were not connected to God and turned their motivations and goals in life away from the world.

Two parts of the warning are emphasized, namely the first about an unfaithful heart. It refers to an inconsistent and unreliable attitude towards following God. To be consistent and trustworthy, one needs some action. The first is persistence. The act of knowing God requires tireless sacrifice. One example is the parable of the unrighteous judge and a widow (Luk 18: 1-8). The widow continued to come to see the judge until her wish was granted. The second part is openness. Psalm 145: 18 mentions that actions holding on to the truth "will provide space for openness to oneself and God. The third is simplicity. God does not want chaos, but peace (1 Cor 14: 33). A person's simplicity in thinking and knowing God allows him to see God and experience his presence in everyday life. The fourth is faith. Hebrews 11: 6 states that faith moves a person to seek God and learn to commit. And finally, patience. It is difficult to be patient when facing a world that changes quickly and instantly. However, patience will enable a person to wait and always hope for God's best time (Gal 6: 9). The next part is an unfaithful soul. It refers to a person's actions of unbelief and disobedience to God. Faithfulness here emphasizes not being negligent in preparing the heart to seek God and to understand His Word. The real visible action regards separating oneself from the pollution of the world and all forms

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[45]   Y.K. Zega, *Pendidikan Agama Kristen Dalam Keluarga: Upaya Membangun Spiritualitas Remaja Generasi Z [Christian Religious Education in the Family: Efforts to Build Spirituality in Generation Z Adolescents]*, "Jurnal Luxnos" 7, no. 1 (2021), pp. 105-116, https://luxnos.sttpd.ac.id/index.php/20_luxnos_20/article/view/zega_2021.

of compromise with the sin. The unfaithful soul shows disobedience and it results in a lack of perseverance (Romans 12: 12). Obedience or perseverance cannot change because of the changing situations but only through commitment. McKaughan provides several attitudes to train oneself not to be negligent. Firstly, faith is valuable in maintaining relationships with God and others. Secondly, it states the role of faith biblically, without requiring inappropriate epistemic opinions, namely through unfavorable circumstances and periods of significant doubt[46].

The obstacle to the faithfulness of the heart lies in being trapped in the situation experienced when the focus of attention is more directed at the outside conditions, such as mistakes or problems. Therefore, the strength of the foundation of a faithful soul is faith or trust. The Old Testament never separates loyalty from personal credibility, which is shown through one's beliefs (Pro 13: 17). Every believer must train himself to be faithful, such as holding on to God's promises as a basis for hope (1 Thes 5). Nothing is impossible for God which has been promised. The next thing is to persevere and become a winner in every test that God has given. Consider it a spiritual muscle exercise that increases the capacity for faithfulness to God (1 Tim 4: 8-10). Therefore, fear and respect for God must be constant in maintaining the quality of true faith. Febri refers to the reflection that a genuine relationship with God is evident in actions that preserve the sanctity of life, make

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[46]   D.J. McKaughan, *On the Value of Faith and Faithfulness*, "International Journal for Philosophy of Religion" 81, no. 1 (2017), pp. 7-29, DOI: 10.1007/s11153-016-9606-x. However, the value of faith has been called into question, particularly in connection with religious commitment. What if anything that is valuable about faith – in the context of ordinary human relations or as a distinctive stance, people might take in relation to God? I approach this question by examining the role that faith talk played both in ancient Jewish and Christian communities and in the larger Greco-Roman culture in which Christian faith talk evolved. I locate the value of faith and faithfulness in the context of relationships involving trust and loyalty and argue that what is most distinctively valuable about faith is the function it plays in sustaining relationships through various kinds of challenges, including through evidentially unfavorable circumstances and significant periods of doubt. In light of this discussion, I set out a view of relational faith and, taking Mother Teresa as an exemplar, argue for two further conclusions. Firstly, faith can play the valuable role that it plays in sustaining relationships even without belief of the salient propositions. Secondly, in at least some circumstances, in order for faith to play this valuable role in a way that does not require epistemic opinions that fail to fit one's evidence, it is important that faith does not require such belief.

the Word the center of life, remain hopeful in Jesus, and carry out the Great Commission until the end of this world[47].

Israel's experience as a real warning for the next generation (v. 9-11)

In his writing, Asaph took an example from the story of the children of Ephraim, one of the main tribes of Israel (v. 9). The tribe of Ephraim was prophesied to have a high position, namely being the protector of God's head (Ps 108: 8). However, even though they were fully armed and had fighting strength, they were defeated. The cause of the defeat was that this nation did not maintain its relational quality to God. They refused to live in the truth of the Torah and continued to forget God and His miraculous deeds (v. 10-11). Even this nation continued to rebel against God by forcing themselves to ask for food according to their lusts (v. 18). This also has similarities with the story of the calf statue in the desert. A valuable lesson when the Israelites enjoyed the gold jewelry given for free by the Egyptians instead of worshiping idols by building a calf statue even though they had experienced miracles (Exo 32: 7-19).

Indeed, in the context of events in the desert and of the Promised Land, these Old Testament stories took place in the past. However, the concept of the negative impact of believers who forget and abandon God's deeds and His salvation is fundamental to this day. A person's action in ignoring God and His deeds is not only forgetting mentally, but more to an attitude of heart that is unfaithful, disobedient, and indifferent to God and His existence (Deu 8: 19-20; Isa 17: 10-11; Hos 4: 6; Ps 9: 18). Aa a result children and the next generation follow the mistakes of their parents. The consequences can occur in various circumstances, such as the physical punishment of war, disease, famine, or natural disasters. Another impact is the separation of spiritual life from God, the giver of life to His people. Even the last thing is the loss of His blessings and protection. Therefore, steps are needed to continue to remember every warning. Some steps can be taken: Firstly, the Word of God must be taught from generation to generation. Fear and trembling of God, who is just and has full authority over life, cannot be considered trivial. And children and the next generation must know

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[47] F.Y. Zaliwu, I.K. Soliyanto, K.M. Waruwu, *Penghakiman Yang Akan Datang: Refleksi Teologis Bagi Kehidupan Kristiani [The Coming Judgment: A Theological Reflection for Christian Life]*, "Diagesis: Jurnal Teologi Kharismatika" 5, no. 2 (2022), pp. 97-111, https://ojs.sttrealbatam.ac.id/index.php/diegesis/article/view/266/136.

clearly and thoughtfully. King David asserted that the fear of the Lord
will be taught to the children" (Ps 34: 11). The leading actors in the fam-
ily are the parents themselves. They are responsible for warning their
children about the consequences of the sin. Parents have a tremen-
dous and weighty responsibility; they must maintain health, physical
development, overall education, development of intellectual interests,
and the creation of moral values, beliefs, and attitudes for children[48].
The second step is the quality of faith, which must be maintained and
developed thoughtfully. It is essential for parents to be satisfied with
passing on faith and provide the proper steps for children to pursue
understanding and feel it personally. Parental religiosity is dynami-
cally interconnected with parenting styles and practices and, in turn,
directly influences moral development in relation to the religiosity of
children or adolescents[49]. Thirdly, is a strong warning not to repeat
the mistakes of actions that forget God, live in disobedience, and not
wholeheartedly worship Him.

Conclusion

Generation Alpha has the largest population today with a con-
strained religious life. The digital world and media technology tend to
harm their spirituality. Parents are the main spearheads responsible
for passing on a spiritual life to this generation. Psalm 78: 5-11 provides
several approaches on how parents base a spiritual heritage on Gen
Alpha with total teaching based on the Bible, emphasizing complete
loyalty to God as the primary requirement. Parents must develop
family-based discipleship in homes, intensively sharing parents' spiri-
tual life experiences with children and wise use of media technology as
a teaching tool through ebooks or virtual cartoon stories. The Church
needs to support by mentoring, training, and preparing parents in
their local churches to play a maximum significant role in passing on
a spiritual heritage to their children.

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[48]   R. Ceka, Ardita; Murati, *The Role of Parents in the Education of Children*,
"Journal of Education and Practice" 7, no. 5 (2016), pp. 61-64.

[49]   S.A. Hardy, D.C. Dollahite, C.R. Baldwin, *Parenting, Religion, and Moral Devel-
opment*, ed. D.J. Laible, G. Carlo, L.M. Padilla-Walker, *The Oxford Handbook
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Andrzej Kiciński
The John Paul II Catholic University
of Lublin

iD 0000-0003-3076-6878

Piotr Tomasz Goliszek
The John Paul II Catholic University
of Lublin

iD 0000-0002-3821-0439

Mirosław Chmielewski
The John Paul II Catholic University
of Lublin

iD 0000-0002-6903-479X

Dariusz Wadowski
The John Paul II Catholic University
of Lublin

iD 0000-0001-8936-9557

Testimony of Faith in the Battle over Crosses at School – Miętne 1984. A Catechetical Perspective

The article is a successive stage of research on the unprecedented event of the defence of the Cross by students of the Agricultural School Complex in Miętne n. Garwolin (Poland). The present analysis aims to demonstrate the theological dimension of the events, the students' testimony of faith in their struggle for the presence of the Cross in the public sphere, and to indicate the attitude of the youth from Miętne as a source for contemporary catechesis. Based on a critical analysis of source materials from a catechetical-theological perspective, the research findings are presented in the four sections: (1) Testimony, (2) Faith, (3) Testimony of the Language of Faith, and (4) Conclusions, covering research findings and recommendations for catechetical practice. In terms of methodology, the study is inspired by J. Cardijn's paradigm of "See – Judge – Act".

Key words: the battle over crosses in school, testimony of faith, catechesis, Miętne.

The Minister of Education has unilaterally reduced the number of hours of instruction of Religious Education in schools to one from 1 September 2025 and has introduced measures marginalising this school subject (Journal of Laws 2025, item 66). Firstly, it is discriminatory to place religious education lessons before or immediately after the compulsory educational classes. Secondly, the actual legislative process on the part of the Ministry of Education and the regulation itself took place without consultations with the Churches and denominations authorised to teach it. This is a departure from the practice of a democratic country well-established for approximately 34 years. Thirdly, legal opinions emphasize that "a thorough analysis of the 2024 regulation, and in particular: the actual procedure for its establishment, the content of the justification for this act, a number of detailed provisions contained in its normative part, the highly probable social effects of its entry into force, and finally: the public statements accompanying its preparation by the head of the legislative body – the Minister of Education – justifies the position that the act in question is inconsistent with Article 25 (2) of the Polish Constitution, i.e. with the principle of impartiality (neutrality) of public authorities in matters of religious, ideological, and philosophical beliefs. The 2024 Regulation indicates the legislative body's (Minister of Education's) aversion to religion in general" (Borecki 2024, p. 151)[1]. It can therefore be stated that the "leftist" leadership of the Ministry has returned to old, definitely undemocratic crusades against all religions, each starting with simulated actions. These contemporary efforts to exclude religion from public life invite reflection on the testimony of faith given by the community of students at the Agricultural School Complex in Miętne n. Garwolin in 1984.

The events in Miętne in 1984 are connected with the de-crucifixion campaign and the so-called Jaruzelski Crusade (1980–1990). This followed Bierut's earlier crusade against the Cross and religious instruction in Poland during the Stalinist period (1944-1956), and Gomułka's crusade, which resulted in the removal of religion from schools (1956-1970). The theological and pastoral study of the testimony regarding the struggle for the crosses at the Agricultural School Complex in Miętne represents a return to an experience of faith that has, until

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[1]   P. Borecki, *Opinia Prawna w sprawie zgodności z odpowiednimi postanowieniami Konstytucji RP, Konkordatu polskiego oraz właściwych ustaw Rozporządzenia Ministra Edukacji z dnia 26 lipca 2024 r. zmieniającego rozporządzenie w sprawie warunków i sposobu organizacji nauki religii w publicznych przedszkolach i szkołach*, "Studia Prawa Publicznego" 3 (47) 2024, pp. 131-152, DOI: 10.14746/spp.2024.3.47.6.

now, been approached primarily from a historical perspective[2] and as presented in the media[3]. The first attempt to develop a catechetical perspective on the events in Miętne was offered by P. Goliszek in a work which focuses on the desk study of the archives of the National Remembrance Institute[4]. The article was written upon the publication of the research outcomes of the Department of Detailed Catechetics and Contemporary Forms of Conveying Faith at the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin compiled a comprehensive *status quaestionis* of research from various academic disciplines devoted to the student strike at the school in Miętne. The sources gathered during these studies, both existing and newly produced, help to continue the analysis of this event. This article attempts to answer the question of what was the testimony of faith in the struggle for the crosses at the school in Miętne and to what extent this stance can serve as a source for contemporary catechesis. The article is inspired by J. Cardijn's paradigm of "See – Judge – Act", which in this case refers to a scientific model[5].

<div style="float:right">Catechetics</div>

Testimony

Responding to the question of what the term "testimony" means, Paul VI referred to a legal opinion indicating that testimony is a statement proving the truthfulness of something. Furthermore, the pontiff stressed that besides all that we have validated ourselves, our entire knowledge relies on the testimony of other people. In theological terms,

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2   J. Żaryn, *Miętne, czyli Września najmłodszego pokolenia "Solidarności" (grudzień 1983 – kwiecień 1984),* in: *Nauka o miłości, odwadze i Krzyżu. 40. rocznica obrony Krzyża w Zespole Szkół Rolniczych w Miętnem*, ed. A. Kiciński, Kielce 2014, pp. 117-134; A. Kiciński, *Kompendium wiedzy o walce o krzyże w szkole w Miętnem*, in: *Nauka o miłości, odwadze i Krzyżu. 40. rocznica obrony Krzyża w Zespole Szkół Rolniczych w Miętnem*, ed. A. Kiciński, Kielce 2014, pp. 21-116.

3   M. Chmielewski, Ł. Drożak, *Obrona krzyża w Miętnem w prasie amerykańskiej*, in: *Nauka o miłości, odwadze i Krzyżu. 40. rocznica obrony Krzyża w Zespole Szkół Rolniczych w Miętnem*, ed. A. Kiciński, Kielce 2014, pp. 143-176.

4   P. Goliszek, *Obrona krzyża w Miętnem w archiwach IPN. Perspektywa katechetyczna*, in: *Nauka o miłości, odwadze i Krzyżu. 40. rocznica obrony Krzyża w Zespole Szkół Rolniczych w Miętnem*, ed. A. Kiciński, Kielce 2014, pp. 247-275.

5   B. Przywara, A. Adamski, A. Kiciński, M. Szewczyk, A. Jupowicz-Ginalska, 2021. *Online Live-Stream Broadcasting of the Holy Mass during the COVID-19 Pandemic in Poland as an Example of the Mediatisation of Religion: Empirical Studies in the Field of Mass Media Studies and Pastoral Theology*, "Religions" vol. 12, no. 4: 261, pp. 6-7, DOI: 10.3390/rel12040261; M. Chmielewski, M. Nowak, P. Stanisz, J. Szulich-Kałuża, D. Wadowski, *Komunikacja Kościoła katolickiego w Polsce w okresie pandemii Covid-19. Raport z badań interdyscyplinarnych, (Edukacja – Media – Teologia)*, Kraków: Wydawnictwo "Scriptum" 2022, pp. 12-13.

testimony is a transmission of the Christian message. According to the Holy Father, the Christian testimony contains three major elements. Firstly, it includes a personal conviction that a given thought, words, and deeds are truthful and serve the truth. Secondly, it arises from a properly formed conscience, one capable not only of distinguishing good from evil but also of listening attentively to the Word of God, which continually reminds us that it is God's will for people to be witnesses. Importantly, as emphasized in this pastoral discourse, such a testimony is not merely conventional or external, nor is it simply a repetition of what has already been verified in history. Rather, it is situated within the Christian economy of salvation, which concerns the fulfilment of God's plan of redemption through Jesus Christ, Who, in His final earthly instruction, told His disciples: "You are witnesses of this" (Lk 24: 48). Thirdly, testimony is meant to awaken faith[6].

All three elements are present in the history of the struggle over the Christ's Cross at the Agricultural School Complex in Miętne. When analysing the presence of the Crucifix in the Polish history, Jan Żaryn places the events in Miętne as a consequence of Pope John Paul II's second pilgrimage to Poland in 1983 and the 1980 workers' strikes, which took place under the sign of the Cross, a symbol of Christian values. Indeed, in the autumn of 1980, the students of the school in Miętne hung crosses in all classrooms. The author notes that the Cross, "beyond its obvious religious aspect, often symbolized the nation's aspirations for independence, expressed the longing for the rule of justice, and ultimately constituted proof and testimony of the gratitude of a free nation"[7]. According to the author, this was a time when "prayer accompanied the organisers of the trade union structures, religious and patriotic rallies, and successive strikes taking place within the 16 months of existence of legal Solidarity"[8]. The presence of the Cross and prayer in a prestigious agricultural school, which was yet administered by the communists, was by no means self-evident. The position adopted by the young people was courageous. Analysing the chronology of the students' strike at the school, the first and foremost question concerns the Cross itself, followed by the testimony of faith expressed in the hymn *We Want God*. Here is an excerpt from the organizers' description of one of the initial episodes in the struggle for the crosses in Miętne:

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[6]   Paweł VI, *Trwajcie mocni w wierze*, vol. 2, Kraków 1974, pp. 393-396.

[7]   J. Żaryn, *Miętne, czyli Września*, p. 117.

[8]   Ibidem.

19 December 1983 (Monday). The Student Council, acting on behalf of the students, presents the headmaster with a written statement requesting answers to the following questions:

– Who, and upon whose orders, removed the crosses?
– What legal basis was this decision taken on? Does the headmaster possess a directive in this matter, and by whom is it signed?
– Why was this decision not consulted with the students, given that the crosses had been officially hung with the consent and approval of the school administration?
– Why is it forbidden for crosses to hang in Miętne, while in other schools they remain in place?
– Where are the removed crosses now, and may the students have them returned?

The letter from the Student Council was read aloud during the assembly by Headmaster Domański, who gave the following responses:

– the crosses were removed in order to restore legal order;
– the school is a secular institution, and the state is tolerant in accordance with the Constitution (he quoted and interpreted Articles 81 and 82 according to his own discretion);
– the crosses had been hung during the period of "Solidarity" activity, when various decisions were imposed upon the authorities;
– in other schools, the crosses will likewise be removed in the near future.

These explanations could not satisfy the students. Their reaction was to refuse to disperse to their classrooms. For one and a half hours, the youth remained in the assembly hall, singing religious hymns, e.g. *We Want God*[9].

This testimony, provided by several students from the student council, was supported by the signatures of 256 students out of the 600 enrolled at the school. Each signature represented a personal profession of faith, affirming that their words and actions were truthful and served the cause of truth, despite the arrival of the prosecutor, who threatened the youth with reprisals, expulsion from school, and the severe consequences imposed by the communist regime of the time. One of the school headmaster's initial reactions only served to confirm the religious motivation underlying the students' testimony.

9 January 1984 (Monday). At the morning assembly, the headmaster announces his decision: in a secular school such as the Agricultural Technical School in Miętne, there is no place for religious forms or content. The outraged students gather in front of the school building

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[9]   A. Kiciński, *Kompendium wiedzy o walce o krzyże w szkole w Miętnem*, in: *Nauka o miłości, odwadze i Krzyżu. 40. rocznica obrony Krzyża w Zespole Szkół Rolniczych w Miętnem*, ed. A. Kiciński, Kielce 2014, pp. 24-25.

and sing religious hymns for fifteen minutes, after which they calmly disperse to their classrooms. Discontent grows; discussions continue. A spirit of rebellion begins to foment among the youth[10].

The students of the school in Miętne blazed a previously unknown path of faith. Attuned to the voice of their conscience, they fought for the crosses in their school despite the external threats. Their testimony of faith was straightforward and courageous. They became participants in the struggle for the restoration of a sovereign and democratic state at a time when fundamental freedoms and human rights were being violated in Poland. Above all, through their public profession of faith, they became intrepid witnesses to their devotion to Christ's Cross.

> 10 January 1984 (Tuesday). From 1:00 to 5:30 p.m., the students carried out a protest strike. After posting a quotation from Mickiewicz: "Only under the Cross, only under this sign, is Poland Poland, and a Pole is a Pole", the students chanted slogans: "Give us back the crosses", "We want the crosses", "We demand the crosses," while singing religious hymns. Accompanied by five teachers, the headmaster tried to confront the demonstration. The students closed their ranks, the older ones encouraging the younger, shouting: "Do not be afraid," "Stand firm," "We Are One"[11].

The purpose of testimony is to awaken faith. Faith is a gift from God, born deep within the soul as the fruit of grace and as a free response to the call of the Holy Spirit. Over the years, the youth of Miętne often reflected on the state of their own faith. Jerzy Rusak, a student fighting for the crosses, posed a question and provided an answer as follows:

> Whether the protest arose from deep faith in everyone, I do not know; at any rate, even if someone had other motivation for joining the strike, it is certain that once they became involved in the protest, that faith was awakened[12].

At the research stage of "seeing," it was noted that the striking youth, their parents, and the teachers who stood in defence of the Cross of Christ were laypeople serving the truth revealed by Christ. They became witnesses to what the Church continually teaches, yet they were open and engaged in what the Holy Spirit directs the Church to

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[10]   Ibidem, p. 25.

[11]   Ibidem, pp. 25-26.

[12]   A. Ilczuk, *Biskup Jan Mazur a strajk młodzieży szkolnej w Miętnem w 1984 r.* Warszawa 2003, [typed manuscript], p. 13, Master's thesis written for the Church History seminar under the supervision of Tadeusz Krawczak, PhD., at the Pontifical Theological Faculty, John the Baptist Section, Warszawa.

embrace, allowing this small community of faith to experience it under those difficult circumstances.

Faith

Faith is an act of the human person entrusting oneself to God. It is an act with an interpersonal structure, grounded in trust directed towards a personal God, as emphasized by *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*: "Faith is first of all a personal adherence of man to God. At the same time, and inseparably, it is a free assent to the whole truth that God has revealed" (CCC 150). It is an interpersonal event initiated by God who reveals Himself, whose call is recognised by man and responded to with a personal decision. In this way, faith becomes a whole-person act of life in the Community of the Persons of the Triune God and an event leading towards the ideal of man, "to the perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Eph 4: 13). In its essence, faith is a decision and attitude of man that creates and enriches his person (only a person is capable of faith), because faith reveals and realises the person and defines the personal "I". Faith develops the person and energises them through aspirations, will, and decisions arising from faith and relating oneself to God and people. Since faith is an act of the whole human person (*actus humanus*), through faith a person expresses their entire world, which towers above temporal reality, transcends its capacities, giving it a supernatural meaning, reaching values that are not visible in immanent reality. Therefore, developing faith in human life is the creation and shaping of human personality, authenticity of life, self-awareness; it is the subjectification of life and action, it is the creative activation of the human person in the religious sphere, in the area of their vocation, in cultural creativity and in social engagement. When education in faith in the family, school, and parish promotes the growth of faith understood as an act and attitude ["trust in God (*fides qua*) and loving consent to all He has revealed to us (*fides quae*)"[13]], it on the one hand fosters the process of upbringing to Christian life, and on the other hand makes upbringing personalistic, i.e. universal. The effort manifests itself mainly in the responsibility for man and in religious, moral, existential, personal, and socio-cultural growth[14].

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[13]   Papieska Rada ds. Krzewienia Nowej Ewangelizacji, *Dyrektorium o katechizacji*, Kielce 2020 [= DK], no. 9.

[14]   Cf. P. Goliszek, *Personalistyczny wymiar katechezy*, Lublin 2017, pp. 296-297.

The young people who took up the fight to defend the crosses removed from classrooms at the Agricultural School Complex in Miętne demonstrated religious and social maturity as well as patriotism and moral values, professing their faith and bearing witness to it. The defence of Christ's Cross organised by the students was not only a protest in its historical narrative, but also an act of confession of faith, a "deed of faith", since "faith without deeds is dead" (James 2: 26). The struggle to have the crosses reinstalled in school classrooms was, on the one hand, a public profession of faith and, on the other, a manifestation of patriotism, which in Poland stems from "the truth of the Gospel and the Cross of Christ, as well as from the mystery of the individual and the 'community person' represented by the family, the nation and the Church"[15]. The events taking place in Miętne were a manifestation of the faith, which in theological terms marks the fulfilment of the entire human person, since "faith transforms the whole person" (LF 26)[16], "For it is with the heart that one believes to be put right with God, and it is with the mouth that one confesses to be saved" (Rom 10: 10).

Through their resolute stance, the students who stood up for the proper place and respect of the crosses in the school were telling a story about their faith, but in an essential sense, they were also expressing the truth about themselves, i.e. who they are as believers and what kind of citizens of Poland they are. The defence of the crosses was, in a way, a defence of Christian-national identity, of faith and religiosity, and of human dignity along with its inalienable personal, humanistic, cultural, and patriotic freedoms. Their public testimony of faith and dialogue with all the offered assurance and called upon others to be courageous, as emphatically underscored by Bishop Jan Mazur in his statement:

> The March days of 1984 made an indelible imprint not only on the hearts of the school students of the Agricultural Schools Complex in Miętne, but also echoed far and wide in Poland and the world. People admired the students' stance in defence of their most sacred religious sentiments, in defence of the symbol of the Cross, their patience and the peace and trust rooted in their religious beliefs. In defending their ideals, the youth relied on God and the Church, providing all of us with both an example and an encouragement to adopt a similar attitude in the effort to renew individuals and the Nation in the present moment[17].

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[15]   P. Goliszek, *Personalistyczny patriotyzm narodu polskiego*, in: *Wychowanie patriotyczne*, ed. P. T. Goliszek, Sandomierz 2018, p. 69.

[16]   Francis, Encyclical letter on faith *Lumen fidei* (= LF).

[17]   A. Kiciński, *Kompendium wiedzy...*, p. 38.

Because faith develops and energizes the human person through aspirations, decisions, and the orientation of oneself towards God and others, it constitutes a creative impetus for the human person in religious terms, within the sphere of one's vocation, in cultural creativity, and in social engagement. It is precisely this faith, which shaped their spirituality, human personality, and the authenticity of their lives, that became the central theme of life and action in this historical testimony of faith. One may say that faith was the force, the motivation, the content, and the event that created the historical reality of the defence of the crosses at the Agricultural School Complex in Miętne. Historical reality is always the history of a human being, a concrete individual; it is also history within the human person. Therefore, there is no history without man, nor man without history. There is the human being and there is history[18]. There is a very significant note of 8.05.1984 marked as "confidential", concerning the conflict at the Agricultural School Complex in Miętne; it was exchanged between the interdepartmental committee of the Provincial Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party and the Provincial Office of Internal Affairs in Siedlce:

> The School's Teachers' Council have in practice lost their influence over the young people. On March 6, the young people did not take part in lessons but sang religious songs in the lobbies. In the afternoon, the students would in large numbers take part in religious services and marches in the streets of Garwolin. On March 7, the protests of the same nature continued. (...) At the same time, relevant action was taken by the services of the Interior Ministry[19].

The account of the young people's fidelity to God, their unshakeable faith and determined attitude in the face of persecution are equally significant:

> 6 March 1984 (Tuesday). The students refuse to attend classes, praying together from morning until 2 p.m. Only a dozen or so people, led by the chairwoman of the Union of Socialist Polish Youth, do not take part in the protest. However, students on sick leave come to school. Students hang a plaque with the words of Romuald Traugutt on the bust of the school's patron, Stanisław Staszic: "We were faithful to God in days of victory and glory, we will remain faithful to Him in days of persecution and defeat. God shall not forsake us"[20].

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[18]   Cf. Cz. S. Bartnik, *Historia i myśl*, Lublin 1995, p. 17.

[19]   Archives of the National Remembrance Institute, file no. BU 1585/1272, *Materiały przekazane przez KC PZPR, Informacja w sprawie naruszania zasad świeckości szkoły*, sheet 208.

[20]   A. Kiciński, *Kompendium wiedzy*, p. 28.

In the context of facts and descriptions, it should be clarified that, fundamentally, history does not so much present events and facts as it asks questions about people, speaks about them, and expresses in words the truth about individuals or groups of people who make up a given community and culture. The meaning of history is to embrace and understand the world of a person, all the past experiences of a human being separated by time. It is about the history of the whole person, not just fragmentary or isolated facts. In this way, history acquires its subjectivity, or personality. Then it is no longer a cognitive relationship between phenomena and things, but ultimately a relationship between persons[21]. Defending their faith and the sign of the Cross, through their attitude and testimony, the students at the Agricultural School Complex in Miętne internalised their faith in personal communion with Jesus Christ, Whom they had come to know at home and in their parish, participating in the liturgy and receiving the sacraments. It can be said that in this way they evangelised the history they left as a legacy and proof of their fidelity to God, the Church, and mankind.

Therefore, the discovery of the truth about the past by human beings is an encounter with a reality that originates in bygone time. Yet this reality is not created by them; it exists and also persists in one form or another in the present, demanding acknowledgment. In historical narrative, what was once subjective and objective becomes actualized and impact both the present and the future; it is both general and individual[22]. Thus, the faith of the youth from the Agricultural School Complex in Miętne, expressed in their defence of the Cross, exerts a tangible influence on attitudes towards current challenges related to the removal of Christian symbols and signs of faith from the public sphere.

History is what presents itself, and in a sense even carries a new history of the future, either by warning against mistakes attested by the past, or by pointing to exemplary attitudes as a model for the future. It is understood that history contains an ambivalence of good and evil, truth and falsehood, knowledge and ignorance, meaning and nonsense. One can also speak of an upward current of history (good), which guides humanity toward truth and goodness, leading individuals to higher values, and even to the virtue of heroism, elevating them above themselves. Conversely, there is a downward current of history (evil), which leads to destruction, annihilation, and depravity, guiding humans toward bestiality. This does not refer to the ordinary level of

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[21]　Cf. P. Goliszek, *Personalistyczny patriotyzm...*, p. 72.

[22]　Cf. Cz. S. Bartnik, *Osoba i historia,* Lublin 2001, p. 62.

human existence, but rather to a morally degenerate course in a particular sense. History moving towards nothingness, anti-values, and transience becomes a historical tragedy, a degeneration, and an anti-personal process[23].

Such phenomena are best illustrated in the following account:

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> PS. – a note from July 1984. As was to be expected, neither the administration of the Agricultural School Complex in Miętne, nor other authorities felt obliged to honour their commitments:
> – Contrary to the agreement, Headmaster Domański opposed the readmission of certain students, and even entire classes, to the school. For example, 18 students from the third class of the Agricultural Technical School were not accepted on the pretext that there were too few of them to form a class, whereas in another instance only six students were sufficient;
> – Under the pretext of reorganization, which in some cases involved increasing the number of students per class, seven teachers were threatened with transfer to other schools and locations, without regard for housing, commuting, or their professional ambitions and specializations. These included older teachers, especially those who had significantly contributed to the establishment of the school in Miętne. Some were even prohibited from entering the school premises;
> – On the day of the school year's conclusion, students were not allowed to enter the library, where the Cross they had fought for was displayed;
> – Shortly after the school year ended, the militia approached some graduates, suggesting that they do military service in the Motorized Reserves of the Citizens' Militia (ZOMO). They of course refused, though it is unclear whether this was a "proposal not to be refused"[24].

At the methodological stage of "judging": history is the pursuit of understanding the past for the sake of the future. Knowledge of the past must yield such an understanding of past events as to better comprehend the perspective of present occurrences and even anticipate the future. History teaches the understanding of all that exists in time and, consequently, cultivates understanding and responsibility for current and future existence. Lives enlivened through historical narrative offer guidance and cautionary lessons. History, therefore, constitutes an essential dimension of every human being's existence. It generates spiritual identity. There can be no ethos of a nation or homeland

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[23]   Cf. K. Michalski, *Między heroizmem a bestialstwem*, Częstochowa 1984², pp. 107-140.

[24]   A. Kiciński, *Kompendium wiedzy...*, p. 32.

without history, which must always be understood not merely as the past, but as a shared future[25].

The value of the historic testimony helps to understand the present and sheds light on the future, as stressed by Holy Father Saint John Paul II in his homily during the Holy Mass in Siedlce during the apostolic journey to Poland 5-17.06.1999:

> The Cross gave them strength to bear witness to Christ and His Church. They showed forth the truth of Saint Paul's words (...): 'If God is for us, who is against us?' (Rom 8: 31). (...). In Poland, a countless number of people suffered for the Cross of Christ and bore the greatest sacrifices for it. Often in its history, our nation had to defend its own faith and endure oppression and persecution for fidelity to the Church. The post-War period in particular was a time of especially intense struggle against the Church, waged by a totalitarian system. The attempt was made then to forbid the teaching of religious education in schools; the public display of faith was made difficult, as was the building of churches and chapels. How many sacrifices had to be made, what courage was needed to keep our Christian identity intact. Yet no one succeeded in removing the Cross, that sign of faith and love, from personal and social life, because it was deeply rooted in the soil of people's hearts and consciences. For the nation and for the Church it became a wellspring of strength and a sign of unity among people. The new evangelization needs true witnesses of faith. It needs people rooted in the Cross of Christ and ready to accept sacrifice for the sake of the Cross. An authentic testimony to the life-giving power of the Cross is given by those who, in its name, overcome in themselves sin, egoism and every evil, and want to imitate the love of Christ to the very end. As in the past, the Cross must continue to be present in our lives as a clear pointer to the path to follow and as a light which illumines our whole being. May the Cross, the very form of which unites heaven and earth and men among themselves, flourish in our land and become a great tree laden with the fruits of salvation. May it bring forth new and courageous proclaimers of the Gospel, who love the Church and take responsibility for the Church, true heralds of the faith, a breed of new men. May they be the ones to light the torch of faith and to carry it burning brightly across the threshold of the third millennium.
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> *Cross of Christ, to you be praise.*
> *We hail you in every age,*
> *from you there spring power and strength,*
> *in you our victory!* [Siedlcel 10.06.1999]"[26].

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[25]   Cf. P. Goliszek, *Remembering the Past, Shaping the Future*, RPK 5 (2013), pp. 204-208.

[26]   A. Kiciński, *Kompendium wiedzy*, pp. 114-115.

The testimony of faith is invariably a response to God's action. However, time and place change, and this must be taken into account at the stage of the pastoral paradigm of "judging". The faith of the students who fought for the Cross in Miętne was primarily ecclesial in form. Although the contemporary situation regarding religious education in schools in Poland bears many analogies to the one described, the criteria of faith are well established. The criterion of the ecclesial nature of faith reflects the faith of the entire People of God: the faith of the apostles, the faith of the martyrs, the faith of the saints and blesseds, the faith of pastors, the faith of teachers, the faith of children and youth, the faith of parents, and the faith of those responsible for organizing catechesis. The faith transmitted by the Church is one and possesses its own specific language, which requires consideration of its own dynamic response to God and to people in the present time and place.

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Testimony of the language of faith

When scrutinising the question of the testimony of faith in catechesis, in the "seeing" – "judging" – "acting" paradigm, Franciszek Blachnicki noted that in the New Testament we deal with two forms of a testimony. One, typical of John, is evident in the message of the Divine Word: "Something which has existed since the beginning, that we have heard, and we have seen with our own eyes; that we have watched and touched with our hands: the Word, Who is life – this is our subject. That life was made visible: we saw it and we are giving our testimony, telling you of the eternal life which was with the Father and has been made visible to us. What we have seen and heard we are telling you so that you too may be in union with us, as we are in union with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ" (1 Jn 1: 1-3). The other testimony is of Paul's type. Paul was not able to say that he saw with his own eyes, watched and touched Him with his own hands. The other type of a testimony was not historical, like the earthly life of Jesus of Nazareth. It was the consequence of a mystical encounter on the road to Damascus, where he met the risen and glorified Jesus. Paul's subsequent preaching is filled with the testimony of that encounter, a testimony of faith. These two types of testimony form a unified whole and must occur together. Subsequently, Blachnicki offered his recommendations for catechesis in Poland, most of which remain relevant to this day[27].

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[27]   F. Blachnicki, *Świadectwo wiary w katechezie*, "Seminare. Poszukiwania naukowe" 5 (1981), pp. 83-97.

The youth who stood by the Cross in Miętne in 1984 embodied many of these elements, certainly those who did not desert. At first, they lived through the events historically and can say that their eyes saw, their ears heard, and their hands touched this reality. Secondly, they received the grace of forming a faith-filled environment in which their Christianity matured. Perhaps their narratives focus too much on the chronology of historical events and, in a way, on the justified attempt to reconstruct everything in minute detail.

In their case, scientific reflection, such as that of Flavio Pajer, can be helpful. At the stage of "acting", he emphasizes the language of testimony, which should be the language of the contemporary catechesis. Incidentally, the language of catechesis should itself be the language of testimony. According to Pajer, the language of catechesis, essentially one of testimony, is triple-coded and includes the narrative code, the explicit code, and the explanatory code[28].

The extant sources feature a "narrative code", which can be described as local, despite the worldwide attention to the events. This observation regarding a specific narrative code in no way diminishes the students' position. The students came from villages or small towns of the former Diocese of Siedlce, e.g. Podlasie. They demonstrated diligence, attachment to the land, honesty, and, above all, obedience to their parents and to the Church. Some of them lived closer to the Church, others were farther away, yet, their fidelity to the values inherited from their families and learned in the Church was inherent to their "genetic code". Their specific narrative code was deeply rooted in their hearts, and they were unaccustomed to doing anything for applause or show. Among themselves, they chose individuals from among the ones of urban origin, educated or capable of clearly expressing their ideas. This is well reflected in old photographs which show e.g. all of them kneeling before the Blessed Sacrament in the church, holding the crosses removed from the school or with those gifted to them by Bishop Jan Mazur, the then-ordinary. This narrative language, proper to the defenders of the Cross, was aptly theologically decoded by the current Bishop of Siedlce, Kazimierz Gurda, who observes:

> We give thanks to God for the 40th anniversary of the defence of the Cross by the youth of the Agricultural School Complex in Miętne near Garwolin. This event, which took place four decades ago, revealed how the Lord worked in the hearts of the students, their parents, teachers, and catechists during a period of trial in their faith. Their openness to

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[28]   F. Pajer, *Świadectwo*, in: *Słownik katechetyczny*, ed. J. Gaevart, K. Misiaszek, Warszawa 2007, pp. 889-890.

the action of God's grace gave them the courage to profess their faith in Jesus Christ, Who suffered, died on the Cross, and rose again for our salvation. They endured a difficult period of persecution for standing up for the presence of Christ's Cross in the classroom. These events continue to strengthen us today in our fidelity to our Saviour[29].

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The young people from Miętne included their own poetry in the narrative code which recalls the historical events at the root of holding on to Christ's Cross. They would likewise include the poetry by other authors, with a clear theological message:

Christ, We Shall Not Abandon Your Cross

Our voice of protest rings afar,
Awake, dear countrymen, take your stand.
The modern Judas took down our Cross
As once he did, to have silver in hand?

Let trumpet sound and hearts incline,
To bear the witness of our faith.
Miętne knows how to love the Sign
Of Christ; the young showed its glorious grace.

Behold their honour, see their might,
The very salt of this blessed land.
They proved the Cross's sacred worth,
Poles know it and understand.

Glory to you! Hail, faithful and strong,
The Cross brings us honour, it rights every wrong.
Through thorny paths, through trials we've gone –
Christ's holy Cross we'll never abandon!" (18 March 1984, youth of the Parish of Parczew)[30]

Decoding the theological message of the striking students in Miętne, we must not lose sight of their own narrative and autobiographical language. In the contemporary catechesis, there is a clear renaissance of the narrative, "not only as a linguistic tool, but above all as a path through which a person comprehends oneself and the surrounding reality, and also as a means of making one's experiences meaningful"[31]. The Church community increasingly understands that faith is expressed more in stories than in doctrines. This is evident in the Bible, in which we find grand narratives about the creation of the world and

[29]   K. Gurda, *List pasterski Biskupa Siedleckiego na Wielki Post (2024)*, L.dz. 155/2024, Siedlce 15.02.2024.

[30]   A. Kiciński, *Kompendium wiedzy...*, pp. 37-38.

[31]   DK, no. 207.

accounts of ancient leaders who guided the people entrusted to them on paths along mountains and deserts. The piety of the students from Miętne is a fruit of the inculturation of faith among the People of God living in this part of Poland and it constitutes a precious treasure of the Diocese of Siedlce.

The second "explicit code" interprets, in the present time, the life situation arising from the recounted historical event and concrete life attitudes. The key interpretative elements of the explicit code are, firstly, the observable ethical qualifications of the youth, qualities inaccessible to the opposite side of the conflict. Secondly, the students' autonomy. Before receiving support from priests and the community in Garwolin, they relied on one another for basic necessities, such as food, and for crucial strategies of action. Together with some teachers, they determined the boundaries of risk and put forth realistic demands. They protected their leaders and pursued their goal consistently. At every stage, they took into account the possibility of expulsion from school. There was always something more. For example, once they uncovered the falsehood of slogans about a secular school, their fervour in prayer directed to God, asking for guidance and deliverance, intensified.

The high ethical qualifications of the students allowed their faith to be characterized as healthy and mature – or rapidly maturing due to persecution. They listened to the Word of God at Mass and during frequent catecheses. The "explicit code" also contains several components and rules. It relates not only to social significance but also to the testimony of faith, which is of particular interest. Even the extant social sources contain Christian values such as humility and truth. Here is an example:

> The Agricultural School Complex in Miętne near Garwolin is by no means an exceptional school. It is located on the periphery of Mazovia, in a predominantly agricultural area, with no significant cultural centre. Yet the truth of those days is remarkable: it turns out that the students of this otherwise unremarkable school had achieved such a level of political awareness that a high-ranking provincial official, cornered by them in a debate, referred to them as "political actors"[32].

What is more, the "explicit code" is imbued with clear moral dilemmas related to the Chrisitan conscience and the heart of the Gospel about the commandment of the love of God and the fellow man. A leader of the school strike, Jarosław Maczkowski, offered a testimony of faith which is as topical as ever:

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[32]   A. Kiciński, *Kompendium wiedzy...*, p. 39.

How to overcome the hostility of those who protested in favour of the crosses in Miętne towards those who defended... well, it is unclear whether they defended Marxism or their personal positions within the PRL system...? And how can the hostility of the latter towards the former be brought to an end? This is the question today, six years later, after everything that has happened in the meantime, especially in the past year. It must be brought to an end. This is precisely what the Cross that they fought for obliges us to do.

In various conversations with the former opponents of the crosses in the school, they often propose a conciliatory approach: Let us mutually admit that we all erred in inflating insignificant matters, rooted in the realism of life, to exaggerated proportions. A Christian cannot accept this proposal. For him, the primacy of the spiritual over material values must be something real in his life.

Only one solution remains: without obscuring the essence of the dispute, stop reproaching anyone for having once adopted a mistaken stance. Forgive them. Then, they too may come to realize that they had been in the wrong. In any case, conditions will be created for good, harmonious coexistence, something urgently needed today in Poland[33].

Catechesis echoes the kerygma and emphasizes the propositional character of its message. In the cited testimonies of faith from the students of Miętne, there is a narrative, emotional, and existential quality. Despite the overt threats and persecutions directed at the young people, their attitude and message are purely evangelical, oriented towards a relationship with God, His Church, and even with their opponents. Their testimony also contains an "explanatory code." According to Pajer, this code is necessary in a testimony of faith, because every testimony may provoke questions from the interlocutor and thus demand clarification. From these distinguishing features of the language of testimony, the author highlights its specific functions in relation to the education of faith. This is, fundamentally, a prophetic function[34]. The headmaster of the school in Miętne was convinced that he had the backing of the party authorities and would be able to make the students abandon their struggle for the crosses. Furthermore, he was confident that if he could not overcome the young people, he was equipped with strong administrative arguments (e.g., expulsion from the school) that would persuade parents to influence their children. The events, however, took on a prophetic character, as the parents, through their closely intertwined words and actions, supported their children, demonstrating that the students could not withdraw from

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[33]   Ibidem.

[34]   F. Pajer, *Świadectwo*, p. 890.

what they had been taught at home. Moreover, their attachment to faith and to the Church had a salvific dimension, as they endorsed their children in the struggle for the crosses. Only 8 out of 124 parents signed the so-called loyalty declaration regarding the school's secular character, and a clear prophetic sign was the withdrawal of documents from the school by approximately 330 students.

The testimony of faith in the struggle for the crosses at the school in Miętne did not end in 1984; from a catechetical perspective, it continues to this day. Certainly, in various contemporary ecclesial contexts, there are aspects of catechesis which, while they are expressed in a different language, constitute a testimony of faith in which the action of God can be recognized. The stage of "acting" must be interpreted as the current challenge of defending anthropological, cultural, and religious values in the diverse languages of faith. This is intrinsic to the fulfilment of the Church's salvific mission, particularly the prophetic function, whose source is the Cross of Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of humanity.

Conclusions and recommendations

Where did the young witnesses of faith from the school in Miętne, together with their teachers who defended the Cross in the public sphere, often at great personal cost, draw their inner, spiritual courage from? Their fortitude was rooted in the truth about Christ and in the Christian system of values they had been brought up on. The vast majority of the youth at that time not only heard about the fundamental principles of moral life but also practiced them in their daily existence.

Contemporary culture, with its rapid development of communication technologies, causes Christians of all generations, not only the younger demographics, to live in a state of continual re-evaluation of ethical and moral principles. The so-called traditional (social and personal) foundational values seem invalidated (cancel culture). This results in a profound ethical disorientation, spanning from extreme ecological ideologies to concepts such as global depopulation. In this climate of chaos and flight, prominent among the younger generation, guided by algorithms and AI, another destructive factor has emerged in the Polish educational system: the unlawful removal of religious education (not only Catholic) from public schools, coupled with the absence of a mandatory subject of ethics. Students at various educational levels float in an ethical vacuum. This deepens the crisis of both national identity, rooted in the Western and Christian culture, and personal identification at its most profound layers.

In light of the testimony of students and teachers from Miętne, both the Church and other institutions responsible for the education of the young generation today have the task to: (1) Educate teachers as witnesses of fundamental, universal human values; (2) Raise witnesses of Christian faith who, in the current digital culture, will be able to communicate the experience of their faith in Christ and His Cross in a three-dimensional code of personal expression: narrative, explicit, and explanatory.

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The testimony of faith of students, parents, teachers, and priests in the struggle for the Cross is intertwined with patriotism, understood as love of one's homeland, reverence for culture and tradition, intergenerational solidarity, readiness for service, willingness to sacrifice for the national good, love of neighbour, solidarity, attachment to and care for family, responsibility for the weakest and the needy, generosity, and the capacity for self-sacrifice[35]. These phenomena of patriotism should be recalled, discussed, and, above all, shown in terms of how they are nurtured, developed, and manifested within families and the Church. Education for patriotism entails understanding both personal and social freedom, as well as providing an example and model for the entire national and European community.

Finally, it should be emphasized that during the research for this article, new testimonies of faith were collected from those who did not participate directly in the school strikes in Miętne but formed a broader environment defending the Redeemer's Cross. They most often gathered in churches in larger or smaller towns and villages, where they too faced harassment from the authorities. Another direction for theological research is the need to document the testimony of living faith of priests who supported the youth during this time in various aspects of life. Many of the existing testimonies regarding priests may sound somewhat rhetorical; a deeper theological analysis is required of the steadfast stance of Fr. Dr. Władysław Zwierz and the engagement of Msgr. Stanisław Maksymowicz. Testimonies of teachers' faith are another field of research.

The ultimate testimony of faith in the struggle for the crosses in the school in Miętne in 1984, from a catechetical perspective, was certainly the *Appeal of the Youth Fighting for the Cross of Christ of the Agricultural School Complex in Miętne near Garwolin to Believing Youth in Poland and the World,* which reads in full as follows:

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[35]   Cf. Konferencja Episkopatu Polski, *Chrześcijański kształt patriotyzmu*, Warszawa, 14 March 2017, no. 1-2.

After long struggles for the Christ's Cross in our school, invariably steadfast in our religious convictions in the face of school authorities who sought to deprive us of this Cross of Salvation, we were expelled from the school, denied the possibility of continuing our education. Compelled by these circumstances in the Year of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Redemption, we call upon the youth of all Poland and the world, the young people who hold Christ's Cross to be precious, the Symbol of Salvation and the Triumph of the good over deceit, of freedom over oppression, of justice over injustice, of love over hatred, of life over death. We call upon you, Friends of the Christ's Cross, in the name of our faith and humanism, to stand shoulder to shoulder with us at the Cross, whether it is present or will be placed in your schools or universities, and to express solidarity with us through your protest, your prayers, and your witness of life[36].

Certainly, the testimony of faith of those who fought for the Cross in Miętne, preserved and passed on in the local Catholic community, contributes to the growth of Christ's disciples and is a life-giving source of contemporary catechesis.

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Catechetics

Duane Armitage
The University of Scranton, USA

iD 0000-0002-8645-4921

Daniel Haggerty
The University of Scranton, USA

iD 0009-0002-0218-415X

What's Really Wrong with Postmodernism?

This paper offers a new critique of postmodernism by focusing on the inadequacy of postmodernism's underlying philosophy of mathematics, which we argue is more philosophically fundamental, and yet compatible with more common critiques of postmodernism, such as those exposing its self-referential incoherency. We define postmodernism as any philosophical system assuming a critique of the objective nature of rationality. Thus, firstly, this paper is devoted to a brief historical overview and argument for this understanding, with an emphasis on the implicit conception of mathematics (and reason) within it, which we argue is largely Kantian. We then turn to an analysis of Kant's theory of mathematics as it appears in the First Critique and the Prolegomena. Finally, we argue as follows: if Kant's theory of mathematics is incorrect, then postmodernism's "metaphysical" pretensions as a critique of rationality, which both arise from and refer back to a Kantian view of mathematics, are bankrupt. The paper concludes by suggesting that the affirmation of intelligibility's reality implies a theistic metaphysics, uniting philosophical and theological reason

Key words: postmodernism, Heidegger, Nietzsche, Kant, philosophy of mathematics.

"Postmodernism" is used in many ways, often functioning as an umbrella term for historical and thematic trends in thinking not limited to philosophy, with broad and varied meanings across the humanities in general. Thus, in this paper, we must narrow the scope and establish a working definition of postmodernism before offering our critique.

In general, by postmodernism, we mean simply *any* philosophical system that assumes, whether implicitly or explicitly, a critique of the objective nature of rationality itself. Such an understanding of postmodernism, we shall argue, makes sense both historically and conceptually. It also covers a rather large scope of post-enlightenment philosophical tradition, which includes not only 19th and 20th Century French and German thinkers (including Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Foucault), but also "modern" philosophers extending back to Kant and, as we shall argue, even Descartes[1]. The first part of this paper then is devoted to a brief historical overview and argument for this understanding of postmodernism, with an emphasis on the implicit conception of mathematics (and thus reason) within it, which we shall argue, again, is largely Kantian. We then turn to a brief but somewhat detailed analysis of Kant's critique of mathematics as it appears in the *First Critique* and the *Prolegomena*. Finally, we argue as follows: *if* Kant's theory of mathematics is incorrect, as we, like most, believe that it is, then postmodernism's "metaphysical" pretensions as a critique of rationality itself, which both arise from and refer back to a Kantian view of mathematics, are bankrupt. In short, then, our argument offers a new critique of postmodernism that is compatible with more common critiques, such as those that expose its self-referential incoherency, and at the same time more philosophically fundamental, focusing on the inadequacy of its underlying philosophy of mathematics[2].

Fundamental Theology

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[1] While we acknowledge that "postmodernism" is a broad and often contested term, our definition does not claim to encompass every possible iteration or self-description of postmodern thought. There are, of course, exceptions and nuances among individual thinkers. However, we argue that there is a discernible throughline – a shared conceptual pattern –t hat justifies discussing these figures and ideas under the general category of postmodernism. Thus, our goal is not to impose a rigid taxonomy but to identify a coherent philosophical tendency that unites the figures under discussion in ways that are both historically and conceptually significant.

[2] It should be noted that our critique of postmodernism via the route of mathematics is not the first, or at least, that a conversation regarding mathematics vis-à-vis postmodern thinking (writ large) has already occurred in the writings of Alain Badiou (most notably his *Being and Event* and *Manifesto for Philosophy*). Badiou argues for a return to Platonism albeit a "Platonism of the many" (as opposed to the One). While there exist similarities in our present work and Badiou's (e.g. his use of Gödel), the differences are significant. Where Badiou seeks a return to mathematics and to Platonism to ground his theory of "fidelity to the event" so as to ground or found subjectivity, he largely remains, for his purposes, uninterested in addressing any critique of reason and cognition in postmodernism writ large, whereas for our present work this critique remains central. Moreover, Badiou does not address, to our satisfaction, the problem of

Our argument also serves as a crucial critical-philosophical foundation for theological hermeneutics. Our insistence that intelligibility has real ontological status that is irreducible to subjective construction anticipates a rather obvious theological claim: that intelligibility and meaning (*logos*) necessitate a further ontological ground, namely an Intellect. That is, if the ontological status of intelligibility is affirmed, as it remains undeniable, then a theistic conclusion becomes not merely compatible but necessary, since only a divine intellect could account for the existence of objective, transcendent intelligible structures. In this sense, our argument provides a metaphysical bridge between philosophical critique and theological hermeneutics, showing that any defense of intelligibility implicitly defends the very conditions for intelligibility, as well as reason, truth, and revelation itself. Thus what follows, though philosophical, should therefore be read as preparatory to theology, as it defends the very conditions that make revelation intelligible and possible.

As it is often used in academic settings, postmodernism means simply the mid- and later 20th century French reception of the German thinking from the late 19th and early 20th centuries[3]. The most prominent French thinkers include Sartre, De Beauvoir, Foucault, Derrida, and Lyotard, and the German sources are primarily Nietzsche and Heidegger. This French reception of German thinking often concerned itself with the ethical dilemma following the Second World War, specifically how to frame and explain, but also prevent, the radical violence and victimization of Nazism. Thus, postmodernism's primary concern was, and still is to today, one of explaining the origins of radical victimization so as to prevent it occurring ever again. Now postmodernists appear to be in unanimous agreement on the source of such victimization, namely, reason, along with its byproduct "absolute

[3]   That Postmodernism is, historically, the French reception of German philosophy, particularly Heidegger, has been argued most notably perhaps by Dominque Janicaud. See D. Janicaud, *Heidegger in France*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press 2015. Charles Guignon and Derk Pereboom argue that Postmodernism is precisely the French reception of Nietzsche and that Postmodernism is quite synonymous with "neo-Nietzscheanism." See *Existentialism: Basic Writings*, ed. C. Guignon, D. Pereboom, Indianapolis, in: Hackett Publishing 2001), p. 94. Countless attempts have been made to unearth an underlying "logic" or structure to Postmodernism quite akin to ours presented here. See D. Armitage, *Philosophy's Violent Sacred*, East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press, 2021, pp. ix-xviii.

truth" – sometimes fashionably referred to as "essentialism." At its core then postmodernism is a critique of reason, a critique of truth, and a critique of essences and essentialism, including categories and categorization itself, as structurally hegemonic, and thus liable to always already marginalize and victimize[4].

This idea that absolute truth, or "essentialism," is violent and prone to victimization is certainly not unfamiliar. It often takes form as a critique of religious fundamentalism, contending that narrow visions of truth lead to violence through marginalization and victimization. It is certainly not our view, then, that what gets called in these and other contexts "essentialism" never leads to violence. The much broader postmodern claim, however, that the exercise of reason in all contexts of truth-seeking is always already a violence to be exposed and rejected is, we contend, untenable[5].

That truth or essences *inherently exclude* is found in thinkers from De Beauvoir through Derrida. Butler's critique of gender essentialism, Foucault's critique of scientific discourse, and Derrida's critique of phallogocentrism are striking examples. They present many and various hegemonic discourses of the West, which include not only Patriarchy but also medicine, the asylum, and the prison system (to name just a few). Postmodernism critiques reason, *precisely because*,

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[4]   Stephen Hicks has argued that Postmodernism is driven by this ethic, which in the end proves to be a recapitulation of Marxism's ethic against classist victimization. See S. Hicks, *Explaining Postmodernism*, Roscoe, IL: Ockham's Razor Publishing 2011, pp. 1-20, 135-170. That, according to postmodernism (writ large) categories are essentially hegemonic and marginalizing, in a Foucauldian and Marxist context in particular, see for example: C. Butler, *Postmodernism: A Very Short Introduction,* Oxford: Oxford University Press 2002, pp. 44-52. See also, S. Kelly, *Understanding Postmodernism*, Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press 2007, pp. 166-186, 203ff.

[5]   It is worth noting that our definition, understanding, and thus unpacking of postmodernism as a "critique of reason" ought not to be confounded with anti-realism *simpliciter*. While postmodernism's eventuality lies in an anti-realist or at least skeptical metaphysics, not all anti-realists necessarily would fall under the purview of the postmodern. For example, thinkers such as Ockham or Hume, we argue, are not postmodernists despite their critiques of reason and realism, since such critiques never ascend directly or apply fully to rationality itself. That is, what distinguishes a postmodern fully from an antirealist is the willingness, in our estimation, to critique and thus dispense with reason entirely. Further on, although in what follows, we argue that elements of Descartes' philosophy lead and materialize into postmodernism, since Descartes at no point commits fully to a critique of reason, he would thus not fit the label of "postmodern." For a discussion of antirealism and postmodernism, see S. Kelly, *Understanding Postmodernism*, pp. 141-165, see: D. Armitage, *Philosophy's Violent Sacred*, pp. 93-106.

it claims, reason (logos) victimizes, hegemonizes, excludes, and marginalizes. As Foucault, Butler, and Derrida, and many following them often argue, rational discourses masquerade as reasoned positions of truth about essential relations (categories, essences) when underneath they are really self-perpetuating structures and expressions of power that marginalize. As Butler argues, for example, not only social categories of gender but putatively biological categories of sex as well are collections of performances posing as the norm by posing "the Essence". So also for Foucault with discourses on "sexuality". The same point can be made for racial categories, and indeed categories in general, as it is for Derrida and the metaphysics of presence[6]. Again, the underlying worry in these various critiques is the same: reason, truth, essences are dangerous constructs because they not only purport to describe the ways things are, but prescribe how they ought to be. That is, essences presume to present the "nature" and "order" and "purposes" of things, just as Aristotle describes in *Physics* that the "nature" of nature is the formal cause, which is simultaneously the teleological cause as well. Postmodern thinkers thus remain wary of truth, rationality, and essentialism, due to their inherent tendency to marginalize and oppress[7].

Now this ethical critique of essentialism derives its language from two founding sources: Heidegger's "soft" *deconstructive* phenomenological critique of reason as "the metaphysics of essence," and Nietzsche's "hard" *destructive* critique of reason as the mere guise of the will to power's *ressentiment.* Both Heidegger and Nietzsche understand Western culture to be dominated by Western metaphysics, which is really to say "Platonism"–the theory of reality that "splits the world in two," where the visible world of appearances is grounded on the invisible, super-sensible world of ideas or essences. For Heidegger, Western metaphysics as the "metaphysics of essences" remains problematic since it reduces all the many meanings of being to one. Thus, metaphysics is violent because it is reductionistic, and

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[6]   See e.g. J. Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, Chicago IL: University of Chicago Press 1978, pp. 79-152. Charlotte Witt describes and delineates precisely this anti-essentialist ethical argument in not only Butler, but in Feminism writ large C. Witt, *Philosophical Topics*, "Anti-Essentialism in Feminist Theory" 23 (2) (1995), pp. 321-344. While this remains the tacit assumption, as well, in nearly all of Foucault's writings, Foucault delineates in the fourth part of first volume of his *The History of Sexuality* the various ways in which categories vis-à-vis sexuality are used to control and thus exclude, see: M. Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction*, Vol. 1, New York, NY: Vintage Books 1990, pp. 81-91.

[7]   See the above footnote.

it is this reductionism, for Heidegger, that is playing itself out in the hegemony of modern science and technology – the hegemonizing processes in service to the reductionistic essentialism Heidegger refers to in his influential essay on technology as *Gestell*, or the "framework"[8]. The problem for Heidegger with this reductionism is that it leads to a "techne model" of comportment toward the world, wherein the "true" idea or essence is discovered only to be violently instantiated in the world. This is the so-called "fascism of Plato"[9]. According to this interpretation, in a kind of Kantian manner, I conform the world to my idea. It is precisely this worry about the fascism of the "techne model" that lurks behind postmodern critiques of essentialism, since, again, Essences tend to violently exclude and marginalize.

The idea that reason is violent in a more thorough and absolute sense comes from Nietzsche and his critique of Western culture and Judeo-Christianity as the *ressentiment*-laced morality of slaves, the metaphysical implications of which "splits the world in two." Indeed, in *Zarathustra*, Nietzsche writes that revenge is "the will's revulsion against time and its passing"[10]. Slave resentment not only hates the powerful and splits the world in two so as to imagine the eternal torments of the masters in another world, but even more deeply, such resentment hates time itself qua becoming, qua change, and thus posits rational categories over and against the flux of time so as to stabilize

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[8]   M. Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, New York, NY: Harper and Row 1997, p. 19. Heidegger's most explicit identification of metaphysics with Platonic essentialism occurs in his lengthily discussions of metaphysics in his *Contributions to Philosophy,* as well as a more focused treatment in *The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking,* see: M. Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy: On the Event,* Bloomington: Indiana University Press 2012, pp. 133-175; M. Heidegger, *Basic Writings*, San Francisco: Harper San Francisco 1993, p. 432. It is to be noted that Heidegger's critique of essential via Platonic metaphysics is the fundamental distinction between Husserlian and Heideggerian phenomenology, as the former sought to uncover essences of phenomena through the method of free variation; the later, on the other hand, identities essences with the Platonic Idea qua ground, presence, etc. and seeks to uncover a more pre-themaic understanding of being via phenomenology. For a treatment of Heidegger's realism and essentialism vis-à-vis Platonic essentialism qua reductionism, see: D. Armitage, *Heidegger and the Death of God,* New York: Palgrave Pivot 2016, pp. 70-84.

[9]   Hannah Arendt develops Heidegger's critique of metaphysics into an ethical/political critique of the "techne model of politics," see: H. Arendt, *The Human Condition,* Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press 1958, pp. 220-230.

[10]   F. Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, trans. W. Kaufmann, New York, NY: Modern Library 1995, chapter 2, section 20.

it[11]. Essences, truth, reason and even being itself remains a kind of a "metaphysical revenge" against reality; they are nothing more than slavish coping mechanisms, steeped in hate, that seek to take flight to another world of stability over and against the "true world" of becoming and flux. It is here that postmodernists find agreement – again, truth, essences, and rational categories are essentially violent.

Nietzsche also has a much "softer" critique of reason, which focuses on reason's will to truth self-destructing as it becomes self-aware, with the advent of Darwinism, as nothing more than will to power in disguise. That is, for Nietzsche, there remains absolutely no reason to trust the cognitive faculties, since such faculties are merely the result of Darwinian adaptations that proved beneficial for survival. (Evolutionary theorist Donald Hoffman has recently argued for this position in his book, *The Case against Reality*)[12]. In essays such as *On Truth and Lie in the Extra-Moral Sense*, this view leads Nietzsche to a kind of radical nominalism, which later gets appropriated, for example, quite explicitly by Butler in *Gender Trouble*, wherein Butler argues that not only gender but "biological sex" itself remains a mere construct[13]. The general move is this: there are no kinds or categories beyond language in any domain to which language refers, and thus our uses of language are always only expressions of a non-rational, inherently violent will to power. Whichever way you slice it, though, the critique of rationality and essentialism remain the common root to all philosophic methodologies that we describe here as "postmodern."

Do Nietzsche and Heidegger contain a common original source in their critiques of reason? Heidegger himself contends that Nietzscheanism is merely the playing out of the subjectivist framework inaugurated by Kant, which was already conditioned by the Cartesian turn[14]. In other words, Heidegger recognizes that, at least for Nietzsche, Kant and Descartes remain the taproot, and that Nietzscheanism remains an eventuality once the human subject (qua Cogito) is taken to be the

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[11]   Ibidem. See also F. Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, New York, NY: Vintage Press 1968, para. 579.

[12]   See D. Hoffman, *The Case Against Reality*, New York, NY: W.W. Norton and Company 2019, pp. 1-21, 40-52.

[13]   J. Butler, *Gender Trouble*, New York, NY: Routledge Classics 2006, pp. 144-193.

[14]   For Heidegger's thesis on the relation between Descartes and Nietzsche, see: M. Heidegger, *Nietzsche. Volume IV: Nihilism,* New York, NY: Harper and Row 1982, pp. 123-139. See also: *Nietzsche's Word God is Dead*, in: M. Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, pp. 53-114.

ground of first philosophy[15]. It is our endeavor, again, to look more carefully at these Kantian and Cartesian roots to postmodernism and find another, and perhaps the more fundamental root to postmodernism specifically in the Kantian Intuitionism[16].

Critiques of postmodernism often (rightly) focus on the self-referential inconsistency of anti-essentialist and anti-rationalist claims. For example, Heideggerian anti-essentialism provides phenomenological description as an alternative to logocentric reason, only to use the very categories of reason and logic to articulate its phenomenological claims. Moreover, such phenomenological descriptive claims quickly devolve into mere arguments from authority, as such arguments admittedly do not and cannot have recourse to logic and reason. Postmodernist claims that follow more directly Nietzsche's route, namely that behind the guises of reason and logic are power, also fall prey to self-referential incoherence (of which Nietzsche himself remained fully aware); for any claim grounded on something more fundamental than reason and logic loses universality and necessity and is thus, again, admittedly for Nietzsche, "irrational" or "illogical", resulting in such claims as there is no truth is true. However, these credible objections to postmodernism notwithstanding, we think an additionally important angle to any critique of postmodernism ought to concern itself with a problem that can best be described as "the ontological status of intelligibility". That is, do intelligible objects such as numbers, mathematical laws, and logical laws exist objectively and independently of

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[15]   That postmodernism finds its roots in Descartes and Kant has also been taken up by Peter Lawler, who argues that postmodernism is essentially "hypermodernism" since it merely unravels the fundamental assumptions of Kant. See P.A. Lawler, *Postmodernism Rightly Understood: A Return to Realism in American Thought,* Washington D.C.: Rowan & Littlefield 1999. As noted above, Heidegger also traces the unraveling of the logic of Niezscheanism from Descartes through Kant, arguing that the Platonic metaphysical world retreats inward in Descartes, becoming disconnected from the world in Kant (absent God as the epistemological guarantor), and fully realized as nothing but the sheer will to power in Nietzsche (see: fn. xiii).

[16]   Since the Kantian philosophy of mathematics later developed by Brouwer into "Intuitionism" is so widely and tacitly assumed in the literature, we use these terms interchangeably here. As John Sallis writes, "Kant's general view of mathematics has been highly developed into one of the major schools of mathematical thought in this century by Brouwer and Heything: Intuitionism. J. Sallis, *Kant and the Spirit of Critique*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press 2020. p. 34. For a detailed analysis of the foundations of Intuitionism in Kant see M. Ardeshir, *Kant's Influence on Brouwer*, "Wisdom and Philosophy" 1 (1) 2005, pp. 6-15. For a lengthy discussion of Kant, Intuitonism, and Platonism, see: R. Tieszen, *After Gödel*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 2011, pp. 24-50.

the subject, or not? Aside from the problems of self-referential coherence, this very basic philosophical question often goes unnoticed and unanswered in postmodern discourses, largely due to a kind of tacit acceptance of the Kantian framework that, we believe, hangs upon Kant's theory of mathematics. It is to Kant we shall now turn with this question regarding intelligibility's ontological status.

Kant's thesis on the nature of mathematics is well known, thus it would be unnecessary to rehearse its entirety in detail. However, there are several salient ideas that touch upon Kant's thesis, which lead Kant to argue in favor of his position, and, which in turn, have led us to argue against it. Kant's thesis is, simply put, that mathematical knowledge is "synthetic *a priori*", meaning that unlike analytical knowledge, which extracts information already contained implicitly in our concepts, synthetic knowledge gains information beyond the mere play of concepts. Moreover, according to Kant, such knowledge or information that is acquired contains both universality and necessity, and contains both precisely because sensible intuition – namely, space and time – from which concepts extract new information are *a priori* forms of such sensible intuition. Thus, for example, when one is to construct a geometric proof empirically, one can conclude from such a proof that the knowledge, proven or gained, goes beyond that, or any other particular construction and applies universally and necessarily. It seems then, at least at first, that Kant's ontological claims are forced from his epistemic commitments. That is, since Kant recognizes the apodicticity of mathematical knowledge, but cannot or will not permit such knowledge to be about reality in itself, in this case mathematical objects, he is forced to argue that the "abstraction" from particular to universal knowledge must be by way of a prior given sensibility – in the case of geometry, pure spatiality. In other words, how is it possible that when I prove something mathematically, I am certain that the proof applies universally and necessarily? Either I am intellectually perceiving or intuiting, via abstraction, in perhaps a Platonic fashion, some independently existing intelligible reality beyond space/time, or, space/time, as *a priori* forms of sensation, permit me to conclude universality and necessity regarding appearances in the world but not reality in itself. Since Kant rules out the Platonic explanation, namely that the mind can access intelligible realities themselves via intellectual intuition, he must make recourse to his transcendental idealism, which argues that not only are concepts/categories provided by the subject, but pure space and time are as well.

   Furthermore, Kant appears, by his own admission, to be conflating epistemic access with ontological status, or at least deriving the latter from the former. Kant writes that mathematical objects are "given in the very knowledge of them" (A87-88/B120)[17]. But while it may be true that new mathematical knowledge is gained in constructing a proof, it simply does not follow that *what* is proven applies only to appearances – to the way things are only under a certain description, to objects constructed by *a priori* categories and forms of sensibility – and not to reality in itself, to the way things really stand. Unless of course, one already accepts Kant's framework.

   A further problem arises. Namely, what support is there for the Kantian claim that mathematical knowledge applies only to experience, insofar as such knowledge constitutes the backbone of nearly all scientific hypotheses and our best current and ongoing efforts to advance our understanding of the world? Kant purports to solve this problem of *quid juris* in his *Transcendental Deduction* by showing that the subject's categories apply to objects in the world insofar as such categories condition the very possibility of experience, that is, of the experience of objects. However, Kant only argues that these categories apply to objects as they appear and not as they are in themselves, thus appearing to argue in a circle. According to Kant, mathematical knowledge is only about the world as it appears and not as it is in itself; thus, Kant can and must say that we know *a priori* of things only what we as subjects place into them. The problem then of the "unreasonable applicability of mathematics" to the world remains unsolved insofar as Kant has only shown in his *Deduction* how categories of thought apply to *a priori* sensation – how categories are "schematized" in *a priori* space and time[18], but not how, or why, such schematized categories are applicable to any reality beyond subjectivity or subjectivity's constructs.

   Returning to Kant's philosophy of mathematics, there appears to be an underlying tacit assumption within Kant's proto-Intuitionism, namely that mathematical truth and provability coincide. That is, that mathematical truth in a very real sense is reducible to *provability* qua

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[17]   Citations of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* are taken from Norman Kemp Smith's translation. I. Kant, *The Critique of Pure Reason,* transl. N. Kemp Smith, New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan 2003.

[18]   Although Kant's reflections on the schematism of categories follow the Transcendental Deduction, it necessarily explains the manner in which the categories apply to experience insofar as it is the categories, fused with a priori sensation, that enable such application, namely by providing in advance an a priori "look" as a standard of judging such future applications.

construction in empirical intuition, which later becomes universaliz-able due to *a priori* intuition. Kant writes,

"Mathematical knowledge is knowledge gained by reason from the construction of concepts. To construct a concept means to exhibit *a priori* the intuition corresponding to the concept" (A713/B741). Thus, one knows a mathematical truth is "true" for Kant insofar as one can construct such a proof *a priori* in intuition, which is to say construct the proof first empirically and then trusting its universality and necessity due to the *a priori* nature of sensible intuition. It is in this sense, then, that mathematical objects are given *in the very knowing of them*, according to Kant.

> The single figure we draw is empirical, and yet it serves to express the concept without impairing its universality. For in this empirical intuition we consider only the act whereby we construct the concept, and we abstract from the many determinations (for instance, the magnitude of the sides and of the angles), which are quite indifferent, as not alter-ing the concept "triangle" (A713/B741).

But the question remains: Are there mathematical propositions that are true but not strictly speaking "provable"? Gödel's two Incomplete-ness theorems become problematic for any Intuitionist, including Kant, who wishes to argue that mathematical truth and provability remain inextricably bound. Indeed, Gödel believed his proofs pointed quite clearly to an undeniable Platonism as the root of any philosophy of mathematics, since if truth extends beyond provability – which is to say, a human construction – then Platonic intellection would be the only manner of explaining how one could both know a truth and yet be unable to prove such a truth[19].

Gödel's proofs, according to Thomas Nagel, present the "best anti-reductionist argument of all time," since Gödel was able to *prove* that mathematical truth cannot be reduced to *provability*; construction in any formal axiomatic system is such that there will always be true propositions in any formal system that we know to be true, but that cannot be proven[20]. The idea that mathematical truth extends beyond provability, again, leads for Gödel to Platonism, since such mathematical truth extends well beyond our subjective constructs of it and thus appears to exist independently and be knowable out-side of such subjectivity. Gödel proves this by showing that a coded

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[19]   For a thorough treatment of the Platonism implied by Gödel's two Incomplete-ness Theorems, as well as the development of Intuitionism from Kantianism, see: R. Tieszen, *After Gödel*, pp. 24-50.

[20]   T. Nagel, *The Last Word*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 1997, p. 74.

self-referential sentence, G, that reads "G is unprovable in this system", results in either inconsistency or incompleteness. Either we recognize the sentence as true and unprovable, in which case the system is incomplete, or we prove it, which in turn results in both G and ~G, and thus inconsistency, since if G were provable, then G would be false. The philosophical insight that can be gleaned from Gödel's proofs vis-à-vis Kant is, again, that there are mathematical truths, which are self-evidently true, that remain true beyond construction[21]. Richard Tieszen summarizes the rejection of Intuitionistic foundations following the results of Gödel:

> The first incompleteness theorem suggests that the abstract concept of objective arithmetic truth transcends our intuition (or constructive abilities) at any given stage, in the sense that we know we can always constitute additional instances of this concept at various times that we have not yet intuited or constructed... The concept of arithmetic truth then appears to be known as an identity (or "universal") through these differences which "transcends" the construction of the specific instances at any given stage in time. This identity (or "universal") is "outside of" or "independent of" each particular intuition (construction)[22].

However, and perhaps more importantly, what of mathematical propositions that are true and unprovable, but not self-evident? Are there any such mathematical truths? If there were not any such truths, one might possibly attempt to squeeze the Kantian framework to fit with Gödel's results, perhaps arguing that the self-evidence of any true mathematical proposition is self-evident precisely by way of *a priori* intuition, which would safeguard the truth against any independent, Platonic existence[23]. However, a "self-evident" truth in precisely this sense – for example, a Gödel sentence that is self-reflexive, unprovable, and yet self-evidently true – still extends beyond the bounds of a Kantian construction in space and time. What makes such a Gödel sentence true has nothing to do with construction from, say, intuition of spatiality. Moreover, Gödel himself argues explicitly against Intuitionism in favor of the Platonic rationalism precisely because of

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[21]   That Gödel's Incompleteness proofs prove difficult to reconcile with Intuitionism, particularly Intuitionism's insistence on equating mathematical truth with provability, see P. Raatikainen, *On the Philosophical Relevance of Gödel's Incompleteness Theorems*, "Revue Internationale de Philosophie" (2005) 59 (4), pp. 516-517.

[22]   R. Tieszen, *After Gödel*, 47.

[23]   For a more detailed critique of Intuitionist's notions of truth and self-evidence, see P. Raatikainen, *Conceptions of truth in Intuitionism*, "History and Philosophy of Logic" 25 (2) (2004), pp. 131-145.

recent advancements in mathematics, since Intuitionism simply cannot account for non-intuitive mathematical truths. Given such recent advancements as the Axiom of Choice, for example, from which it is possible to derive the Well Ordering Theorem, any suggestion that such mathematical foundations can be based on subjective intuition, as Gödel contends, remains simply untenable. Similarly with Transfinite Numbers, the Continuum Hypothesis, and the derivation of the Banach-Tarski Paradox. These advancements in mathematics did not, and indeed could not make recourse to subjective intuition. Cantor's work with transfinite numbers, for example, obviously cannot obey the strict demands of Intuitionist standards of truth, since these numbers *qua transfinite ipso facto* cannot be constructed or imaged by the finite human subject. Gödel himself writes that,

> the negative attitude towards Cantor's set theory... is... only the result of a certain philosophical conception of the nature of mathematics, which admits mathematical objects only to the extent to which they are interpretable as our own constructions, or, at least, can be completely given in mathematical intuition. For someone who considers mathematical objects to exist independently of our constructions and of our having an intuition of them individually... there exists, I believe, a satisfactory foundation of Cantor's set theory in its whole original extent and meaning, namely axiomatics of set theory interpreted in the way sketched [i.e. Platonism][24].

Now, according to Kant's *Transcendental Dialectic*, metaphysics remains impossible as a science since it extends the use of categories beyond sensible intuition. Mathematics and natural science, on the contrary, operate within the strict bounds of sensible intuition (*a priori* and empirical). Yet in light of the above-mentioned advancements, it seems, then, for Kant, that modern mathematics is itself, by definition, *metaphysics*, insofar as it uses concepts beyond the bounds of sensible intuition. Indeed, modern mathematics, cannot get off the ground without recourse to the transcendence of not only intuition (e.g. again, transfinite numbers), but construction and provability as well.

Even given modern mathematical advances that render Kant's theory of mathematics rather obviously incorrect, or, at best, obsolete (consider, for example, non-Euclidian geometries), there remains nevertheless a strictly philosophical problem with reducing mathematics (and by proxy, logic, since mathematics depends upon it) to subjectivity's construction – or, *a fortiori,* its creation. For as Heidegger sees it,

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[24]   K. Gödel, *What is Cantor's Continuum Problem?*, in: *Kurt Gödel: Collected Works*, vol. II, pp. 254-270, from R. Tieszen, *After Gödel*, 41.

"pushing" it to the extremes of subjectivism, Kant's system appears, in the end, to be "grounded on an abyss (*ab-grund*)". For Kant's entire conceptual framework, including his account of sensibility itself, remains contingent upon the transcendental imagination. Indeed, Heidegger shows that Kant's schemata as a priori determinations of time, which condition experience, and which are, according to Kant, constitutive of mathematical intuition, can very well precede categories and sensibility, in the sense that nothing within Kant's system prevents them from doing so, once Kant grounds the categories' synthesis with sensibility on the transcendental imagination[25]. Rational categories, then, would be mere abstractions from such "schemata."

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On this reading, a priori determined space-time, produced by the imagination's *productive synthesis* of pure sensibility, functions to ground experience. Thus, the problem, for Kant, of the heterogeneity between a priori rational categories and a priori sensibility, which the schematism sought to solve, is rendered moot, insofar as there exists, in schemata themselves (as a priori determinations of sensibility) a more fundamental and already existing homogeneity. Pure categories separated from pure sensibility, then, are mere abstractions from schemata *produced and determined by* the imagination. Kant indeed recognizes this in a curious footnote:

> Space, represented as object (as we are required to do in geometry), contains more than mere form of intuition; it also contains combination of the manifold, given according to the form of sensibility, in an intuitive representation, so that the form of intuition gives only a manifold, the formal intuition gives unity of representation. In the Aesthetic, I have treated this unity as belonging merely to sensibility, simply in order to emphasize that it precedes any concept, although, as a matter of fact, it presupposes a synthesis which does not belong to the senses but through which all concepts of space and time firstly become possible. For since by its means (in that the understanding determines sensibility) space and time are first given as intuitions, the unity of this a priori intuition belongs to space and time, and not to the concept of the understanding... (B 160 a)

Thus, Kant here admits that pure sensibility as something separate from determination or synthesis (by rational categories) is a mere abstraction. The problem, then, with Kant's admission is that it allows Heidegger to argue for a grounding of the entire conceptual apparatus – that is, reason itself qua the cognitive faculties – on imagination.

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[25]   Heidegger's reading, of course, works only for Kant's *A Deduction* and likely explains why Kant rewrote the entire Deduction. Nevertheless, Heidegger's reading points to the tenuous and precarious structure of Kant's system.

If schemata, as a priori conditions for experience, remain the ground of categories, and not the other way round, then rational categories lose their universality and necessity becoming mere abstractions from an already determined sensibility produced spontaneously by imagination.

In Kant's system, the a priori imagination was said to synthesize sensibility according to the rules of the categories; however, if categories remain mere abstractions to an already existing, synthesized sensibility, then rationality no longer remains fundamental. In that case, then, the achievements of rationality are neither universal nor necessary, as the imagination's synthesis would be spontaneous, lawless, and perhaps even arbitrary. In short, then, rational categories lose their universality and necessity when grounded and fixed upon imagination, which acts "creatively" rather than constructively, and which leads, according to Heidegger, to a deeper subjectivism than Kant was willing to admit. It is in this way, then, that Kant "looked into the abyss, but withdrew"[26]. And it is in this way that Heidegger's reading shows that within the Kantian framework remain the seeds for its own demise, collapsing into a radical skeptical subjectivism, the poisoned fruits of which later take shape explicitly in postmodern critiques of reason and intelligibility.

Returning then to the question concerning the ontological status of intelligibility, in this case, the reality of mathematical, and, we should add, logical objects, it seems one must grant some kind of objective "reality" to these intelligible objects. It is not our concern here to attempt to discover precisely how or in what manner these objects *are*, but simply to determine that they are, and must be, in order to have a coherent understanding of these objects in line with the basics of best current mathematics.[27] In short, these objects cannot in anyway be held to be constructed by the subject without forfeiting coherence. Thus, Kantian Intuitionism is, in fact, false.

Prior to Heidegger, Nietzsche had already unraveled the Kantian framework to its "logical" conclusion, namely subjective perspectivism. That is, as noted earlier, Nietzsche rightly saw within Kant the seeds of subjectivism, once rational cognition, including the enterprises of

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[26]   M. Heidegger, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press 1997, pp. 112, 117.

[27]   For a thorough treatment of the metaphysical and ethical implications of mathematical realism and anti-realism, see: J. Clarke-Doane, *Morality and Mathematics*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 2020.

mathematics and physical science, were held to be grounded in the subject. Nietzsche, however, contends that reason itself is a mere guise for the subject's value construction motived by the will to power. Concerning mathematics in particular, Nietzsche writes:

> *Number* – the invention of the laws of numbers was made on the basis of the error, dominant even from the earliest times, that there are identical things (but in fact nothing is identical with anything else)...When Kant says "the understanding does not draw its laws from nature, it prescribes them to nature", this is wholly true with regard to the *concept of nature* which we are obliged to attach to nature... but which is the summation of a host of errors of the understanding. – To a world which is *not* our idea, the laws of number are wholly inapplicable...[28]

Kant accepts that objects conform to our minds and that what we find in nature is only that which has been put there by our subjectivity. This admission fits with Nietzsche's Darwinian understanding of rationality's will to truth as the outgrowth of survival and power, which is not interested in truth. On this view, our cognition is not geared to a discovery of truth, but rather to concepts of the world that aid in control, dominance, and, ultimately, survival. It becomes difficult to see how Kantianism does not immediately dissolve into Nietzscheanism, then, once the understanding becomes *prescriptive*, and the cognitive faculties, mathematical objects, and logic are held to be rooted in subjectivity. If rationality is grounded ultimately on human subjectivity and not *in itself*, then claims to universality and necessity fall apart. Nietzsche therefore can plausibly claim that:

> Not "to know" but to schematize – to impose upon chaos as much regularity and form as our practical needs require. In formation of reason, logic, the categories, it was *need* that was authoritative: the need, not to "know", but to subsume, to schematize, for the purpose of intelligibility and calculation ... No pre-existing "idea" was here at work, but the utilitarian fact that only when we see things coarsely and made equal do they become calculable and usable to us... The categories are "truths" only in the sense that they are conditions of life for us...[29]

So we agree with Nietzsche, at least to this extent: If rationality is wholly conditioned by the human subject, then rationality itself, and all that depends upon it is undermined; reason's claims to universality and necessity, if grounded in nothing but human subjectivity, cannot hold.

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[28]   F. Nietzsche, *Human All Too Human*, Lincoln NE: University of Nebraska Press 1986, para. 19.

[29]   F. Nietzsche, *The Will to Power,* para. 515.

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Nietzsche's radicalization of Kant forces the question concerning the ontological status of intelligibility to the fore. Is that which orders the world (e.g. numbers, concepts, etc.) independent of human subjectivity, or does such ordering arise from the human subject? If the latter, then it is difficult to see how, again, Nietzscheanism does not follow, since reason and justification would be grounded upon nothing more than human subjectivity, and thus a certain arbitrariness – the arbitrariness of power – would always be at work in reason's application. Is intelligibility fundamental? Is it the "last word," as Thomas Nagel suggests? Or is intelligibility a product of human subjectivity?

Although Kant agreed with Hume's general empiricist critique of Rationalism, he nevertheless could not follow Hume in his radical critique of all intelligibility, particularly Hume's contention that mathematics has no existential import, no non-utilitarian justification in its application to the world. Instead, Kant was convinced that mathematics is not merely the dissection of analytic concepts, but that it is genuinely informative, a branch of knowledge of synthetic *a priori* propositions. The proposal Kant makes to explain how such knowledge could be possible is his hypothesis concerning the relation between the mind and the world. However, if the Kantian explanation of mathematics fails, as we have argued it indeed does, then the intellectual motive for accepting Kant's hypothesis – that reason does not and cannot discover what genuinely is the case regarding things in themselves – must be abandoned. Thus, we return to our original thesis, namely, that if Kant's framework concerning the foundations of mathematics is incorrect, then postmodernism fails, as there remains no compelling reason to accept that the link between mind and world is as Kant asks us to suppose it to be.

The question concerning the objective, ontological status of the intelligibility of the world seems to ultimately hang on the nature of mathematical objects. For, what is ultimately meant by an object of intelligibility? A mathematical object? Plato and Nietzsche both recognized that this question boils down to the objective status of "the one", insofar as *logos* is that very capacity to gather many disparate elements into one coherent form, pattern, or rational principle. The question is whether the world is divisible in this manner or not. Plato, of course, argued it was via the forms; Nietzsche argued it was not and that such apparent intelligibility was nothing more than the schematism imposed upon the world by the subject's will to power. Kant attempted to offer a kind of skeptical alternative that both excluded metaphysical speculation but kept the science and mathematics

of his day. However, we have seen that such an understanding fails based upon recent developments in mathematics. Given Kant's failure to adequately account for mathematical "knowledge", if one wishes to keep Kant's critique of reason wholesale, it becomes difficult to see how Nietzsche's radical destruction of reason does not become the only option:

> [u]ltimately, human beings find in things nothing but what they themselves have imported into them: the finding is called science... [and thus in] *summa*, science is preparing a sovereign ignorance, a feeling that there is no such thing as "knowing," that it was a kind of arrogance to dream of it, more, that we no longer have the least notion that warrants our considering "knowledge" even a possibility – that "knowing" itself is a contradictory idea (WP 606, 608)[30].

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It is worth noting that the modern idea that there lies something more fundamental than reason that can assail the claims of logic and mathematics arises first in Descartes' evil demon thought experiment. Indeed, Descartes argues that it is precisely power that could undermine the truths of arithmetic. The kind of power that could pull this off, according to Descartes, would be omnipotence. But it is worth considering, in the light of such subsequent deconstructions as those offered by Foucault, Derrida, and Butler, for example, whether Descartes might be more amenable than we tend to imagine to the idea that the "dream world" and other "snares for our credulity" are manufactured by invisible, pervasive systems and structures of power. Either way, the only thing that can save Descartes from the disorienting threat of such a radical skepticism, a skepticism borne of destabilizing abuses of power in institutions and ideologies, is burrowing into his own subjectivity. It is in this sense, then, that, as we noted earlier, Heidegger saw that the true origin of Nietzschean will to power was not Kantianism but Cartesianism, in particular, Descartes' grounding of "being" and "truth" in the human subject and its dependence on God as the epistemological guarantor of veracity. And once God "dies" via the advent of modern science and technology, there remains only will to power to account for the intelligibility of the world.

Yet, as we argue, Descartes runs up against the very same problems as Kant and Nietzsche and all who attempt to argue for something more fundamental than rationality, namely, the problem of self-referential incoherence. In reasoning that he could possibly be deceived about the truths of arithmetic, Descartes' argument assumes and relies on the very kind of reasoning it attempts to question. If the

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[30]   F. Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, para. 606, 608.

truths of arithmetic are dubitable but nevertheless intelligible, then such a doubting of them must doubt intelligibility itself. Moreover, if arithmetical reasoning is intelligible but dubitable, and power is the grounds of its dubitability, then Descartes cannot rely on argument to overcome solipsism and infer the existence of a benevolent power that secures the veracity of reason, as doing so is a self-referential absurdity. As Thomas Nagel writes concerning this very doubt of Descartes: "it is not possible to argue in this way, because it is an instance of the sort of argument it purports to undermine"[31]. In other words, Descartes' argument involves some form of reasoning and cannot help but do so, insofar as it is a form of doubt.

Postmodernism is wholly driven by its anti-victimization ethics, which justifies its radical critique of metaphysics and rationality. However, given our critique, Kant's philosophy of mathematics, both in itself and as putative support for postmodern critiques of reason, must be abandoned. It appears then that the only "metaphysics" remaining that could sustain postmodernism is, in fact, Nietzsche's, namely an "anti-metaphysics," which includes a wholesale critique of rationality and admits of only power and power relations. Yet, Nietzscheanism can provide absolutely no justification for postmodernism's ethic. Indeed, according to Nietzsche, if intelligible structures must be abandoned, then reality is best understood in terms of power relations, and there remains absolutely no reason to side with the weak, save for 2000 years of catechesis in Judeo-Christianity. Why not side with the strong instead? The inability to answer this question without recourse to Judeo-Christian/Platonic metaphysics – Christianity, for Nietzsche, is merely "Platonism for the people"–permits Nietzsche to advocate for a philosophy of strength over weakness. For example, in a passage that perhaps best summarizes his entire philosophy, Nietzsche writes that "the weak and the ill-constituted should die off, and we shall help them to do so: first principle of *our* philanthropy. And one shall help them to do so"[32].

Without recourse to truth and metaphysics, ethical claims of preference for victims, the oppressed, and the marginalized remain unjustified, indeed arbitrary. Postmodernism's ethic requires justification, which, it seems, only traditional metaphysics – the very thing that postmodernism rejects on the supposition of its own ethics – can give.

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[31]   T. Nagel, *The Last Word*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 1997, p. 62.

[32]   F. Nietzsche, *The Twilight of the Idols and The Anti-Christ*, New York, NY: Penguin Classics 1968, p. 128.

We have argued that postmodernism, if it wishes to preserve some connection to the sciences, is contingent upon Kant's philosophy of mathematics. However, as we have argued, Kant's philosophy of mathematics is wholly untenable. Recourse therefore must be made to Nietzscheanism as the only viable alternative, should postmodernism wish to keep its critique of reason. Yet Nietzscheanism wholly destroys postmodernism's motivation for ever embarking on its critique of reason, insofar as Nietzsche demonstrates that ethical critiques of oppression, or any ethics for that matter, are entirely unjustifiable – indeed, unsustainable. For Kant, it was his unique theory of mathematics that enabled him to both preserve and critique (delimit) reason. Kant did not dispense with mathematical truth, but rather showed how such truth was wholly contingent upon the subject's construction in intuition (thereby, Kant thought, saving mathematics from the Humean critique). But it is precisely this Kantian legacy in mathematics, insofar as it justifies Kant's Copernican turn, that enables further, devasting critiques of rationality to be launched by later thinkers. As Kant's philosophy of mathematics is no longer tenable, and thus neither are the grounds for his Copernican revolution, the framework for postmodernism's critique of reason falls apart, unless one wishes to slide along with Nietzsche into an irrational and absolute destruction of reason, in which case no support for postmodernism's anti-victimization ethics is available. This is what's really wrong with postmodernism.

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In conclusion, our critique of postmodernism not only exposes the philosophical incoherence of reducing intelligibility to subjective construction but also gestures towards its theological significance. If intelligibility is real ontological status irreducible to human cognition, then such a status and irreducibility cry out for an explanation, that is, an explanatory ground beyond human cognition, namely a transcendent or divine intellect. The affirmation of the ontological reality of intelligibility thus entails a theistic metaphysics: *logos* then would not merely be a human ordering principle but the eternal Intelligibility or Word through which, through whom, all things are made intelligible. The rejection of this truth, as postmodernism shows, leads not to liberation but to incoherence and nihilism; its recovery restores both philosophy's and theology's shared ground in reality and reason, wholly compatible and even harmonious with revelation.

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Tadeusz Kasabuła
University of Białystok

0000-0003-3731-5324

The Endowment of the Vilnius Cathedral Chapter in the Years 1390-1662

The first donations to the cathedral chapter in Vilnius date back to 1390 and were bequeathed by King Władysław II Jagiełło. By giving the lands of Strzeszyn to the canons, the monarch provided the basis for the development of the capitular latifundium. It was expanded by the Grand Duke of Lithuania, Vytautas, who, after assuming power in 1391, in 1415 endowed the chapter, in addition to several minor estates, with the lands of Kamieńszczyzna, which, combined with the endowment from Jagiełło, gave the Vilnius canon corporation land goods that can already be called a latifundium. The estates belonging to the Vilnius Chapter gradually increased in the sixteenth and mid-seventeenth centuries owing to the generosity of successive rulers and magnate families. Over time, the chapter's endowment was increased by private donors, both from the clergy and laity.

This endowment, which by the middle of the 17th century included about 1000 farmsteads (so-called "smokes" – Pol. dymy or sochy) and covered around 21 300 hectares of various types of land, placed the Vilnius Cathedral Chapter among the five most generously endowed canon corporations in the Polish-Lithuanian state.

Moscow's invasion and the occupation of a huge part of the country by foreign troops in the years 1656-1662 brought about an economic collapse of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. The capitular latifundium suffered greatly as a result of the war. Some of the land goods suffered losses of 80-90%. In 1662, the income from the whole endowment was less than half of what it had been before 1656. Although the chapter rebuilt its latifundium through careful efforts, it never regained the old dynamics of development.

Key words: Vilnius, cathedral, chapter, endowment.

Introduction

The basic endowment of each chapter consisted of prebendary property. Each prelature and canonry had its own foundational property, based either on land ownership or on tithes. The endowment of the canonry was extremely uneven. It was administered by prelates and canons individually. Since the order of the canonries was sometimes determined not so much by the years of their erection as by the size of their endowments, the canons were promoted to higher positions after the death of another, to increasingly better canonries, and moved closer and closer to the altar in the stalls.

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The chapters also had joint property, which was administered by the procurator on behalf of the chapter. The income from the common property went towards daily distributions, the so-called refections, and the common expenses of the chapter, such as restoration of the cathedral, the costs of court proceedings, travel and allowances of canons delegated by the chapter to diets and tribunals. Distributions were small amounts given to prelates and canons present in the choir and at the convent mass, and to those whose absence was justified. In some chapters, e.g. in Włocławek, all the prebends were counted towards the overall endowment, from which some of the income was paid to prelates and canons, and the rest was distributed as refections and used to cover common expenses.

In addition, chapters had a separate part of estates, consisting of a number of villages, the so-called prestimonies, which were distributed by "option" (a request from individual prelates and canons) to their members according to seniority in the chapter (*secundum senium*). There were fewer such villages than seats in the chapter, which is why only older members of the corporation received them. In addition, prelates and canons had residential houses near the cathedral, so-called canon curiae. Some were spacious and impressive, others more modest, and some very modest, so after each death of a canon, the oldest member moved to vacant, higher quality lodgings.

Shaping the foundations of the benefice

The Vilnius Cathedral Chapter received its first endowment two years after its establishment. It was then, on May 15, 1390, that King Władysław II Jagiełło granted it a hamlet, formerly belonging to Olgierd Ponara, near Vilnius, a tithe on fish from the weir on the Neris river, a tithe on the fields in Niemża, and 12 poods of wax per year from

the Vilnius castle[1]. Already the same year, the monarch granted the chapter the extensive Strzeszyn estate, covering an area of 1200 km² on both sides of the the Dnieper[2].

The endowment was expanded by the Grand Duke of Lithuania, Vytautas. Around 1395, he granted to the chapter tithes from Cudzeniszki near Medininkai, a honey tithe, and three villages with inhabitants in the Choreczko estates called Trusewicze, which was based around the following land goods: Korzeń Wielki, Korzeń Mały, Haniewicze Wielkie, Haniewicze Małe, and Wołcz, also known as Bihomel[3]. In 1410, he added the village of Drogiminiszki on the Żyzna River[4]. The culmination of Vytautas's gifts to the chapter was the donation, made in 1415, of the powerful Kamieniec estate in the Kiev region, which was soon started to be referred to as Kamieńszczyzna[5].

The lands of the Vilnius Chapter gradually increased thanks to the generosity of successive rulers and magnate families. After the death of Vytautas, in 1435, Duke Sigismund Kęstutaitis donated the village of Rukojnie in the Miednica estate to the endowments of the chapter, along with a manor, a honey tithe and peasants[6], as well as probably Parfienowicze in the Kurzeniec estate[7]. In 1436, he donated the village of Wojniałgowo with all its land and several other minor estates to the chapter[8].

Subsequent rulers also gave gifts to the chapter and the cathedral. The donors included: Casimir IV Jagiellon, Alexander Jagiellon,

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[1]   *Kodeks dyplomatyczny katedry i diecezji wileńskiej*, ed. J. Fijałek, W. Semkowicz, vol. 1, z. 1, Kraków 1948, (hitherto: KDKDW), no. 17, pp. 30-31; Vilniaus Universiteto Biblioteka (hitherto: VUB), fond (hitherto: f.) 4, no. 39098, Kopie nadań…, 1387-1676, p. 46.

[2]   KDKDW, no. 20, pp. 33-35; Lietuvos Mokslų Akademijos Vrublevskių Biblioteka (hitherto: LMAVB), f. 43, no. 141, Summa privilegiorum fundationis super certis bonis Capitulo Vilnensi…, XVIII w., p. 4.

[3]   KDKDW, no. 25, pp. 41-42; VUB, f. 4, no. 39098, Kopie nadań…, 1387-1676, p. 46.

[4]   KDKDW, no. 51, pp. 78-79; LMAVB, f. 43, no. 141, Summa privilegiorum, p. 5.

[5]   KDKDW, no. 67, pp. 98-99; LMAVB, f. 4, no. 39098, Kopie nadań…, 1387-1676, p. 46.

[6]   KDKDW, no. 139, pp. 157-158; LMAVB, f. 43, no. 141, Summa privilegiorum, p. 7v.; J. Ochmański, *Biskupstwo wileńskie w średniowieczu. Ustrój i uposażenie*, Poznań 1972, p. 98.

[7]   KDKDW, no. 236, pp. 266-268; J. Ochmański, *Powstanie i rozwój latyfundium biskupstwa wileńskiego (1387-1550). Ze studiów nad rozwojem wielkiej własności na Litwie i Białorusi w średniowieczu*, Poznań 1963, pp. 63-64.

[8]   KDKDW, no. 146, pp. 164-165; LMAVB, f. 4, no. 39098, Kopie nadań…, 1387-1676, pp. 105-106.

Sigismund I the Old[9], Stephen Báthory[10], Sigismund III Vasa[11]. Lithuanian feudal lords, who were still building up their own latifundia, played a significant, though definitely smaller, role in this matter. Nevertheless, the Kęsgaila family donated to the Vilnius cathedral their estate of Bakszta[12], and some property was also added by Jonas Goštautas, Andrius Daugirdas, and Aleksandras Alšéniškis[13].

Over time, the chapter's endowment was increased by private donors from the clergy and laity. Notable donations came from Bishop Valerian Protasewicz, Canon Stanisław Kiszka, or Wojciech Stanisław Radziwiłł. As a result of these grants, the Vilnius Cathedral Chapter in the mid 17th century owned about 270 villages[14].

In addition, Duke Vytautas confirmed Jogaila's donations, giving to the chapter squares in Vilnius, the place where, among others, the cathedral bell tower, the church of St. Mary Magdalene, and capitular houses were located. This original donation gave rise to the rapidly growing capitular jurisdiction in the capital of the diocese[15].

Already at the beginning of the formation of the Vilnius Chapter's latifundium, its endowment, according to the intention of the founder and the needs of the corporation, was supported by common lands, called table estates (Pol. *dobra stołowe*), the total income from which, among others, the entire chapter was shared as well as prebendial lands, which the chapter shared regardless of dignity and already holding a prebend, and prebends, i.e. chapter goods attached to a certain position. In addition, the endowment of the chapter included other prebends – for the altar, chapter vicars and their lodgings, cathedral preachers and a number of offices and institutions functioning at the cathedral. These were founded both from land estates, as well as cities, lakes, mills, breweries, tenement houses, bequeathals, tithes, and others.

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[9]   J. Ochmański, *Powstanie i rozwój latyfundium biskupstwa wileńskiego*, p. 67 et seq.

[10]   *Księga Batoriańska. Zbiór dokumentów ku uczczeniu 350-letniej rocznicy zgonu króla Stefana Batorego*, ed. R. Mienicki, Wilno 1939, no. 22, pp. 45-48.

[11]   J. Kurczewski, *Kościół zamkowy czyli katedra wileńska w jej dziejowym, liturgicznym, architektonicznym i ekonomicznym rozwoju*, pt. 2, Wilno 1910, p. 166.

[12]   J. Ochmański, *Biskupstwo wileńskie w średniowieczu*, p. 96.

[13]   KDKDW, no. 281, pp. 328-329; J. Ochmański, *Powstanie i rozwój latyfundium biskupstwa wileńskiego*, p. 66.

[14]   J. Ochmański, *Powstanie i rozwój latyfundium biskupstwa wileńskiego*, p. 97.

[15]   J. Maroszek, *Ulice Wilna w XIV-XVIII wieku*, "Kwartalnik Historii Kultury Materialnej", 1-2 (1999), pp. 177-179.

The estates of Strzeszyn and Kamieńszczyzna formed the core of the table estates of the Vilnius Chapter around the middle of the 16th century. In 1559, the property of Strzeszyn included 104.5 *sochas*, i.e. peasant farms with draught animals, and 10 poorer farms without yoke animals, as well as two gardens, i.e. plots belonging to even poorer peasants, so-called gardeners.[16] In total, this amounted to about 120 households[17]. Kamieńszczyzna had about the same number of households[18]. They were complemented by smaller estates, such as Ponary near Vilnius, consisting of 13 *sochas* and 32 poorer farmsteads[19], Jeziornica with four and one respectively[20], six *sochas* from Szpingle, acquired by the chapter in 1535 from secular landowners, and tithes from Cudzeniszki[21]. In total, therefore, there were about 300 households in the table estates of the Vilnius Chapter in the middle of the sixteenth century[22].

At the same time, the capitular prebendial estates included two settlements called Korzeń, one of which had 58 *sochas* and two gardens, while the other had 50.5 *sochas*, three poorer farmsteads, and two gardens. Haniewicze had 41 *sochas*[23], Wojnilgowo – 45.5[24], two settlements called Trusowicze – one with 54.5 farmsteads and the the other of indeterminate size, as well as Bakszty with 33.5 *sochas*. The larger estates also included the property of an unknown provenance called Kuźmiszki, numbering 38 *sochas* and three poorer farmsteads, and Wołcz, whose size cannot be determined. Smaller estates included Szyłany – 12 *sochas* and 5.5 lesser farmsteads, Rzesza – 8.5 *sochas* and two poorer farmsteads, as well as Kupiecko with 20.5 *sochas* and one

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[16]   The size of individual estates was determined by J. Ochmański based on information from the source: *Rejestr skarbowy wybierania srebszczyzny z dóbr duchownych kapitulnych i plebańskich biskupstwa wileńskiego*, 1559, and described in *Biskupstwo wileńskie w średniowieczu..*, pp. 96-99.

[17]   KDKDW, no. 20, p. 35. J. Ochmański discusses whether this was indeed Jagiełło's foundation in *Najdawniejsze przywileje Jagiełły i Witolda dla biskupstwa wileńskiego*, "Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu im. A. Mickiewicza", Historia, 5 (1961), pp. 26-29.

[18]   KDKDW, no. 67, p. 99; J. Ochmański, *Powstanie i rozwój latyfundium biskupstwa wileńskiego*, p. 51.

[19]   KDKDW, no. 17, p. 31.

[20]   It is impossible to determine the founder of the Jeziornica estate today.

[21]   KDKDW, no. 25, pp. 41-42.

[22]   J. Ochmański, *Biskupstwo wileńskie w średniowieczu*, p. 97.

[23]   KDKDW, no. 25, p. 41.

[24]   Ibidem, no. 146, p. 164.

lesser farm[25]. In total, the prestimonial goods of the Vilnius Chapter around 1550 numbered 300 households, to which should be added the estates of indeterminate size – Trusewicze and Wołcz. Assuming they could have numbered approx. 50 households each, this would bring the total to around 400 households[26].

By the middle of the 16th century, prelate prebends had also been introduced[27]. The oldest of these donations was made by duke Vytautas in 1410 to provide for the salary of the provost. It was based on the estate of Drogimniszki, which included 38 farmsteads (*sochas*)[28]. The prelate provost's fund did not change for the next 150 years, as by 1559 he was still in command of 38 farmsteads.

The prelate dean had the lowest salary, as he drew income from the estates of Rubno and Dziekaniszki. This original fund was expanded in 1562 by Bishop Valerian Protasewicz, who added to the emoluments of the vice-dean the estate of Suderwa, granted to the bishops of Vilnius by royal decree, henceforth known as Poddziekaniszki. In the middle of the 16th century, the dean drew income from only 11 farmsteads[29].

The greatest prebend was granted to the archdeacon prelate. He drew income from the villages of Rukojnie and Parfieniewo, which in 1559 constituted a total estate of 66.5 *sochas* and 17 lesser farmsteads[30].

The custodian's salary was small. In the mid-sixteenth century, he collected income from 14 *sochas* and three lesser farms. This was probably based in the property of Kiemiesze, belonging to the estate of the bishops of Vilnius – Tauroginie[31].

The founder of the lowest dignities in the Vilnius chapter, the Vilnius bishop John of the Dukes of Lithuania, turned out to be a generous donor. The scholastic prelature founded by him was the second largest

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[25]   Ibidem, no. 469, pp. 551-553; J. Ochmański, *Powstanie i rozwój latyfundium bi-skupstwa wileńskiego*, p. 42 et seq.; Idem, *Biskupstwo wileńskie w średniowieczu*, pp. 97-98.

[26]   J. Ochmański, *Biskupstwo wileńskie w średniowieczu*, p. 98.

[27]   Data concerning the size of the prelate prebends, based on the Treasury Register of 1559, is cited from J. Ochmański, J. Ochmański, *Biskupstwo wileńskie w średniowieczu*, p. 98.

[28]   KDKDW, no. 51, p. 58.

[29]   J. Kurczewski, *Kościół zamkowy*, pt. 2, p. 157; J. Ochmański, *Biskupstwo wileńskie w średniowieczu*, p. 98.

[30]   KDKDW, no. 139, p. 157; J. Ochmański, *Powstanie i rozwój latyfundium biskup-stwa wileńskiego*, pp. 63-64.

[31]   J. Kurczewski, *Kościół zamkowy*, pt. 2, p. 158.

prebend of a prelate (after the archdeaconry)[32]. The scholastic prelates salary was probably drawn from the estates of Tołociszki and Kapłańce, with a total of 60.5 *sochas*, eight lesser farmsteads, and three gardens[33].

However, the bishop assigned a much smaller salary to the prelate cantor. The estates of Gietaniszki and Piotrowo, assigned to this position, only brought income from 33 farmsteads[34].

Summing up the size of all the prebends in the mid-sixteenth century, we get an income from 223.5 *sochas*, 28 lesser farmsteads, and three gardens, a total of about 260 homesteads. Since one provided a tithe in the amount of about 60 Lithuanian grosze, it is easy to estimate the income the prelates drew from their prebends, which would have amounted to a gross sum of about 260 grosze, albeit unevenly distributed among individual capitular dignities[35].

In this context, it should be noted that this distribution of prelate prebends did not last long. The prelates were not canons. They were supported by prebendal estates assigned to every position, but they were not entitled to emoluments drawn from the distribution of refections due to the canon chapter, nor did they have the right to sit in chapter sessions during which cases concerning the canon college were resolved. This was the source of the conflict in the chapter, which flared up in 1551, when prelates Józef Jasiński – archdeacon and Paweł Wiszeński – custodian, were introduced to the canon college without observing the proper formalities and began to demand participation in the canon refections. In July 1551, canons Bartłomiej Sabiniusz and Wojciech Narbut, as well as Wacław Wierzbicki, the bishop of Samogitia, and Walerian Protasewicz, the bishop of Lutsk, protested against this practice[36]. This was a signal to the other canons, who gathered at the general session on October 1, citing the statutes defining the constant number of members of the college, collectively protested against the new practice of the newly established prelates – canons[37] participating in their sessions, and on October 3, appreciating the achievements and work for the dioceses of the prelates introduced to

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[32]   Biblioteka Polskiej Akademii Nauk w Krakowie (hitherto: Bibl.PAN.Kr), sygn. 8903, Akta różne, pp. 207-208, 211-220.

[33]   J. Kurczewski, *Kościół zamkowy*, pt. 2, pp. 159, 293.

[34]   Bibl.PAN.Kr, sygn. 8903, Akta różne, pp. 211-220; J. Kurczewski, *Kościół zamkowy*, pt. 2, p. 159.

[35]   J. Ochmański, *Powstanie i rozwój latyfundium biskupstwa wileńskiego*, p. 111.

[36]   LMAVB, f. 43, no. 211, Acta Capituli Vilnensis (hitherto: ACV), vol. 3 (1550-1560), p. 12.

[37]   Ibidem, pp. 17-19.

their group, they renewed the protest, claiming that the income from their refectory estates was barely enough to support 12 canons[38]. The conflict within the chapter was resolved by King Sigismund II Augustus, who first transferred the right of patronage to the deanry, and then, by virtue of a privilege issued in 1558, incorporated the prebends of the royal prebendary benefices, the prepositure, archdeaconry, and custody into the canon estates[39]. This resulted in canon Jan Wirbkowski, elevated to the chapter by the deaconry, resigning in 1559 from the position of prelate and remaining at the canonry[40]. The same year, on May 10, the provost, archdeacon, and custodian joined the group of canons, after donating a part of the income from their prebends[41], and on May 25, 1560 the prelates of the episcopal college, the cantor, and the scholastic did the same[42]. Henceforth, the prelates managed the refectory estates of the chapter together with the canons, who would occupy stalls vacated by the prelates[43].

In total, therefore, in the middle of the 16th century, the estates of the Vilnius cathedral chapter consisted of about 1000 households or farmsteads. Assuming, with some simplification, that the Lithuanian *socha* corresponded to the later *włóka* (21.3 ha), it turns out that at that time there were approx. 21 300 ha of various types of lands in the endowment of the Vilnius Chapter. To put the size of these estates in the context of the emoluments of the Catholic Church in Lithuania, it is worth comparing this data with the endowment of the cathedral chapter in neighbouring diocese of Samogitia. According to information from 1552, the Samogitia Chapter paid a tax on 362.5 farmsteads, which constituted about 36% of the assets of the Vilnius Chapter[44].

In this context, we may ask what the income of the Vilnius Chapter from such an endowment would have been. In 1573, the total income from table estates and canon prestimonies was determined at 84 794 Lithuanian groszy[45]. If one adds to this the income from prelates' pre-

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[38]   Ibidem, p. 20.

[39]   *Summaryjny wypis z protokołów Kapituły Katedralnej Wileńskiej od r. 1501 do r. 1783 Października 22, przez i. w. Xawierego Bohusza, Prałata Kantora Kathedry Wileńskiey uczyniony*, in: *Opisanije rukopisnago otdielenija Wilenskoj Publicznoj Biblioteki*, wypusk 1, Wilna 1895 (hitherto: *Summaryjny wypis*), p. 55.

[40]   LMAVB, f. 43, no. 211, ACV, vol. 3 (1550-1560), p. 210.

[41]   Ibidem, p. 211; *Summaryjny wypis*, p. 55.

[42]   LMAVB, f. 43, no. 211, ACV, vol. 3 (1550-1560), p. 270.

[43]   *Summaryjny wypis*, p. 57.

[44]   J. Ochmański, *Biskupstwo wileńskie w średniowieczu*, p. 107.

[45]   J. Kurczewski, *Kościół zamkowy*, pt. 2, p. 332.

bends (approx. 15600 groszy), the total annual income of the Vilnius Chapter amounts to about 100 800 Lithuanian groszy, which also included the income from the 21 homesteads in Vilnius. In 1569 it gave a general income of 4800 groszy[46].

The sum of 84 780 groszy from the canon table and prestimonial land estates determined here was divided between 12 canons, which gave an average of 7020 groszy per person. By comparison, a canon of the Samogitia chapter received an average of about 4800 groszy from table and prestimonial estates[47]. It should be noted that the canons and prelates, in addition to the chapter prebends, held well-endowed parishes, holding 100 and more farmsteads. Therefore, their real annual income, after deducting a part of the revenues allocated to the maintenance of vicars and church servants, was much higher than just emoluments from participation in income from capitular estates.

Development of the benefice from the mid-16th century to 1656

Over the next hundred years, until the Muscovite invasion in 1656, capitular estates were increased by donations made almost exclusively by the nobility. The poor prebend of the dean prelate increased, though it is difficult to say when, by 166 households in the estate of Świranki and 18 households in the property of Stołpienięta[48]. The endowment of the Vilnius custody was expanded in 1641, owing to the donation of Andrzej Dowgierdowicz, to include the village of Świątniki with 20 households[49].

The size of the canon prestimonial lands did not change significantly, unlike its table estates. These were enlarged as a result of the donation from the suffragan of Vilnius, bishop Mikołaj Pac, who in 1608 expanded the royal estate of Trusowicze (granted earlier) with the villages of Prudki and Pliszczyce, with 37 households[50], and the farm estates of Cielechowicze, Dekszniany, Wieprzacze, and Koladycze[51]. In 1609, the chapter accepted another great donation, the estate of

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[46]   Ibidem; J. Ochmański, *Biskupstwo wileńskie w średniowieczu*, p. 108.

[47]   J. Ochmański, *Biskupstwo wileńskie w średniowieczu*, p. 109.

[48]   LMAVB, f. 43-223, ACV, vol. 15 (1667-1672), p. 134; J. Kurczewski, *Kościół zamkowy*, pt. 2, p. 157.

[49]   KDKDW, no. 261, p. 272.

[50]   LMAVB, f. 43, no. 236, ACV, vol. 28 (1753-1766), p. 140.

[51]   LMAVB, f. 43, no. 203, Liber Privilegiorum, vol. 2 (1387-1618), pp. 275-276.

Hoduciszki, from the Vilnius canon Stanisław Kiszka, who held the bishopric of Samogitia from 1618 on. These lands included the estate of Hoduciszki with 247 households and the farm estates Mirkliszki, with 112 households, Stojaciszki, with 126 households, and the smaller Rokity, with 67 households. Another major donation was made in 1612 by a nobleman from the county of Świącin, Krzysztof Komar. He donated the property of Syczynięta with 24 households to the table estates of the chapter[52]. The capitular estates were expanded even further by a donation from Wojciech Stanisław Radziwiłł, who in 1636 donated to the Vilnius canonical corporation the well-managed estate of Braszewicze in Kobryń county, with 150 households[53], as well as the farm estates of Czechowce, with 103 households, and Tołkowo, with 49, which were a part of the Braszewicze estate[54]. In 1649, just before his death, Bishop Abraham Woyna bequeathed to the chapter the estate of Michniszki in Trotsk county with 98 households and Łosk in Oshmiana county, whose size was not specified. Both of these estates were soon, at the will of the founder, donated for the endowment of an altar in the Vilnius cathedral, named after the benefactor: altaria Woyniańska[55]. Some of the last endowments before the war were probably purchased from various landowners and handed over to the chapter by the prelate dean, Wojciech Żabiński in 1651. These were the estates of Sory, which would support the upkeep of the Cathdral cantors' dormitory[56], and most likely Mickuny, obtained from the Sanguszko family[57]. The size of these estates is not specified in the sources. Nor is it possible to determine the exact date of this donation.

The endowment of the Vilnius Cathedral Chapter was supplemented by the income from rents from burghers, donations to anniversaries and the altar. This should also include income obtained from the estates intended for the upkeep of chapter vicars and the seminary in Vilnius.

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[52]   Ibidem, p. 304; J. Kurczewski, *Kościół zamkowy*, pt. 2, pp. 164-165.

[53]   LMAVB, f. 43, no. 4835, Akta Wizyty Kościoła Katedralnego Wileń. [...] na Rok 1830ty, knlb.

[54]   LMAVB, f. 43, no. 266, ACV, vol. 56 (1836-1838), p. 49.

[55]   In 1822, the Michniszki and Łosk estates returned to the chapter's endowment and became part of its table estates. LMAVB, f. 43, no. 4835, Akta Wizyty Kościoła Katedralnego Wileń. [...] na Rok 1830ty.

[56]   LMAVB, f. 43, no. 220, ACV, vol. 12 (1644-1652), p. 968.

[57]   J. Kurczewski, *Kościół zamkowy*, pt. 2, p. 165.

In total, the capitular benefice built over the centuries provided an income of about 810 000 Lithuanian groszy in 1643[58]. Although this number is so impressive as to be outright unbelievable. It is difficult to accept that in less than a hundred years, despite some increase in emoluments, population growth, and modernization of farming and management methods, the income from the chapter estates increased almost tenfold in comparison to the income from the middle of the sixteenth century, which amounted, as indicated above, to about 100 800. To clarify the matter, it is necessary to look at the evolution of the value of money used at that time. On 5 January 1580, King Stephen Báthory extended the Polish monetary system to the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, as a result of which the Polish grosz began to displace the Lithuanian one. Therefore, it is highly probable that the author of the annual revenue accounts of the Vilnius Chapter in 1643 stated their amount in the Polish grosze, while retaining the Lithuanian name of the coin (Pol. *kopa grosza*). If so, the actual income from the estates would amount to 810 000 Polish groszy, which also seems unlikely given the 100 800 Lithuanian groszy of income a century before, even taking into account the fact that the value of the Lithuanian grosz in the second half of the 16th century was 20% higher than that of the Polish grosz. The situation seems to be explained by the state of Polish currency at the turn of the 16th and 17th centuries, when the value of the Polish silver coin fell, in a devaluation so rapid that in 1620 the Lithuanian grosz was the equivalent of 4.5 Polish groszy (while in 1559 the ratio of the value of both coins was 1 to 1.2)[59]. Taking into account these circumstances, the chapter's actual revenue from its benefice in 1643 amounted to about 180 000 Lithuanian groszy.

<div style="margin-left:2em; font-size:0.5em; position:absolute; left:-100px; top:500px;">History of the Church</div>

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[58]   LMAVB, f. 43, no. 573, Przychód pieniędzy wszelkich z majętności Wielebnej Kapituły Wileńskiej z roku 1642 na rok 1643 i inszych rozmaitych pensji i fundacji niżej mianowanych do rąk moich, mnie Adama Zabłockiego kanonika i podskarbiego tejże Wielebnej Kapituły Wileńskiej, passim. Information on the income of the chapter based on this source was published in the form of a table by J. Kurczewski in: *Kościół zamkowy*, pt. 2, pp. 206-210.

[59]   The reasons for this were as follows: in the German countries, there was a sharp decrease in the value of money at the time, while the value of Polish coins remained relatively constant, after the Báthory's reforms. This resulted in the outflow of better quality Polish coin to Germany and the flooding of Poland with worse German coin. A. Jezierski, C. Leszczyńska, *Historia gospodarcza Polski*, Warszawa 2010, p. 62.

Losses of the capitular latifundium in 1656-1662

Capitular estates suffered severely as a result of Moscow's invasion. The war damage from the years 1656-1662 can be estimated in a large approximation thanks to the preserved household registers, on the basis of which a comparative analysis of their condition in 1653[60] and 1673[61] can be made. However, it should be noted that these are incomplete data, as they do not contain information about all the assets of the chapter.

From the above, it can be seen that the largest losses, reaching over 80% of the state from before 1656 were recorded in as many as seven estates (Sorzyca, Korzeń, Haniewicze, Trusewicze, Prudki, Rubno, and the church jurisdiction in Vilnius). Of the above-mentioned estates, only Rubno and the city properties were located in the vicinity of Vilnius, while the others were located in the eastern voivodeships: Sorzyca in the Vitebsk region and the others in the Minsk voivodeship. No less devastation was recorded in the estates of Rukojnie, Szyłany, Tołociszki, Bakszty, Hoduciszki, and Kołpienica, where over 70% of farms were completely destroyed. More than half the households were also lost in Parafanów, Wołcz, Syczyniet, and Rzesza, and nearly half in Braszewicze and Wojniałgów. The overall losses in the estates recorded here amounted to 64% of the state from before 1656.

The largest estate recorded in the registers of households, Sorzyca, although it suffered as much as 87% losses, still brought some income. However, it did not supply the capitular treasury. From 1660 it was used by Orthodox monks under the protection of the Tsarist garrison from Vitebsk. The one positive effect of this was that it protected Sorzyca from even greater damage[62].

In addition to the damage done by enemy troops, capitular properties were often devastated by their administrators, assigned by

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[60]   LMAVB, f. 43, no. 609, Trzecia rata podymnego na Sejmie Brzeskim dwuniedzielnym, 1653.

[61]   Lietuvos Centrinis Valstybės Archyvas, (hereinafter: LCVA), Akta Dawne, no. 3435, vol. 1. Wiadomość oddanych pieniędzy ze wszystkich dóbr duchownych diecezji wileńskiej podług konstytucji Sejmu Walnego Warszawskiego w tymże roku *ut supra* pisanego (...) oddanej ode mnie Benedykta Żuchorskiego, kustosza prałata wileńskiego, dziekana żmudzkiego, poborcy duchownego, 1673.

[62]   Archiwum Archidiecezjalne we Włocławku (hitherto: AAW) – no sign., Materiału historycznego do dziejów rocznych czyli kroniki Litewsko-Katolickiego Kościoła, a szczególniej wileńskiej diecezji z akt kapituły katedralnej oraz konsystorza wileńskiego i rozmaitych dokumentów oryginalnych przez x. Mamerta z Felsztyna Herburta (...) zebranego (hereinafter: Herburt), vol. 2 from 1601 to 1679 r., k. 166v., 169v., 171v.

the chapter itself. The steward of Kołpienica took advantage of the turmoil of war and began to pressure his subjects so much that it led to the ruin of some farmsteads, while other peasants left their village and fled from their own administrator. In the end, without even having the fields sown, he himself fled[63]. An exceptional perversity was shown by the administrator of Hoduciszki, who, having sold out to the enemy, managed capitular estates on behalf of the Muscovites, oppressed his subjects and meticulously lined his own pockets as long as he remained under Moscow's protection, which led to the "ruination of capitular estates" (Pol. *kapitulne dobra zmarnował*)[64]. The income from the Brasewicze estate was appropriated in the first months of the war by their administrators appointed by the chapter, and through cut and slash management they caused mass escapes of their subjects. The situation of these estates changed little after they were recovered by Polish troops. At first, the estates were plundered and the peasants were oppressed "beyond measure" (Pol. *nad miarę wszelką*) by Hetman Gosiewski's troops, then the same was done by the soldiers of the starost of Samogitia, Chlebowicz. The measure of misfortune was completed by the occupation of Braszewicze by the Cossacks in 1657 and their armed raids in 1658[65]. Despite these experiences, miraculously, these estates were still able to bring the chapter some revenue, which, together with the income from less devastated goods, provided a lean but permanent livelihood.

No register makes note of the Strzeszyn estate, the largest and most profitable capitular estate located on the Dnieper. Their condition immediately after the beginning of hostilities is evidenced by the account of canon Judycki. At the session of the chapter, held in Braszewicze, he informed that all the villages on the left, eastern bank of the river were almost intact, while a part of the estate located on the west bank was almost completely devastated, the villages had been burned, and many subjects scattered in the woods. Although, according to Judycki's account, they were ready to return in "calmer times" (Pol. *spokojniesze czasy*)[66]. It seems that Strzeszyn, due to its strategic location, became fully available only after the complete cessation of hostilities.

The most accurate account of the capitular beneficium in the areas covered by hostilities at the end of the conflict was provided by the

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[63]   Ibidem, p. 167v.

[64]   LMAVB, f. 43, no. 221, ACV, vol. 13 (1652-1663), pp. 264-264v., 283, 286, 309, 331.

[65]   AAW, Herburt, vol. 2, pp. 167-170v.

[66]   LMAVB, f. 43, no. 221, ACV, vol. 13 (1652-1663), p. 237.

report on the state of the Sorzyca estate from 1661. On May 10 it was recorded in the files that

> the overseer of the estate (...) reported that this year it would bring no income at all for close proximity to the enemy who clings to the vicinity of Vitebsk and often makes raids from there, which the informer himself had narrowly escaped. Some villages have been completely burned down, while others have mostly survived with serfs living in them, but you have no cattle at all, so now he decides not to require anything from the peasantry for danger from the Muscovites, while maintaining further management of the estate. (Pol. *opiekun tych dóbr (...) doniósł, iż nic zgoła w tym roku nie przyniosą dochodu dla bliskiego sąsiedztwa z wrogiem, który trzyma się okolic Witebska i częste czyni stamtąd wycieczki, których zaledwie i sam donoszący uniknął. Niektóre wioski zupełnie są spalone, a inne w większej połowie ocalały i poddani w nich mieszkają, bydła zaś wcale nie masz, przetoż postanawia nic teraz od włościan nie wymagać dla niebezpieczeństwa od Moskali, zachowując przy nim dalszy tych dóbr zarząd*)[67].

Under the same date there is a record of the situation in the Kamieńszczyzna estate:

> from our Polish soldiers, more than from enemies, the estates are also devastated and what they could bring, from the income only 60 złoty (...). Some villages ravaged by plague, you have no cattle and hives with bees were plucked by soldiers." (Pol. *od naszych polskich żołnierzy bardziej, niż od wrogów też dobra są spustoszone i zaledwie co przynieść mogą, z których dochodów tylko złotych 60 (...). Niektóre wsie morową zarazą spustoszone, żadnego nie masz bydła i ule z pszczołami żołnierze powydzierali*)[68].

This shows that the capitular benefice was not spared by any of the possible war calamities.

Conclusion

The Vilnius Cathedral Chapter arose by virtue of the decision of the Holy See expressed in the bull of Pope Urban VI *Romanus Pontifex* of March 12, 1388. This document was a canon act of erection of the Vilnius bishopric. Its executor, the bishop of Poznań, Dobrogost received all powers of attorney to establish central diocesan offices, including the cathedral chapter. It was the summer of 1388 when Bishop Dobrogost began to implement the papal decisions. This was when

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[67]   Quote after W. F. Wilczewski, *Spustoszenia wojenne w diecezji wileńskiej w połowie XVII wieku*, Lublin 2001 (mps BU KUL), p. 215.

[68]   Ibidem.

a cathedral chapter was established, consisting, for the time being, of two prelates and 10 canons.

The first donations to the cathedral chapter in Vilnius date back to 1390 and were bequeathed by King Władysłlo Jagiełło. They gave rise to a dynamically developing chapter with the introduction of subsequent dignities, offices, and canons. They were greatly enlarged by the Grand Duke of Lithuania, Vytautas, in 1391-1415. As a result of these donations, the chapter benefice began to take on the character of a *latifundium*. The estates belonging to the Vilnius Chapter gradually increased in the sixteenth and mid-seventeenth centuries, due to the generosity of successive rulers and magnate families. Over time, the chapter's endowment was increased by private donors, both from the clergy and laity.

This endowment, which by the middle of the 17th century included about 1000 farmsteads and covered around 21 300 hectares of various types of land, placed the Vilnius Cathedral Chapter among the five most generously endowed canon corporations in the Polish-Lithuanian state.

Moscow's invasion and the occupation of a huge part of the country by foreign troops in the years 1656-1662 brought about an economic collapse of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. For the Catholic Church in Lithuania and its income, the events of 1656-1662 were disastrous. The properties of the chapter suffered significant war damage. Some of the estates suffered losses of 80-90%. In 1662, the income from the whole endowment was less than half of what it had been before 1656. Although the chapter rebuilt its benefice owing to careful operations after a dozen or so years, it never reached a state that would give grounds for describing it as a *latifundium*.

**Losses in the number of households in the estates
of the Vilnius Cathedral Chapter in 1653-1673***

No.	Estates	Status	Number of households		Losses	
			1653	1673	In numbers	In percentage
1.	Sorzyca	vicars' estates	578	112	466	87%
2.	Hoduciszki	table estates	498	123	366	73%
3.	Braszewicze and Borodzicze	table estates	332	173	159	48%

No.	Estates	Status	Number of households		Losses	
			1653	1673	In numbers	In percentage
4.	Parafianów	archdeacon's prebend	257	90	167	65%
5.	Wołcza	table estates	240	85	155	65%
6.	Poswol	vicars' estates	186	149	37	20%
7.	Kamieńszczyzna	table estates	175	132	41	23%
8.	Korzeń Mały and Korzeń Wielki	table estates	88	7	81	92%
9.	Haniewicze	canon prestimony	86	11	75	87%
10.	Kołpienica	saminar estates	68	18	50	73%
11.	Syczynięta	table estates	48	19	29	60%
12.	Bakszty	canon prestimony	41	9	32	78%
13.	Tołociszki	scholastic's prebend	37	9	28	76%
14.	Trusewicze	canon prestimony	36	4	32	89%
15.	Prudki	table estates	35	2	33	94%
16.	Rukojnie	archdeacon's prebend	29	8	21	72%
17.	Wojniałgów	canon prestimony	28	16	12	43%
18.	Sołok	cantor's prebend	27	17	10	37%
19.	Rubno	deans prebend	16	2	14	87%
20.	Szyłany	canon prestimony	9	2	7	78%
21.	Rzesza	canon prestimony	8	3	5	62%
22.	Kiemieszyszki	canon prestimony	8	5	3	37%
23.	Mickuny	table estates	7	6	1	14%
24.	Ponary	table estates	7	9	gained 2	gained 28%

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No.	Estates	Status	Number of households		Losses	
			1653	1673	In numbers	In percentage
25.	Szpingle	table estates	1	1	-	-
26.	Jurydyka wileńska	table estates	63	12	51	81%
Overall			**2.908**	**1.033**	**1.875**	**64%**

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History
of the Church

Dariusz Lipiec
The John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin

iD 0000-0002-8890-2062

The Apostolate of People with Disabilities in the Teaching of Pope John Paul II

The aim of this article is to present the issue of the apostolate of people with disabilities in the teaching of Pope John Paul II. The issues concerning the existence of such people have been numerously discussed by the Pope, also with regard to the life of the elderly and of the sick. The Pope grounded the apostolate of people with disabilities on anthropological bases, and based his considerations on philosophical and theological anthropology. The apostolate of people with disabilities results from the subjectivity of man, which is never denigrated by any bodily disability or by any intellectual disability. In his teaching John Paul II indicated the apostolate of the presence and of the example as well as the apostolate of suffering or of the prayer. He thought that they were of particular value in the eyes of God and had a substantial impact on other people.

Key words: disability, a person with a disability, apostleship, apostolate, John Paul II.

People with disabilities have always been in a significant position in the pastoral ministry of John Paul II. During his pontificate, the Holy See and the whole Catholic Church were engaged into the celebration of year 1981 as the International Year of Disabled Persons announced by the United Nations. One of the fruits of the year is the *Document of the Holy See for the International Year of Disabled Persons*, published by a few dicasteries. It is the first extensive document which holistically discusses the issue of the existence, social life as well as the vocation and mission of people with disabilities. In celebration of the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000, people with disabilities also celebrated their special day in Vatican. On that occasion people with disabilities and

their families took part in the liturgy held by the Pope; it consisted in cultural and religious commemorative gatherings with special prayers. During the celebrations, John Paul II delivered occasional homilies and speeches for them, which were mainly devoted to their dignity and their place in the Church and in the society. The Holy See engaged into the celebration of the European Year of People with Disabilities in 2003, the holiday established by the Council of Europe. During the pontificate of John Paul II, the then Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Health Care Workers organized international scientific conferences devoted to people with disabilities and to their pastoral care. They were devoted to people with intellectual disabilities and to those with eyesight disabilities. People with those disabilities took part in them. The participants met the Pope who addressed to them the special speech devoted to disability. What is more, the conferences were an occasion to address messages on the issue to the faithful as well as for the Holy See to publish final documents.

Pastoral Theology

The issue of disability was very significant in the teaching of John Paul II. The distinctive feature of the Pope's teaching with regard to disability is the fact that he addressed it not only to people with disabilities but also to the sick and to the elderly. The Pope often compared the conditions of disability, sickness or old age, considering them as having a lot features in common as they all result from suffering which is their common element. Every year the Pope published messages on the World Day of the Sick in which he discussed the issues of disabilities, sickness and old age. He indicated that these forms of suffering are often interconnected. The issue of disability was often present during the Pope's apostolic pilgrimages. In each of his pilgrimages the programme included a meeting with people with disabilities and with the sick; during these meetings the Pope addressed to them the occasional homilies or speeches. He also discussed the issue of disability during numerous occasional meetings with health care workers, volunteers and members of the associations which serve people with disabilities.

The issue of people with disabilities was interconnected with the issue of their apostolate, particularly in the context of their vocation. Apostolate is "the participation in the salvific mission of Christ, which takes place through participating in His priestly, prophetic and kingly office and in uniting with Christ through faith and love; the main aim of all of the actions is spreading the Kingdom of God"[1]. The focus of this article is to present the issue of apostolate realized by

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[1]   E. Weron, *Apostolstwo*, in: *Leksykon Teologii Pastoralnej*, ed. R. Kamiński, W. Przygoda, M. Fiałkowski, Lublin: Towarzystwo Naukowe KUL 2006, p. 61.

people with disabilities. The teaching of John Paul II is the source of the research. Furthermore, the author introduces the documents of the Church which regard the issue, the ones published during the pontificate of John Paul II, as well as the scientific studies on the subject. The aim and the source of the research require the assumed research methods which mainly include: the leading method, the monographic method and the other methods, involving the historical and the critical method, the comparative method, the analogy and the content analysis.

The dignity of a person with a disability and disability in the teaching of John Paul II

John Paul II was a philosopher and a theologian. His philosophical views can be perceived in the light of the concept of personalism. According to the Pope, dignity is the most important value of a human person and it is not comparable to any other value. Man is a value himself, he is also the greatest of the earthly creatures. Man is bestowed with humanity due to being man and it cannot be taken away from him in any way. Man himself is not able to get rid of his dignity[2]. Such an understanding of a human person and of his dignity has its consequences in the field of morality and in placing man in the material world and in the social life. The first consequence is the fact that every man is entitled to the dignity, regardless of his race, religion, sex, age or other features. All people have dignity which is the basis of the definition of *humanitas*.[3] Another consequence is that human dignity is man's attribute from the moment of conception till his death. Human life begins at the moment of conception therefore man is bestowed with his dignity from the very beginning of his existence. Therefore, John Paul II definitely supported protection of the human life at its every stage and he firmly opposed to the practice of abortion and euthanasia[4]. Furthermore, yet another consequence of the fact that each person is bestowed with dignity is the way people with disabilities are perceived. According to the Pope, the physical and mental condition

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[2]   John Paul II, Encyclical *Redemptor hominis*, no. 14.

[3]   Cf. W. Chudy, *Sens filozoficzny kondycji człowieka niepełnosprawnego*, in: *Osoba niepełnosprawna i jej miejsce w społeczeństwie*, ed. D. Kornas-Biela, Lublin: RW KUL 1988, pp. 106-108.

[4]   John Paul II, Message *Nietykalność życia każdej istoty ludzkiej* (Rome November 9, 2004), L'Osservatore Romano (Polish edition) [further: OsRomPol] 26 (2005) no. 2, pp. 37-38.

of man are incidental and they do not interfere with the essence of humanity. Therefore, people with disabilities are human beings to the same extent as the able-bodied and they possess dignity meant as an inalienable human trait. John Paul II taught about equal humanity of people with disabilities. Such a person, he taught, requires the same respect and treatment as any other person. Thus he opposed to the prenatal testing which aimed at detecting the foetal malformations and, as a consequence, at having an abortion[5].

Dignity of every human person ensures that each person with a disability possesses the full extent of natural and established rights. He or she has the same rights in the social and ecclesial community as any able-bodied person. A person with a disability is entitled to all rights in the family and social life although for some people with disabilities the full participation in these fields of life is not possible[6]. John Paul II considered disability as a kind of a human weakness and people with disabilities as the weaker members of the society. Such a weakness – according to him – is a request to the society for help and assistance in order to enable people with disabilities to fully participate in the life of the society. The Pope was an advocate of revalidation and rehabilitation of people with disabilities in order to enable them to the most complete commitment in family, in society and in the Church. He thought it to be indispensable to shape their physical and mental abilities to the fullest and he suggested using all the currently available ways and means in order to achieve it[7].

Pastoral
Theology

Although disability does not disrupt the structure of the human person and does not violate his dignity, however, it is a noticeable lack for man. This shortage in the physical or mental sphere seriously limits his opportunities of development and of his ability for undertaking any activity to a degree which is possible for other people. For a man with a disability it is the source of suffering, therefore John Paul II perceived such people as suffering. The Pope perceived the sick and the elderly in a similar way as their condition was compared by him to the condition of the disabled. It was the reason why he addressed such people in his teaching.

John Paul II presented disability as evil. It is the lack of the fullness of humanity – that is of the good that man is endowed with. In case of

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[5]   John Paul II, Encyclical *Evangelium vitae*, no. 3, pp. 14-15.

[6]   John Paul II, Speech *Godność i apostolstwo ludzi cierpiących* (Rome April 27, 1994), OsRomPol 15 (1994) no. 8, pp. 38-40.

[7]   John Paul II, Speech *W leczeniu nie zapominajcie o duchowych potrzebach człowieka* (Rome March 23, 2005), OsRomPol 26 (2005) no. 2, p. 41.

people with disabilities the lack means the inability to realize the full-ness of developmental possibilities proper for man, which are available for the able-bodied. This inability and the resulting limitations, and in some cases also life threats or the full dependence on others are the source of suffering. The Pope addressed his message called "Ewangelia cierpienia" [the Gospel of suffering][8] to people with disabilities and to other suffering. He invited such people to join their suffering with the suffering of Christ which He accepted to save the world. In such a way the suffering can mean engagement into His salvific work. The Pope further emphasized that overcoming evil is a duty. In case of disability and the resulting suffering, it influences the people who suffer from it as well as the people who accompany them, mainly the members of their families and friends, as well as the whole society who should come to their aid[9].

Personal dignity tenable for people with disabilities indicates their full subjectivity. They are full-fledged members of the human and ecclesial communities, they possess all rights as well as the ability for active work. Through baptism they are bestowed with the vocation to build the community with God and to cooperate with Christ in realization of His salvific mission. This means calling for the active realization of the Christian vocation through deepening of the personal holiness and of apostolic activity in the Church and in the world. John Paul II clearly indicated that there is no vocation for suffering. It is only an accidental – in the philosophical aspect – feature of man which does not constitute his humanity or the dignity of a child of God. However, it significantly influences human existence, substantially modifying his condition in the human and ecclesial community. Therefore, John Paul II taught about the vocation for disability. Disability causes that a Christian who suffers from it, realizes his apostolate in a different way than the able-bodied one. Disability influences, depending on its type and degree, the methods and scope of the apostolic activity. Regardless of the type and degree of disability, all the baptised who suffer from disabilities, can realize the apostolate in a way proper for all of such conditions[10].

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[8]   John Paul II, Apostolic letter *Salvifici doloris*, no. 25-27.

[9]   John Paul II, Message *Ludzie najsłabsi i najbardziej potrzebujący w życiu społeczeństwa* (Rome January 5, 2004), OsRomPol 25 (2004) no. 4, pp. 16-18.

[10]   John Paul II, Message *Miłość najwspanialszą formą ewangelizacji* (Rome December 5, 2001), OsRomPol 23 (2002) no. 3, pp. 8-9.

The apostolate of presence and of the example

The analysis of the teaching of John Paul II leads to the conclusion that he considered the apostolate of presence to be the basic form of apostolate of people with disabilities. It is a form of apostolate which is realized in a spontaneous way. It has been present in the Church since the time of the Apostles. In the ancient times, the apostolate of presence was an important element of evangelization, particularly when people around them watched how Christians build relations based on mutual love. Brotherly love was for the then faithful the principle of the social life and the foundation of interpersonal relations. It was the contrast agent between the lifestyle of Christians and of pagans, which led the latter to asking questions about motivation and about practising it, as well as its source. The mutual love of Christians motivated their environment to ask questions and to act.

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John Paul II taught that the presence of people with disabilities provokes the environment to ask questions concerning the essence of humanity and the meaning of suffering and to help them. He noticed that many people inspired by the presence of such people in the society took the initiative aiming at providing disabled people with multiple support. Due to this inspiration, numerous forms of medical and social activity have been undertaken. Many special centres offering specific aid addressed for such people have been organized. These are centres of education, of schooling, of rehabilitation and of social care[11]. Furthermore, volunteering plays an important role here because due to volunteering people with disabilities are provided with material, psychological and spiritual aid. John Paul II called volunteering the school in which those engaged into providing aid learn to be sensitive to the needs of others. In this respect, the volunteering of young people who learn to offer others (in whatever condition they are) the emotional support and encouragement, empathy and the altruistic attitudes, is the most meaningful[12].

The presence of people with disabilities is an inspiration for Christians for a deepened reflection on the meaning of suffering in the human life. The faithful try to see in the life condition of people with disabilities the suffering of Christ and in the disabled – the presence of the Saviour. Therefore, providing spiritual aid and psychological

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[11] John Paul II, Speech *Medycyna a prawa człowieka* (Rome July 7, 2000), OsRomPol 21 (2000) no. 9, pp. 35-36; cf. W. Przygoda, *Posługa charytatywna Kościoła wobec osób niepełnosprawnych*, "Homo Dei" 73 (2004) no. 1, p. 60.

[12] John Paul II, Reflection before the Angelus prayer *Rok Wolontariatu* (Rome January 7, 2001), OsRomPol 22 (2001) no. 3, p. 40.

and material aid, they try to lead the disabled to the meeting with the suffering Christ. It is meant to help the disabled in understanding the meaning of suffering and to provide meaning to their further life. At the natural level of activity, Christians aim at providing relief to the suffering, while at the supernatural level, they are to lead them to salvation[13].

However, John Paul II noticed that the presence of people with disabilities also evokes negative emotions. In some people it evokes the need for eliminating people with disabilities, especially those who are burdened with significant suffering which particularly results from an additional illness or dependence on others. Some people suggest introducing euthanasia with regard to such disabled persons; it is motivated with pity or care for the good of a suffering person. The real motivation is difficult to determine. There are opinions that propagating euthanasia is motivated by economic reasons because the care for such people is costly and it requires participation of many people from the medical and social sector. John Paul II opposed to the use of euthanasia. He thought that this opinion was favoured by those for whom the dignity of a human person and of the human life were not the highest values. These aims and propagating abortion promote the emergence of the "culture of death" which is contrary to the "culture of life" rooted in God's creation and in the salvific act of Jesus Christ[14].

The presence of people with disabilities who maintain their roles or take on new social roles exerts significant influence on the social environment. It mainly refers to those among the disabled who realize their vocation for marriage and family life, who work professionally and lead an active cultural and social life. The attitudes of such people are of interest and they are often admired by their environment which leads to respect. Their presence and visible testimony are important for other people with disabilities. They can become a reason for the creative acceptance of one's disability and an inspiration for undertaking activities in their family and in the social sphere. The engagement of people with disabilities is also an inspiration for the able-bodied. It allows for the critical view of one's life adversities and suffering which are relatively lesser in degree than the ones experienced by people with disabilities. The presence of such people strengthens the motivation for sacrifice and for more intense activity in marriage and

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[13]   John Paul II, Speech *Spieszmy z pomocą cierpiącym* (Rome February 11, 2004), OsRomPol 25 (2004) no. 4, pp. 22-23.

[14]   John Paul II Apostolic letter *Salvifici doloris*, no. 26-27.

in the social life[15]. It is valuable in particular in the current culture conditions mainly created by people who are egocentric and not used to accepting sacrifice. It chiefly concerns young people who are less and less eager to seek for ideals in the spiritual sphere and more and more eager to assume the consumerist lifestyle[16].

The apostolate of the example is similar to the apostolate of presence. They differ from each other because in the apostolate of presence the disabled person does not want to be visible to others while in the apostolate of the example such a person assumes the consciously defined attitudes and behaviours in order to present others the examples of behaviours and values which they represent. The presented values and results are to be shared in the apostolate of the example as the conscious and free-will activity. It indicates that for the person who assumes this attitude, the addressees of the activity are important and that he or she is not indifferent to their fate. Moreover, it indicates that the presented values which are transmitted to others are important[17].

Pastoral Theology

The apostolate of the example of people with disabilities is addressed to everybody from their environment, however, in the first place it refers to the people who are important for some reason. These are mainly family members, friends and other nearest and dearest. The apostolate mainly concerns the dignity of a human person and the value of life of a person with a disability. People with disabilities indicate to others how to live despite limitations and how to cope with suffering. What is more, their good example indicates the perspective to others for whom it is difficult to find way in the condition of disability and to get subjectively engaged into the life of the human and ecclesial communities[18].

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[15]   John Paul II, Speech *Jesteście darem dla Kościoła i świata* (Prague April 26, 1997), OsRomPol 18 (1997) no. 8-9, pp. 14-15.

[16]   Cf. K. Święs, *Aktualny kontekst społeczno-kulturowy jako zagrożenie dla wiary*, in: *Duszpasterstwo wobec kryzysu wiary*, ed. W. Przygoda, K. Święs, Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL 2013, pp. 72-77; J. Mariański, *Kondycja religijna i moralna młodzieży szkół średnich (1988-2017)*, in: *Duszpasterstwo młodzieży w Polsce wobec współczesnych przemian*, ed. P. Ochotny, M.J. Tutak, T. Wielebski, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo i Księgarnia GOTÓW 2018, pp. 141-150.

[17]   Cf. J. Majka, *Świadectwo chrześcijańskie jako element ewangelizacji*, in: *Ewangelizacja*, ed. J. Krucina, Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Wrocławskiej Księgarni Archidiecezjalnej 1980, p. 88.

[18]   Cf. D. Lipiec, *Świadectwo życia ludzi chorych, starszych i niepełnosprawnych*, in: *Świadectwo w służbie ewangelizacji*, ed. W. Przygoda, Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL 2012, pp. 223-225.

The apostolate of suffering and of the prayer

Disability and its results in the individual and social life of people suffering from it is perceived as suffering and is accompanied by the question about its meaning and significance[19]. Suffering reflected as damnation became a blessing in God's Son. He came to earth and became man in order to save humanity from the sin's dominion and its results that is from suffering and death[20]. The "Gospel of suffering" was fully presented on the cross[21]. In the sacrifice on the cross which was indicated by the Father, Christ recognized the way to salvation of humanity. He stepped on this path and announced to His apostles that they would share His sacrifice. In the perspective of the way of the cross, we should perceive the life paths of people with disabilities as they are marked by suffering[22].

John Paul II indicated that people with disabilities are called to join their suffering with the passion of Christ. It thus becomes their sacrifice which conditions its fruitfulness. In the suffering of the Saviour, these people find the meaning of their pain. They draw strength and motivation from Him in order to try to accept their condition and to trust the will of the Father and to submit to it; they also take from Him the courage to offer one's suffering for other people. Christ's sacrifice on the cross bore the fruit of salvation and so does the sacrifice of the disabled. Entering this mystery allows people with disabilities – in connection with Christ – to offer their suffering for others[23].

Participation in the passion and death of Jesus Christ means co-operation in His work of salvation of man. People with disabilities can – following the example of Saint Paul the Apostle – through their life united with Him, fill up what is lacking (cf. Col 1: 24). Calling such people for the cooperation with Him, Christ allows them to participate in carrying the cross. He enables them to it through the development of God's grace in them, through giving meaning and value to their

existence and through empowering their effective engagement into the life of the human and ecclesial community.

According to John Paul II, the "Gospel of suffering" shown to Jesus' disciples on the cross is possible to understand only in the light of faith. Faith enables entering into this difficult mystery and attempting to accept it. The condition under which the suffering can be accepted is the awareness of being chosen by God and being bestowed with the special gift in the form of the painful experience. This gift is difficult to recognize and remains for man an unrecognized mystery. Thus people with disabilities have difficulties in recognizing this gift as the genuine God's love. Recognizing it, however, leads to the intimate meeting with God and to filling one's existence with the salvific love of Christ. Owing to this gift, people with disabilities can reach the inner peace and joy[24].

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Recognizing disability as a gift from God and acceptance of it are difficult for man, therefore the Holy Spirit comes to aid in the process of accepting the "Gospel of suffering". In Him, people with disabilities can fully discover their dignity and the value of their lives in the light of the Christ's sacrifice on the cross. The activity of the Holy Spirit enables them to see themselves not as the victims meant to suffer but as the ones called for sanctifying themselves on the path of obstacles. The activity of the Third Person of the Holy Trinity brings the fruit of discovering the call to sanctify others. Owing to His gifts, a man with disabilities participates in the work of saving man and the world. He is enabled to introduce his pain into the suffering of Christ, and also to bring strength to others to renew their lives and to experience joy given from the Risen Christ[25].

This joy is not a substitute of consolation, which is to distract from the disability and from the suffering connected with it, neither it is a way of escape from the difficult reality. It results from the joy which comes from the participation with Christ in His salvific work. The Third Person of the Holy Trinity makes it possible for a person with disabilities to experience being privileged, and having the greater right to be with God. Therefore the Holy Spirit appears as the Comforter for the people burdened with disabilities[26].

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[24]   John Paul II, Speech *Ewangelia cierpienia źródłem nadziei* (Rome February 11, 2000), OsRomPol 21 (2000) no. 4, p. 24.

[25]   John Paul II, Speech *Chrystus przyjmuje waszą pomoc w dziele zbawienia* (Budapest August 20, 1991), OsRomPol 12 (1991) no. 9-10, p. 29.

[26]   Cf. D. Kornas-Biela, *Osoba niepełnosprawna, chora, cierpiąca: nauczanie Jana Pawła II*, in: *Rodzina: źródło życia i szkoła miłości*, Lublin: TN KUL 2000, pp. 364-365.

Cooperation with Christ in His salvific work allows for sacrifice of the suffering for others. It thus becomes a gift and, similarly to the prayer, connects man with God. According to the commentators of the teaching of John Paul II, the sacrifice of suffering strengthens the power of the prayer. The greater the suffering and the more eager the donator, the more meaningful it becomes in the eyes of God. It is thus the sign of faith, of hope and of love which is reflected as a gift of suffering and the prayer[27].

The prayer, similarly to suffering, when offered by people with disabilities, becomes a gift for the Church and for man. It places the givers in the first line of those who participate in the salvation of the world. The prayer combined with suffering is the reflection of communication and solidarity with Christ Who is suffering on the cross. While combined with His suffering, the gift of his or her life achieves the salvific meaning[28].

Conclusion

The analysis of the teaching of John Paul II indicates that he treated the issue of the apostolate of people with disabilities in a way proper for other issues which he discussed during his pastoral ministry. His message for these people and for those who provided aid to them was rooted in the anthropological basis. He explained what the personal human dignity of a person with disabilities consists in, what is the source of the value of this life and what is the meaning of this life. He indicated that the natural law, which is rooted in the human nature and which can be manipulated and overused by the human-made laws, is the basis for the human rights. John Paul II combined philosophical anthropology with theological anthropology, particularly the biblical one, receiving a coherent and holistic image of man who is a value in himself in the natural perspective and a child of God in the supernatural perspective.

In the teaching regarding people with disabilities and addressed to such people, he indicated their subjectivity in the Church and in society. The important manifestation of it is reflected in the apostolate meant as the engagement into the realization of the salvific mission of Jesus Christ Who was sent by His Father in the power of the Holy

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[27]   Cf. R. Rak, *Chrześcijańska postawa wobec cierpienia*, "Śląskie Studia Historyczno-Teologiczne" 33 (2000), pp. 267-270.

[28]   John Paul II, Speech *Różaniec waszą modlitwą* (Rome February 11, 2003), OsRomPol 24 (2003) no. 4, p. 44.

Spirit. John Paul II focused on certain forms of it. He underlined the value of the apostolate of presence and the apostleship connected with the example. They initiate the reflection in people from the environment of those with disabilities, particularly with regard to human dignity, to the meaning and the value of this life. He devoted much of his teaching to the apostolate of suffering and of the prayer connected with it. The prayer and the suffering have the supernatural value, and when offered with intention, they can become part of the salvific work of Christ and thus be a gift for man and for the world.

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9. John Paul II, Message *Tajemnicę cierpienia wyjaśnia tylko Chrystus* (Mexico January 24, 1999), OsRomPol 20 (1999) no. 4, pp. 25-27.
10. John Paul II, Speech *Ewangelia cierpienia źródłem nadziei* (Rome February 11, 2000), OsRomPol 21 (2000) no. 4, pp. 23-25.
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Cezary Smuniewski
University of Warsaw

iD 0000-0002-8973-3539

Mateusz Drewicz
Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań

iD 0009-0002-7712-3386

Archaeological Research on Church Premises in Poland and Pastoral Ministry: Opinions of Priests, Church Life, and Best Practices

The article presents and analyzes how the results of archaeological research conducted in Poland on church premises can be utilized in pastoral work. Based on the qualitative research (IDIs) conducted among the Roman Catholic clergy, it demonstrates how archaeological studies can enrich pastoral ministry in terms of religious (theological) education, homilies, and building local identity in the communities of the faithful. They findings pertain to the possibility of using archaeological research findings in pastoral work, strengthening community bonds, and fostering reflection on the transience of life. The article also addresses organizational challenges associated with conducting archaeological research on church premises, such as temporary restrictions on access to churches, and it provides best practices for collaboration between priests and archaeologists. The study's conclusions indicate that the results of archaeological work on church premises can serve as a valuable tool for supporting pastoral development and enhancing the sense of responsibility for the spiritual and material heritage of the Church.

Key words: archaeological research, Roman Catholic Church, pastoral ministry, parish/rectory operations, best practices.

The contemporary archaeological research conducted in Poland on church premises constitutes a unique intersection of pastoral ministry, local history, and culture. The Roman Catholic Church, for centuries connected with, among other things, the material cultural heritage, and at the same time co-creating this heritage, increasingly engages in dialogue with archaeology, which opens new perspectives on understanding the past and provides content that can be utilized in pastoral practice. The findings of these studies not only offer insights into the material remnants of past generations, but also inspire innovative forms of pastoral work, enhancing community bonds and strengthening the identity of local communities. This article contributes to the areas of theological, humanistic, and social sciences.

This article, based on qualitative research (IDIs) conducted among the clergy, explores how archaeological research impacts pastoral practices and the functioning of parishes and rectories. The aim is to reflect from the perspective of pastoral theology on how the results of archaeological research can be applied in pastoral ministry, taking into account organizational challenges, and identifying best practices that can serve as a foundation for fruitful collaboration between the clergy and archaeologists to the benefit of both religious communities and preservation of cultural heritage. To achieve this goal, we adopt the perspective that pastoral theology is a theological discipline examining the Church's practical efforts to fulfil its mission entrusted by Christ to the world; this endeavor requires dialogue between theology and the contemporary life context of both the individuals within the Church and the broader ecclesial community.

Methods

Why did we decide to study the relationship between archaeological research and pastoral ministry? The primary reason lies in the existence of academic bodies within the Roman Catholic Church associated with archaeological research, such as the Pontifical Commission for Sacred Archaeology[1], the Pontifical Roman Academy of

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[1]   Cf. B. Iwaszkiewicz-Wronikowska, *Papieska Komisja Archeologii Sakralnej. Sto pięćdziesiąt lat działalności (1852-2002)*, "Vox Patrum" 2002, 22, p. 516; see Pio XI, *Motu Peopeio de Pontificia Commissione Sacrae Archaeologiae deque novo Pontificio Instituto Archaeologiae Christianae*, "Acta Apostolicae Sedis" 1925, 17, pp. 619-624; Pio XI, *Regolamento per la Pontificia Commissione di Archeologia Sacra*, "Acta Apostolicae Sedis" 1925, 17, pp. 625-629; The Holy See, *Pontifical Commission for Sacred Archaeology*, (date of access: 1.12.2025), https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_commissions/archeo/index.htm.

Archaeology[2], the Pontifical Institute of Christian Archaeology[3], the Pontifical Biblical Institute[4], the Studium Biblicum Franciscanum[5], and the École Biblique et Archéologique Française de Jérusalem[6]. We interpret the operations of these institutions as expressions of the Church's mission in the world. These are, of course, very specific expressions and they do not belong to the mainstream research in pastoral theology. Moreover, the Roman Catholic Church has Her own experience in conducting archaeological research on various continents, including sites like the Shepherds' Field in Beit Sahour[7], Rome (the Papal Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls)[8], Teleilat el Ghassul (settlements)[9], el-Adeimah (cemetery)[10], Nazaret (Judeo-Christian synagogue and pilgrim graffiti)[11], Mount Nebo (basilica and monastery)[12], Qumran (manuscripts, grottos and archaeological

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[2]   See The Holy See, *Pontifical Roman Academy of Archaeology*, (date of access: 1.12.2025), https://www.vatican.va/content/romancuria/en/pontificie-accademie/ pontificia-accademia-archeologia.html; Pontificia Accademia Romana di Archeologia, (date of access: 1.12.2025), http://www.pont-ara.org/.

[3]   See Pio XI, *Motu Peopeio de Pontificia Commissione Sacrae Archaeologiae deque novo Pontificio Instituto Archaeologiae Christianae*, "Acta Apostolicae Sedis" 1925, 17, pp. 619-624; Pio XI, *Regolamento per il Pontificio Istituto di Archeologia Cristiana*, "Acta Apostolicae Sedis" 1925, 17, pp. 630-633; Pontificio Istituto di Archeologia Cristiana, (date of access: 1.12.2025), https://www.piac.it/.

[4]   See Pontifical Biblical Institute, (date of access: 1.12.2025), https://www.biblico.it/.

[5]   See Studium Biblicum Franciscanum, (date of access: 1.12.2025), https://sbf. custodia.org/en.

[6]   See École Biblique et Archéologique Française de Jérusalem, (date of access: 1.12.2025), https://www.ebaf.edu/en/.

[7]   See Pontificio Istituto di Archeologia Cristiana, *Progetto di ricerca e valorizzazione a Beit Sahour/Campo dei Pastori (Palestina)*, (date of access: 1.12.2025), https://www.piac.it/scavi-attivi#campo-dei-pastori-a-beit-sahour.

[8]   See Pontificio Istituto di Archeologia Cristiana, *Scavo dell'area a Sud della Basilica Papale di San Paolo fuori le mura e allestimento dell'area archeologica*, (date of access: 18.10.2024), https://www.piac.it/progetti-congressi/scavi-musei/ scavo-a-san-paolo-e-allestimento/.

[9]   See J.F. Briffa, *90° anniversario degli scavi del Pontificio Istituto Biblico a Teleilat Ghassu*, "Vinea Electa" 2020, 20, pp. 8-10.

[10]   See E. Braun, *Placing South Levantine Late Neolithic/Early Chalcolithic: Cist Burials within Cemeteries in their Proper Chrono-Cultural Context*, "Paléorient" 2024, 50, pp. 133-158.

[11]   See Studium Biblicum Franciscanum, *Archeologi francescani nella storia*, (date of access: 18.10.2024), https://sbf.custodia.org/en/node/39807.

[12]   Ibidem.

remains)[13], and Samra (churches)[14]. In the Polish context, the Council for Culture and the Protection of Cultural Heritage operates under the Polish Bishops' Conference, with a consultant specifically responsible for the protection of sacred monuments. This Council collaborates with art restorers[15] and issues documents related to the preservation of monuments managed by the Roman Catholic Church[16]. Additionally, at the diocesan level, experts or expert groups are often established to address issues related to archaeological research. Examples include the Archdiocesan Conservator of Historical Monuments of the Archdiocese of Warsaw, the Bishop of Elbląg's Delegates for Church Monument Conservation, and the Archdiocesan Commission for the Conservation of Church Heritage, Architecture, and Sacred Art of the Archdiocese of Krakow[17]. Furthermore, priests, who occasionally hold an archeological degree, conduct archaeological research themselves, combining their pastoral ministry with academic work in this field[18].

Another important reason for exploring the pastoral perspective on archaeological work conducted on church premises was the questions that arose during our review of various academic studies. Initially, it was the book *Sacred Sites, Sacred Places*[19] that prompted us to reflect

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[13]   See École Biblique et Archéologique Française de Jérusalem, *The Qumran Excavations*, (date of access: 1.12.2025), https://www.ebaf.edu/1035-2/qumran/.

[14]   See École Biblique et Archéologique Française de Jérusalem, *Samra*, (date of access: 1.12.2025), https://www.ebaf.edu/1035-2/samra/.

[15]   See Konferencja Episkopatu Polski, *Gremia*, (date of access: 1.12.2025), https://episkopat.pl/Gremia.

[16]   Fundacja Opoka, *Instrukcja Episkopatu Polski o ochronie zabytków i kierunkach rozwoju sztuki kościelnej (1966)*, (date of access: 1.12.2025), https://opoka.org.pl/biblioteka/W/WE/kep/kkbids/sztuka1_16041966.html; Fundacja Opoka, *Konserwacja i zabezpieczenie zabytków sztuki kościelnej*, (date of access: 1.12.2025), https://opoka.org.pl/biblioteka/W/WE/kep/kkbids/sztuka2_17061970.html; Fundacja Opoka, *Wskazania konserwatorskie*, (date of access: 1.12.2025), https://opoka.org.pl/biblioteka/W/WE/kep/kkbids/sztuka3.html.

[17]   See Z. Czernik, *Działania Kościoła Rzymskokatolickiego w Polsce w zakresie ochrony zabytków*, "Ochrona Dziedzictwa Kulturowego" 2016, 1, pp. 25-29.

[18]   See C. Dauphin, B. Hamarneh, *In Memoriam: Fr Michele Piccirillo, ofm (1944-2008): Celebrating His Life and Work*, Oxford 2013; J. Kałużny, *Święty Józef Bilczewski badacz starożytności chrześcijańskiej i jego interdyscyplinarna metoda w świetle nieznanych materiałów źródłowych z lat 1885-1900*, Lwów, Kraków 2015; S. Heid, *Anton de Waal, das Deutsche Priesterkolleg am Campo Santo in Rom und die christliche Archäologie Dalmatiens*, "Kačić: zbornik Franjevačke provincije Presvetoga Otkupitelja" 2011, 41-43, pp. 1031-1070.

[19]   D.L. Carmichael, J. Hubert, B. Reeves and A. Schanche, *Sacred Sites, Sacred Places*, London 2013.

on the collaboration between the clergy, local communities, and archaeologists conducting research on religiously significant sites – research within specific "sacrum" (sacred) environments, but also in the environment of pastoral ministry involving the local community. These questions gained further importance in light of additional readings, including *The Archaeology of Religious Places: Churches and Cemeteries in Britain*[20], *The Religious Heritage Complex: Legacy, Conservation, and Christianity*[21], *The Archaeology of Death in Post-medieval Europe*[22], and *Catholic Religious Minorities in Times of Transformation: Comparative Studies of Religious Culture in Poland and Ukraine*[23]. From these publications, we concluded that from the perspective of pastoral theology, the key considerations include: the relationships between historical sites of religious worship, pastoral ministry, and their socio-cultural environment; religious material heritage (churches, cemeteries, places of worship) serving both the Church's mission and local culture; the significance of religious material remnants (e.g., cemeteries, churches) for contemporary studies on ecclesial memory and diachronic communion; and the pastoral implications of archaeological research conducted in or around specific "sacrum" (sacred) of church communities.

Given these considerations, our main research question at the beginning of our analysis was formulated as follows: How can archaeological research conducted on church premises be utilized in pastoral ministry while accounting for organizational challenges?

The empirical material for this study was collected through individual in-depth interviews (IDIs)[24] conducted in Poland between February 20 and May 29, 2024. The respondents included the Roman Catholic clergy from five voivodeships (the Lower Silesia, the Lesser Poland, the Masovia, the Subcarpathia, and the Podlaskie), so also from the Archdiocese of Białystok, the Archdiocese of Krakow, the Archdiocese of Warsaw, the Archdiocese of Wrocław, as well as the Diocese of Zamość-Lubaczów, all of which have managed church

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[20]   W. Rodwell, *The Archaeology of Religious Places: Churches and Cemeteries in Britain*, Philadelphia 1990.

[21]   C. Isnart, N. Cerezales, *The Religious Heritage Complex: Legacy, Conservation, and Christianity*, London 2020.

[22]   S. Tarlow, *The Archaeology of Death in Post-medieval Europe*, Warsaw 2015.

[23]   M. Zowczak, *Catholic Religious Minorities in the Times of Transformation: Comparative Studies of Religious Culture in Poland and Ukraine*, Berlin 2019.

[24]   See S. Kvale, *Doing interviews*, Los Angeles, London, New Delhi, Singapore 2007; D. Silvermann, *Doing Qualitative Research*, London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi, Singapore 2017; M. Hennink, I. Hutter, A. Bailey, *Qualitative Research Methods*, London 2020.

properties. The study involved nine clergy members: six from urban areas and three from rural areas. Seven were parish priests, and two were church rectors. The interview structure was based on a pre-developed script, ensuring that all the respondents were asked the same questions. Before the interviews, each respondent was informed about the anonymization of their data. This approach noticeably fostered openness, resulting in responses that provided a more realistic depiction of the researched issue[25].

The research process comprised the following stages: designing the study, consulting theologians and archaeologists, developing the research tool (scripted IDI), purposeful selection of respondents, conducting interviews (IDIs), transcribing the recordings, codifying, categorizing, analyzing, synthesizing, consulting the results, and finalizing this article. The research tool was developed based on the insight from sociological research specialists[26], who also advised on codification and categorization[27]. The respondent selection followed these steps: (1) conducting an online query to identify parishes and rectories within various dioceses where archaeological research had been conducted, (2) contacting parish and rectory office staff via phone to inform them about the study and invite participation (during these conversations, we additionally obtained contact data of other clergymen, some of whom agreed to participate). The interviews were conducted in parishes and rectories where archaeological research had previously taken place. This methodology proved effective and efficient, with the collected material forming the basis of this article.

Codification and categorization of the data facilitated identification of five categories[28]: (1) pastoral ministry – education, promotion of local identity, eschatological perspective; (2) benefits – historical insight and rooting in diachronic communion; (3) community building – identity and integration; (4) parish/rectory operations – challenges and new ideas; and (5) best practices. Two of these categories were further

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25   See M. Drewicz, *The Social Archaeology of Sacred Heritage in Poland: The Significance of Archaeological Research for the Identity of Local Communities*, "Polish Journal of Political Science" 2025, 11 (2), pp. 65-83.

26   S. Kvale, *Doing Interviews*, Los Angeles, London, New Delhi, Singapore 2007; D. Silvermann, *Doing Qualitative Research*, London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi, Singapore 2017.

27   S. Kvale, *Doing Interviews*, Los Angeles, London, New Delhi, Singapore 2007, pp. 33-66, 104-106.

28   S. Kvale, *Doing Interviews*, Los Angeles, London, New Delhi, Singapore 2007, pp. 104-106.

divided into subcategories. The empirical material structured in this manner was subjected to content analysis[29].

When citing clergymen's responses, we use the abbreviation *IDI* and the number assigned to the respondent, e.g., (IDI_1), (IDI_2). The terms *clergy*, *respondent*, *clergyman*, and *priest* are used synonymously. For analyses of specific topics, we provide two to six quotations from the respondents as examples to illustrate the varied approaches to the issue.

Pastoral ministry – education, promotion of local identity, eschatological perspective

During the interviews (IDIs), we asked the priests the following question: "In your opinion, can the results of archaeological research be used in pastoral work, and if so, to what extent?" The responses focused on three main areas: educating the congregation (homilies, catechesis), promoting local heritage, and eschatological reflections. Below there are selected excerpts from the responses:

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> We reference this in sermons or during meetings. And we do make use of it (IDI_1).

> In our old church, multiple burials, coffins were discovered in the underground parts. This sparked a lot of interest and amazement. We also take pride in the fact that such discoveries were made here. There are graves here. This is very much a pastoral matter. It provokes interest in the discovery and, let's say, perhaps some reflection: "They are buried here…, we will also be buried someday…, though we don't know where." This kind of eschatological attitude tends to intensify with discoveries of this sort (IDI_4).

> What is unearthed through archaeological research, should be showcased here, locally, to enrich and add character to the parish. Often these are small items, like in our case: ornaments, some 17th- or 18th-century pins, 13th-century ceramics, or fragments of pottery. For a small, local community, this has an educational aspect and elevates the community. Children observe these things. When shown here, locally, it looks better than in an archaeological museum (IDI_5).

> In homilies, it is certainly worth presenting and discussing certain artifacts: "This is a tangible witness to events that took place in this very church, in our local community" (IDI_6).

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29   S. Kvale, *Doing Interviews*, Los Angeles, London, New Delhi, Singapore 2007, pp. 105-106.

> I try to put the results of archaeological research to use during what we call "religious tourism" because we have pilgrims and tourists here. They visit our cathedral, explore the museums. When I meet with them and present these archaeological objects – both movable and immovable – I also refer to the research findings (IDI_8).

The interviews with the clergy clearly indicate that archaeological research conducted on church premises not only can, but should be utilized in pastoral work. All the respondents, though in different ways, expressed strong support for this perspective. They provided examples of how data from archaeologists were used in sermons, catechesis, meetings, and events organized by the church. These findings allowed the clergy to address theological topics (community building, religious identity, eschatology) as well as social, historical, and cultural themes. Priests see archaeological findings as opportunities to enhance the reputation of their locality, to attract pilgrims and tourists, and to promote the uniqueness of their church, cemetery, or historical landmarks. Some respondents described their own pastoral initiatives made possible by archaeological discoveries, such as open meetings with archaeologists or historians. Discoveries related to burials, in particular, prompted some of the clergymen to reflect with their congregations on mortality and eternal life, serving as a reminder of the eschatological dimension of human existence. In this way, archaeology becomes a tool for a deeper understanding of eschatological Christian truths, such as transience, death, and hope for eternal life, while also emphasizing the responsibility before God for the grace of faith and the testament handed down by believers from past generations.

Benefits – historical knowledge and rooting in diachronic communion

In conducting the research, we asked the respondents about the benefits of archaeological research on church premises. Specifically, we posed the following question during the interviews: "How can archaeological research benefit a parish/rectory?" The responses highlighted two main themes. Firstly, all the respondents pointed to cognitive benefits related to historical knowledge uncovered by archaeological research. Secondly, seven respondents mentioned (albeit in different ways) the value of perception and understanding of the contemporary community of believers under the pastoral care of the clergy in its communion with past generations of Christians. In some responses, both aspects were explicitly addressed, for example:

Archaeological research offers a lot. First and foremost, it fits into the broad scope of studies on the parish's history and tradition. Most of all, it concerns material cultural goods, sacred objects that used to serve the parish centuries ago – economic and residential. Moreover, it provides insight into the context in which the parish existed and carried out its pastoral activities, as well as its contribution to the community. Because through tangible material objects, one can discern higher, spiritual, immaterial values (IDI_8).

Below there are selected responses concerning the first issue – cognitive and historical knowledge:

Understanding what lies beneath the ground. Dating the artifact. The origins of the artifact. (...) We get to know the history associated with this particular place (IDI_1).

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It is a good opportunity to learn more about the history of the building. As for our church, when we installed new water, sewage, and gas connections, we discovered that the medieval shape of the building was a bit different – what we found was the foundation of the original hospital. This fascinating discovery added to our understanding of history. (...) If the opportunity arises, I think it's a good idea to deepen our historical knowledge (IDI_2).

For us as the Church, tradition – both with a capital "T" and a lowercase "t" – is something significant. Archaeological research can certainly clarify or illuminate some part of that tradition that is currently inaccessible to us (IDI_3).

Archaeological research is an essential step when undertaking the revitalization of historic, and in this case sacred, buildings. (...) It's important to rely on hard data, which archaeological research, among other tools, help to verify. (...) During the research, many human remains were found, as well as coins from the 17th century, known as *boratynki*, a Russian kopeck from the 18th century, elements of a candlestick, buckles, clothing remnants, and fragments of bottles or ceramics. Some of these items have already been preserved, and we are planning to exhibit them in our memorial room (IDI_6).

Based on the interviews, it can be stated that the clergy with experience in archaeological research on church premises under their management unanimously point to cognitive and historical benefits, including expanding knowledge about the past of a given site and deepening the understanding of its cultural significance. In their opinion, such research reveals hidden architectural structures, stages of construction and further development of buildings, which improves

the understanding of the history of sacred sites often associated with long-standing traditions. This knowledge enables the reconstruction of original condition and provides insight into the functions of structures identified by archaeologists. Furthermore, historical structures can be revitalized, and unearthed artifacts may be exhibited when preserved.

Let us now consider the second benefit: The potential for perceiving and understanding the contemporary community of believers in its communion with past generations of Christians, especially those who lived in the area covered by the archaeological research. Below there are selected responses from the participants on this matter:

> Archaeological research can primarily bring us closer to the cultural context of worship that took place in a given sacred site. And that is invaluable. Archaeology is one of the sources for liturgical studies, which explore the worship of the Church. For us as a community, it's important to know how this worship was shaped and practiced in a specific location (IDI_3).

> The pastoral benefit for the parish is that archaeological research shows that in this place, in this very area, there was a church, where people worked and believed. After all, they used to come here to gather and pray in this place. And this is very important for contemporary individuals to realize they are not the first to do it here... but that entire generations have passed through this sacred place before them (IDI_4).

> A certain knowledge about the past, about the history, and about the people who created this parish community over centuries (IDI_5).

Based on the interviews, it can be stated that most of the clergy involved in the research perceive archaeological research as an important element that can be utilized in pastoral work because archaeological research allows for a deeper spiritual and cultural connection between present and past generations of Christians. The respondents see archaeological discoveries not only as the material heritage of the past but also a spiritual testimony to the enduring faith that transcends temporal boundaries. According to them, archaeological work reveals historical places of prayer and gatherings of the faithful, which, when used as a basis for catechesis, can contribute to raising awareness that contemporary pastoral efforts are part of a multi-generational tradition. Understanding the history of parishes and sacred sites strengthens the sense of responsibility for continuing this tradition. The benefit of archaeological research may therefore lie in fostering awareness among today's local community of believers about diachronic communion in the Church, which should translate

into a sense of identity and strengthen the capacity to pass on the faith to future generations. Diachronic communion should also be viewed in its potential to creatively influence the synchronous communion of a given community of believers – that is, the communion realized in the contemporary generation of the faithful within the "today" mission of the local Church in its parish and diocesan dimensions.

Community building – identity and integration

During the research conducted using IDIs, we asked priests the following question: "In your opinion, can the results of archaeological research be used in building the local community of the faithful, and if so, to what extent?" The responses revolved around two key themes: historical identity as the foundation of the community of believers and the integration of this community around shared material and immaterial heritage. Below there are selected excerpts from the responses:

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> So, this is about showcasing that identity, that history which concerns us. It's not like everything began with us. Rather, this is our heritage, this is our history, this is our identity. And it's all here. This is the richness we draw upon (IDI_1).

> There's no community without history. We won't understand ourselves without history. (…) Archaeological research can have a community-building dimension. Not directly, but indirectly, if the clergy knows how to use it wisely, to show the faithful: "It was your ancestors who ensured that this church looks like this today," or if the building has lost its former splendor, "look at how it once appeared." This can certainly be used as a community-building factor (IDI_3).

> Archaeological research can reveal uniqueness and spark local patriotism, as well as commitment to material and immaterial heritage (IDI_6).

> When we conduct work on some object, we inform people about it in church. This really integrates the parishioners. There's this shared responsibility for the church. We tell people about it. And that builds the parish community (IDI_8).

Based on all the interviews, it can be stated that clergymen see archaeological research conducted on church premises as an opportunity to link such efforts with their pastoral mission of building the community of believers. Building this community is related to historical identity and the integration of the community around its heritage. Historical identity is associated with enabling members of the community

of believers to root themselves more deeply in the history of the parish (the local Church) which leads to a sense of belonging and a mission of continuity. The faithful, aware of their ancestors' heritage, become more engaged in community life, building their identity based on collective experiences and traditions handed-down by generations. The second aspect concerns the integration of the community around the shared material and immaterial heritage. Archaeological discoveries and the preservation of historical monuments serve as tools for strengthening social bonds, fostering a sense of responsibility for heritage, and cultivating local patriotism. Through joint efforts to preserve material heritage, the faithful not only strengthen their ties, but also find meaning in cultivating communal values and traditions, which leads to the increased involvement in the life of the parish/rectory.

Parish/rectory operations – challenges and new ideas

During the interviews (IDIs), we asked the priests the following question: "How have archaeological research affected the functioning of the parish/rectory?" The responses centered on two main themes: challenges to pastoral ministry and the emergence of new ideas and pastoral initiatives. Below there are selected excerpts from the responses:

A large area of the church's floor is covered with glass, allowing the foundations of the church to be visible. Part of it is open for visitors, so people can come in and see it. The crypt has been studied, and the results have been presented. We now have this knowledge; we know what, who, how, where, and when (IDI_1).

Closing the sacred site for an extended period due to archaeological research is, from the pastoral perspective, a very harmful solution. That's why archaeological work needs to be divided into stages. People have religious needs. When this place is closed, they go elsewhere, putting down roots there. Some compromises must be sought. (…) The discovery made here led to the creation of our modern Stations of the Cross. It now hangs in the church. So, there's an interesting discussion, a nice one, between what's modern and what's historical (IDI_2).

Terrible difficulties. Terrible difficulties… Because, first and foremost, the church serves a sacred function. The matter is very, very difficult, very challenging. Closing the church for several years is simply not feasible. It has to be done in turns somehow. (…) I am, first and foremost, a priest, a clergyman, a parish priest. Only then am I the administrator of a building that, unfortunately for me, is a historical monument. My

life would be so much easier, simpler, if it was not a historic site. It would be easier for me. But I understand. It is a monument. It must be taken care of. It must be protected. It must be preserved. Yes. But that comes second. For me, the primary focus is on the parish and its community. The altar was moved outside, next to the church. Services were held here, outside, while work continued inside the church (IDI_7).

The best thing, and it's ideal, is when parishioners see the archaeological work being conducted. It's very engaging for people, drawing them into the life of the parish. But for them to engage, they also need to feel connected to this place (IDI_9).

The data collected from the IDI interviews with clergymen demonstrated that archaeological research conducted on church premises had diverse impacts on the functioning of religious communities, ranging from challenges to the introduction of new pastoral ideas. Archaeological research often necessitated temporary closures of churches or restrictions on access to sacred spaces, leading to justified concerns based on the respondents' experience about losing congregation and disrupting the community. At the same time, archaeological discoveries, such as historical elements of church architecture, enriched the spiritual and cultural life of the parish/rectory, inspired new forms of worship, such as the creation of a "modern Stations of the Cross", and fostered greater engagement of congregation in the life of the parish/rectory.

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Four best practices

During the research, we asked the priests about best practices for organizing collaboration with archaeologists working on church premises. The question posed was: "What advice would you give to priests regarding cooperation with archaeologists?" The responses allow us to identify four key pieces of advice for priests preparing for cooperation with archaeologists about to conduct research on church premises.

At first, the willingness to collaborate with archaeologists and maintaining clear communication with them is crucial on the part of the clergy. Below there are selected responses on this topic:

If both sides are willing to cooperate and approach the work responsibly, it always leads to very good results (IDI_1).

It's essential to establish the rules upfront, i.e. what my expectations are. Absolutely inviolable boundaries, and the framework for collaboration. Agree on the scope of work and clear timeframes for the planned

works. When will the archaeologists leave the site? This needs to be determined (IDI_3).

You simply need to talk, striving to understand the other side. After all, none of us has a monopoly on infallibility. And I think you can always reach an agreement. You can always reach an agreement. If there is goodwill and mutual respect, you can always reach an understanding. It's a matter of goodwill, mutual respect, a sense of responsibility (IDI_7).

There's no alternative. Cooperation with archaeologists, architects, and historians is a must. Together, we are called to save this church. Yes. And to keep it in good condition. A priest is a priest, not an archaeologist, architect, or art historian, etc. We have no expertise in these areas because we have a vocation for something else. Therefore, the help of archaeologists, architects, art historians, and so on is very important (IDI_9).

Willingness to collaborate as well as clear communication between priests and archaeologists emerge as key factors determining the success of joint efforts, especially in the context of conservation and archaeological work on sacred sites. The research highlights that openness to dialogue and mutual understanding of both sides' needs to facilitate smooth project management and help avoid unnecessary conflicts. Priests, aware of their limited expertise in archaeology, value professional collaboration, reinforcing their readiness to communicate with experts. The emphasis on this issue in the interviews suggests that the respondents view it as a potential weak spot in their cooperation with archaeologists. Clear communication from the priest's side is especially important in situations when a balance between liturgical needs and heritage preservation requirements must be found.

Secondly, transparency in project management and accountability for the heritage site are essential for the clergy. Below there are selected responses on this topic:

I would certainly advise acting in a professional and complex way. Create a detailed conservation work schedule, a solid schedule. And a realistic one. And also develop a comprehensive conservation work program. (...) Few people actually do this (IDI_2).

If it's just archaeological research without conservation, the original condition of the church structure must be restored after the work. Everything must be returned to its pre-excavation state. For me, this is of course the most obvious condition: There should be no trace of the work (IDI_3).

The interviews emphasize the importance of transparency in project management and accountability for the heritage site, including clear timeframes and organizational framework for archaeological and conservation works; this approach helps to prevent conflicts and damage to sacred objects. Priests, often acting under the supervision of their diocesan authorities and in collaboration with experts, have stressed the need for comprehensive and cohesive action plans that consider both legal and logistical aspects. Another crucial element is working with experienced specialists who can foresee potential issues and provide proper oversight. Accountability for the heritage site includes the necessity to restore the site to its original condition after completing the works, which further highlights the importance of solid organization and responsible handling at each stage of the project.

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Thirdly, prudence and a responsible approach towards archaeologists and their work are vital on the part of the clergy. Below there are selected responses on this topic:

> Organizationally, priests are really well-prepared for this. Mainly because the curia has appropriate departments that oversee these matters. We, priests, have someone to turn to for help. We're not left to handle this alone. We have Church guidelines, and we know what we can and cannot decide on our own. Before making any decisions, you have to check what the reality of the given project actually is, so you don't get carried away with your imagination. Someone might come and promise they'll do God knows what, and then it turns out to be one big failure (IDI_1).

> The first thing one must acknowledge is: I don't know much about this stuff. That's very important. I might think I know something. I might come up with an idea and get attached to it. And that becomes a problem. So, it's better to invite an expert in this field. Someone who has worked on multiple sites. And ask them what it will look like, how it can be financed, and how the works can be carried out. You must rely on the experience of others. One must never ever do it all by themselves (IDI_2).

> I often say in such circumstances that the Church is wise, but its people not always are. Even those in zucchetta. There is no shortage of fools in the Church, too. But the Church itself is wise. In the litany of cardinal virtues, the Church placed prudence first, and not by accident. Firstly, prudence. Only then justice, moderation, and fortitude. Without prudence, justice quickly turns into cruelty, into revenge. Without prudence, fortitude becomes pointless bravado. Prudence (IDI_7).

Prudence and a responsible approach by the clergy towards archaeologists and their work are indispensable elements of effective collaboration. The participating priests recognize their limitations in specialized archaeological and conservation works, which leads them to trust experts and make decisions based on professional knowledge. Prudence is also reflected in the readiness to refrain from emotional reactions to unexpected discoveries or challenges that might emerge during the works. Responsible approach is key – it means adhering to the established procedures, consulting actions with experienced specialists, and ensuring that archaeological work does not negatively impact historical structures. A prudent approach safeguards both heritage preservation and constructive relations between the clergy and professionals, promoting harmonious realization of shared goals.

Fourthly, exchanging experiences and collaborating with other priests who have previously worked with archaeologists are important practices. Below there are selected responses on this topic:

> I would advise priests to contact another priest who has done something similar or renovated something. Such a priest has the most recent knowledge. The paths have already been paved after all. A priest becomes a parish priest, has a church to renovate, and faces this challenge, not knowing how to approach it. He calls me and says, "Listen, I have this issue. What should I do?" And I tell him, "These are the steps I took. If you want to follow the same path, I offer you my help." It's about sharing experiences and working together(IDI_2).

> Priests should seek information from the curia. The curia has a department for these matters, and someone there oversees church architecture. We have a church construction commission. So, the first step is to establishing collaboration with the curial department. Without that, there's no question of launching an archaeological research independently. That's fundamental: collaboration with the curial department of church architecture. This also ensures that unqualified individuals do not conduct the work in the church (IDI_4).

> My tip for priests would be: Before you start discussions with archaeologists, you should meet with fellow priests who have already undertaken similar activities. Consult it with them, learn about the benefits and challenges, and what the risks might be. Then, once the priest is prepared, he can start talking to the archaeologists (IDI_8).

Exchanging experiences and collaborating with other priests who have worked with archaeologists are very important for the effective management of projects related to the preservation of sacred heritage. The clergy emphasize the importance of a practical approach based

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on mutual understanding and the expertise of more experienced colleagues, which helps avoid mistakes and enhances the quality of the conducted works. Information exchange, both formal and informal, facilitates identifying suitable specialists and firms while fostering solidarity and organizational efficiency in actions connected with archaeological research on church premises.

The findings from interviews with the clergy on collaboration with archaeologists on church premises highlight several key "best practices" that can ensure the success of such endeavors. Firstly, openness to dialogue and mutual understanding between priests and archaeologists are fundamental, as these aspects promote effective collaboration and minimize conflict. Secondly, on the part of the clergy, project management requires organizational transparency and accountability for heritage, with a clear focus on work schedules. The third vital element is prudence of the priests, who, recognizing their limitations in expertise, rely on professionals, which helps to anticipate challenges. Finally, sharing experiences with other priests who have participated in similar projects provides valuable insights and support, additionally solidifying the clerical community.

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Conclusion

The undertaken research on the use of archaeological findings from research conducted on church premises in Poland within the context of pastoral ministry brings significant conclusions for both ecclesial practice and the academic reflection characteristic of pastoral theology. Archaeological work on church premises can serve not only to deepen knowledge about the history of a given site, but also to contribute to the development of pastoral ministry, particularly in building the community of believers, strengthening local identity, and promoting educational and cultural activities within parishes and rectories. The in-depth interviews (IDIs) conducted with priests revealed that archaeological findings are a valuable tool in their ministry, enriching homilies, catechesis, and other pastoral activities, especially by directing the faithful toward reflection on transience and the community of believers. These findings, connecting the past with the present, have the potential to enhance a sense of responsibility for spiritual and material heritage while also deepening the eschatological perspective of individual lives and the broader Church community.

From the perspective of managing the material heritage of the Roman Catholic Church, fostering collaborative relationships between

the clergy and archaeologists proves to be crucial. This cooperation, rooted in mutual understanding and openness, leads to the creation of innovative pastoral and educational initiatives that can effectively engage communities of the faithful. At the same time, challenges associated with archaeological work, such as temporary restrictions on access to churches, require flexibility and skillful management to avoid disrupting the religious life of parishes and rectories.

In light of the findings, archaeological research on church premises constitutes a significant contribution to both heritage preservation and the development of modern pastoral practices. The gathered experiences can serve as a foundation for establishing best practices in collaboration between the Church and heritage preservation professionals. This, in turn, should facilitate even more effective use of archaeological research results in pastoral work in the future.

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Jerzy Król
The John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin

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The Premises of Catholic Education in the Pluralistic Reality of Poland, Europe and the Contemporary World

The article is an attempt to indicate the premises of Catholic education and upbringing, the roots of which lie in Ancient Greece. Catholic education is not a simple extension of the Hellenic model, even though it recognizes the basic assumption of Hellenistic humanism, in which man is perceived as a wealth prior to all specifications belonging to humans. The specificity of the Christian reference to man is the recognition of the personal and supernatural dimension of a human being. It is associated with the integrating force of the function of religious Christian education. The article also presents some of the reasons for the loss of this integrating force and attempts to demonstrate the still valid Catholic ideological proposal in relation to the modern world.

Key words: Catholic education, paideia, upbringing, religious upbringing, secularization.

Introduction – the Greek philosophy and classical culture as the widest base of Catholic education

Basically, everyone agrees that the process of education consists in upbringing, mainly in mental terms; it means schooling, acquiring knowledge[1]. Therefore, in the course of reflection, both terms education and upbringing will appear. Catholic education, as well as essentially European education, called humanistic, has its roots

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[1] Cf. *Mały słownik języka polskiego*, ed. E. Sobol, L. Drabik, Warszawa: PWN 1997, p. 178.

in ancient Greece. The genius of the Greeks lies not only in the fact that they were able to inquire about the essence of things and to find the fundamental laws that govern them, but also in the fact that they sought to subordinate their own life and the life of the whole of society to these laws. At the same time, they indicated clear standards of conduct relating to personal and social life. The philosophy they created allowed to see the unchanging order in the changing reality of nature and the human world. It was through such a philosophy that their lives found meaning in the various dimensions of the whole human reality. The "natural" principles and immanent laws they discovered were consistently applied in culture, education and upbringing. Education in this spirit was an effort to realize in man the eternal and universal ideal of humanity through the development of all spheres of human life. The tool for upbringing – education (as the perfecting of human nature) seen in this way was culture[2]. It was culture that was to build a work of art, i.e. an individual man, who as the "greatest work" was created by following the ideal pattern confined in the mind of the creator of the work, i.e. the educator. Education was defined as the art of arts. It is in this sense that the idea of education understood as a series of tutoring activities – "education" appears in Plato's work entitled *Republic*[3].

Upbringing as the potentialisation of the human being to the state of *kalokagathia* and as a task of *paideia* – a rational and universal culture

The Greeks did not see man through the prism of some brilliant idea or project. Instead, they sought to know the truth of human existence, which enabled them to see human potentialities that could be developed through education. In this connection, the Sophists were the first to pose the question on what human development depends: on birth, that is, on inheritance or on upbringing[4]. The purpose of upbringing – education was a state called *paideia*, and what Homer had earlier defined in relation to culture as a consciously cultivated ideal of human perfection. Culture and education understood in this way was expressed in the whole character of man – in his external

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[2]   Cf. I. Chłodna I., *Od paidei do kultury wysokiej*, Lublin 2016, pp. 15-16.

[3]   Ibidem; cf. Platon, *Państwo*, transl. W. Witwicki, Kęty 2001, p. 671.

[4]   Cf. S. Kunowski, *Podstawy współczesnej pedagogiki*, Warszawa 2004, p. 35.

behaviour, actions, as well as in his internal attitude[5]. The perfection was to be expressed in the human character formed by education. In its manifestations, both external and internal, the attitude of man was to reveal harmony, discipline and moral excellence. This ideal of man was defined by the word *arete* – virtue, perfection, valour. This state, i.e., the possession of virtue, was to characterize a nobleman, and this constituted the nature of nobility and the essential mandate to hold supreme positions in the state. In the works of Homer, *arete* is a combination of moral value with physical strength. It meant heroic bravery, as well as the possession of some quality of the highest degree[6]. In the 5th and 6th centuries, this ideal permeated the whole classical Greek culture, as the development of cities was followed by the democratization of culture. Rights have been extended in the name of the idea of freedom, understood as the inherent and inalienable capacity of man to choose the good. It is worth noting that it was a freedom "to do" not "restrain from". In view of this freedom, the Greeks demanded participation in public debate and in the exercise of power. This refers to those who did not belong to the nobility, but came from wealthier social classes known as *demos*. As a result of such aspirations, the nobility of the spirit, i.e., the possession of virtue rather than the mere fact that one was born a nobleman, began to be accepted as the basis of nobility. This approach was also supported by the central principle of Athenian democracy, which is that all are equal before the law [7]. The culture understood in this way was characterized by two features: universalism and rationalism. That is why it was so eagerly embraced by the Greek people and all mankind[8]. The very pinnacle of this culture was *paideia*, meaning the highest human *arete* in the sense of the highest human physical and moral perfection. This term also meant the comprehensive rational education of man, the "cultivation" in the individual and social aspects. It was first used in the 5th century BC by Aeschylus[9]. The concept of *paideia* was closely connected to the knowledge of human nature, which, being subject

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[5]   Cf. I. Chłodna, *Od paidei do kultury wysokiej*, Lublin 2016, pp. 15-16.

[6]   Ibidem; cf. P. Jaroszyński, *Rola Homera w kuturze śródziemnomorskiej*, in: *Powszechna encyklopedia filozofii*, ed. A. Maryniarczyk, vol. 4, Lublin 2003, p. 562.

[7]   Cf. I. Chłodna, *Od paidei do kultury wysokiej*, Lublin 2016, pp. 25, 30-31.

[8]   Ibidem pp. 25-26; cf. W. Jaeger, *Pideia, Formowanie człowieka* greckiego, transl. M. Plezia, H. Bednarek, Warszawa 2001, p. 51.

[9]   Cf. I. Chłodna, *Od paidei do kultury wysokiej*, Lublin 2016, p. 32; Ajschylos, *Siedmiu przeciw Tebom (Hepta epi Thebas)*, in: idem, *Dzieła*, Lwów 1912, p. 18.

to education, needs methods of cultivation. These methods are man-made and have the form of culture. By applying them in education, one must learn to live a life of a truly human nature. For this he needs help in the form of education, i.e. culture – *paideia*, which can equip him with the right permanent capacity – virtues to take appropriate action. They slowly become the second nature. Thus, the task of *the paideia* is to make up for the deficiencies of nature. *Paideia* is to enable the integral education of a child to become an adult, i.e. a rational and free man with the appropriate skills. This education takes into account human nature and stages of development, which is why it is a staged education. The stages are: physical education; artistic education; moral education; intellectual education. Its culmination for the Greeks was philosophy and in Christianity theology. In this context, education became the transmission of culture, i.e. the conscious shaping of the human personality in its all dimensions according to a strictly defined pattern. This educational culture was not based on theoretical values, but, at the level of actions, provided everything needed to overcome the split between nature and the person. The decisive factor here was human reason, which enabled man to recognize the means for a proper personal life, and in this way reason led man to the good of the person as the primary good. The tools for achieving the goal, i.e. the personal good, were the virtues: bravery, justice, prudence and moderation, that shaped the character of the person. They were not treated as a goal themselves. In this perspective, the primary force of education was not individualism, but humanism shaping the proper character of a person, i.e. true humanity. As already noted above, the education thus shaped was not about preparing for a profession or formation of a social stratum. The task of this education was to realize the proper ideal of humanity[10].

A significant role in the process of discovering the importance of education was played by the sophists. They were the first to notice the connection between the formation of man and all rational shaping of life. They tried to agree on the relationships and principles of upbringing, which, on the one hand, were traditionally associated with the inheritance of nobility by blood, and, on the other, with concepts that wanted to link upbringing with political and democratic principles. Ultimately, this process led to the belief that a person's value is measured not by blood heritage, but by human nature shaped by upbringing – education. In this way, a new concept of man was born, which stated that man is not shaped by nature (*physis*), nor by origin,

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[10]   Cf. I. Chłodna, *Od paidei do kultury wysokiej*, Lublin 2016, pp. 22-23, 32-34.

but is shaped by upbringing. Moreover, the sophists (especially Protagoras) linked education with the philosophy of culture, maintaining that human upbringing is the highest dimension of culture. It involves directing a person towards the universal ideal of humanity[11]. The main goal of education understood in this way is to improve a person to a state of *kalokagatia* (*kalos* – beauty, *kai* – and, *agathos* – good) i.e. to a state of perfection in terms of beauty and goodness. The ideal of education shaped in this way meant that, along with emphasizing the moral and aesthetic tasks of education, physical and mental education was also appreciated, the synthesis of which led to the balance of body and spirit, physical and mental abilities. This type of education was based on the principle of "levelling up". The belief was reflected in the idea of noble competition. The principle of "levelling up" was also the basis for rational self-love and the respect as well as honour due to a person from others. All this was based on the foundation of the triad of truth, goodness and beauty[12]. The word "upbringing" in this sense also occurs in Latin (*ex duco* – to lead out) and means bringing the child out of the state of nature and barbarism into the state of culture. A Christian education and upbringing outlined in this way contain important premises which are not in conflict with the Christian faith as we find them clearly present in Catholic education.

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The following observations can be made:

1) upbringing and education are essentially the work of the culture of a given society;
2) the aims of nurture and education are its main strength;
3) the foundations of Greek upbringing and education were the work of an aristocratic environment – the main principle is "to level up"; in catholic education this principle leads those who profess faith in Jesus Christ not only to realise the ideal of the new man in imitation of the incarnate word, but leads to the attainment of eternal life with Christ. This is a kind of "offer" to all who have believed in Chrit regardless of any status.
4) nature, the natural side, is also a driving force in human development, but it is subject to socialization and introduction to culture[13]. This belief was so strong in antiquity that Isocrates claimed that "Greeks are those who participate in our way of upbringing,

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[11]   Ibidem pp. 45, 47; cf. W. Jeger, *Paideia*, p. 395.

[12]   I. Chłodna, *Od paidei do kultury wysokiej*, Lublin 2016, pp. 47, 24-25.

[13]   Cf. S. Kunowski, *Podstawy współczesnej pedagogiki*, Warszawa 2004, p. 41.

rather than those who only share a physical nature with us"[14]. We find a similar conviction in Christian education. As early as the second century, Tertullian wrote: "Man is not born a Christian, but must become one" (Lat. *Fiunt, non nascuntur christiani*)[15].

Acceptance of the Hellenic humanism

H.I. Marrou noted in his work *History Of Education In Antiquity* that in this era, Christians commonly applied the principle of education according to which, before becoming a Christian, one had to first mature as a human being (i.e. before receiving the sacrament of Baptism). This attitude, among others, caused Christians to adopt the system of upbringing and education used in Greek and Latin schools. In education, the basic assumption of the Hellenistic humanism was accepted, which saw man as abundance prior to all specific features attributable to persons. Christians, like Jews, based their educational activities on the functions of the family home. Basically, they did not create their own schools. They did not practice teaching and education which rejected Hellenism, as was the case in Jewish education and schooling. Christians accepted the achievements of Hellenism, contenting themselves with their own religious teaching, conducted in parallel to the classical teaching, including both Christians and pagans. These basic resolutions determined the development of specific Christian education *en Christo paideia* (Marrou)[16]. Its basis was humanistic education, not being subject to religious requirements and undistorted. This positive attitude towards Hellenic culture led many Christians to become teachers in classical schools. The kind of a teacher was, for instance, Origen, who in the years 202-203, after the martyrdom of his father, opened a grammar school, and a year later he was elected head of the catechetical school[17].

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[14]   Cf. Izokrates, *Panegiryk*, in: S. Srebrny, *Wzory do literatury starożytnej Grecji*, Warszawa 1929, paragraph 50, cited for, I. Chłodna, *Od paidei do kultury wysokiej*, Lublin 2016, p. 68.

[15]   Cf. Tertulian, transl. J. Sajdak, *Apologeticum*, Kraków: Księgarnia akademicka 1947, XVIII.

[16]   Cf. H.I. Marrou, *Historia wychowania w starożytności*, Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, Warszawa 1969, pp. 435-442.

[17]   Ibidem pp. 445-446.

The purpose of culture: the human being – a new Christian anthropology and new strength of the function of religious upbringing

Christianity, without rejecting classical culture, adopted the discovery of antiquity that the goal of culture is man. However, the ancients did not know the answer to the question who is man: the subject and maker of culture. What is the ultimate meaning and purpose of human life? Ancient thinkers claimed that the goal of a life of a person is a certain ideal that he, a human being, can achieve with his own efforts by developing his intellectual, moral and bodily powers. Christianity proposed a new anthropology with a vision of man as a personal being transcending the world of nature and society, and a vision of a personal God, transcendent and omnipotent creator of the cosmos and man. In this way, human life gained a supernatural dimension in which the ultimate goal and meaning of human life was emphasized – the eternal life[18]. This perspective includes the educational ideal of Catholic pedagogy, which is the desire for happiness by each person. This desire can be fully satisfied only in God, Who is eternal. Therefore, the fact of Christ's Resurrection is of paramount importance here, as it authenticates the Catholic educational ideal – the desire for happiness[19].

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As Stefan Kunowski notes, the integrating power of Christian education anchored in the foundation of a Loving God – Man, overcoming death was so great that until the Reformation period, one function of religious education included the other two primordial educational functions, i.e. moral and social. It is worth noting that the faith of Israel, based on the Law of the Old Covenant, was also permeated with the idea of a loving God directing the history of his people. However, the fact that death is insurmountable meant that education based on biblical faith was unable to give a strong enough impulse to the religious educational function that would also cause including a moral and social one. The peculiar "weakness" of the religious education function of the old order can be explained by the fact that no historical person was known to have escaped death and to have given such an opportunity to others. Only Jesus Christ did this out of love for each of us through His passion, death and resurrection. This fact is the basis of the fundamental Christian message – the *kerygma*. Until fear, distrust in God and terror of death disappear, man is not able to

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18   Cf. I. Chłodna, *Od paidei do kultury wysokiej*, Lublin 2016, pp. 94-98.

19   Cf. J. Kostkiewicz, *Kierunki i koncepcje pedagogiki katolickiej w Polsce w latach 1918-1939*, Kraków 2013, pp. 37-39.

experience his religiosity, his faith and his life in such a way that the result is such a love, the strength of which integrates basic functions of education, which are: religious, moral and social ones.

A possible reason for the loss of coherence and strength of not only Catholic upbringing

As S. Kunowski (2004) noticed, this phenomenon of the integrating function of religious upbringing in Christian and Catholic education lasted until the Reformation. At first, the moral function was separated from the religious nurture function, which, according to Kant's categorical imperative of conscience, was supposed to develop appropriate ethical attitudes in people regardless of their religion. This approach resulted in a gradual desacralisation of ethical attitudes, which in turn influenced the formation of secular ethics later on. Ultimately, in the 19th century, a class society detached moral education from its social function, assuming that the school alone, by educating the masses in the spirit of state loyalty, would effectively safeguard the social order against revolutions. Apart from the formation of secular ethics and the fact of separating the social function from moral education, one of the main reasons for the disappearance of the integrating phenomenon was the approach to the Word of God and the Church expressed in words *sola scriptura* that appeared during the Reformation[20]. Until then, there was a belief, supported especially by church liturgical practice, that the Church, as the Mystical Body of Christ, was the carrier of the Word of God. In practice, the principle was that the Word of God precedes the Holy Scripture, accompanies the Holy Scripture when it is read at a liturgical meeting and is superior to the written book, because it is a living, personal, loving God and not only a written letter. But the principle *sola scriptura* locked God in a book. It was no longer the Word of God proclaimed by the Body of Christ, which is the Church, but the written pages of the Bible that were believed to "capture God." God was reduced to the *sacred* sphere of the holy book and locked in it. The world and history became empty. It was not the Word that was in the beginning, the Logos, God Incarnate, but the book that became the beginning. As Marshall McLuhan

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[20]   Cf. S. Kunowski, *Podstawy współczesnej pedagogiki*, Warszawa 2004, pp. 21-23; J. Król, *Chrześcijański wymiar wychowania i edukacji, podstawowe funkcje wychowania, potrzeba punktów orientacyjnych*, in: *Geniusz patriotyzmu jako koniecznej cnoty społecznej*, ed. T. Guz, S. Zawiślak, Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL 2023, pp. 14-20.

claims in his book *The Gutenberg Galaxy*[21], the Reformation would not have been possible without the invention of printing, and it is not only about easier access to the written word, but about a new way of thinking of man, similar to the ordered, linear system of signs of printed writing. This is about the "authority" of the printed matter, which was previously unknown. There was a kind of "enchantment" of the human mind by the print – in the sense of a medium, a transmitter, redirecting the human mind from reading the mystery of a loving God and His truth from the beauty of the created world and the history of salvation to the genius of linear thinking[22]. This observation seems to find its deep justification in the revelation, where the Word is Jesus Christ Himself – "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us"[23]. So the Word is not just information, an idea that can be conveyed in the spoken or written word, but it is a living eternal Person, God Himself – "in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and God was the Word"[24]. This is probably why St. John writes at the end of his Gospel: "There are many other things accomplished by Jesus. If one wanted to write them all down in detail, the whole world would not contain the books that would have to be written"[25]. Here we touch upon the very core of what the Church from the beginning has called tradition. This can still be seen today, particularly in the liturgy of the Church, where the Word of God is proclaimed through the reading of the Scriptures. So this is also where the difference between word and the Scripture becomes apparent. Historically, the word is prior to the Scripture, it accompanies the Scripture when the Church (the Body of Christ – especially in the teaching of St. Paul the Church is the living Body of Christ) reads the Scriptures as the Word of God especially in the liturgical assembly. And a third observation: the Word of God transcends the Scriptures – this is evidenced by the aforementioned conclusion of St. John's Gospel about the impossibility of housing books describing what Jesus Christ accomplished or, to put it another way, the Person of Jesus Christ – the Word Incarnate – cannot be enclosed in a book. It is worth pointing out that this dimension of reference to the Word of God is at the heart of what the Catholic Church to this day refers to as tradition, which has had and continues to have a tremendously integrating effect in catholic education and upbringing,

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[21]   Cf. M. Mc Luhan, *Galaktyka Gutenberga*, Warszawa 2019 p. 143.

[22]   Ibidem.

[23]   Cf. J 1: 14.

[24]   Cf. J 1: 1.

[25]   Cf. J 21: 25.

without conflicting with the education and upbringing developed by the genius of the ancient Greeks.

A contemporary perspective – the need for a "*paideia* of meaning"

In view of what has been stated above in relation to the ideas inspiring Catholic or Christian education and upbringing, it must be stated that today we do not live in a world where the Christian faith and philosophy universally give coherence to the education and daily life of the people. Even in countries with a long Catholic tradition, such as Italy or Poland this is no longer the case. As noted by Ch. Duquoc, although we live in a world engulfed by secularization processes, when no religion offering the idea of a mythical deity allows us to look optimistically into the future, such an optimistic perspective is still provided by faith in the crucified and resurrected Son of God, Jesus Christ. He notes that only the Word of God, bringing hope, makes sense of the secularized, modern world and makes human upbringing meaningful. It gives the right motives and strength[26].

Here we touch upon the main problem of the contemporary culture, which, not being the ultimate goal and form of human existence, cannot indicate any other reference than itself and is confined in its own limitations. Ultimately, the fact that a believer can look into the future with hope results not from the unfathomable and completely incomprehensible mystery of the Almighty, but from the promise of God guaranteed by and fulfilled in Jesus Christ. It is Jesus Christ who liberates the present and the future, not a myth, not technology and progress, which by themselves cannot indicate their goal. This understanding is carried in Catholic education[27].

Catholic education also carries the belief that today's programmes and educational practice cannot omit the so-called basic ideals that are necessary to maintain social order and peace among people. The UNESCO Convention signed in 1945 already mentioned this. However, Wolfgang Brezinka points out that the common basic ideals are insufficient because they cannot provide individuals with the meaning of life, its individual characed and deeper non-utilitarian morality. The state itself, or the supranational structures themselves,

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[26]   Cf. Ch. Duquoc, *Niejasności teologii i sekularyzacji*, Warszawa 1975, pp. 49-54; H. Cox, *La cite seculiere. Essai theologique sur la secularisation et l'urbanisation*, Paris 1969, pp. 104-105.

[27]   Ibidem.

e.g. the European Union, do not provide such foundations, because in the conditions of contemporary pluralism, the ideals of a good person and a good meaningful life appear as specific ideals precisely defined for a specific group or an individual. The merit of these ideals is convincing only for fellow believers, it creates a religious community and has an educational impact on the young generation. This is the key to the formation of beliefs over which the state provides legal protection, because the meaning of people's lives, their joy and courage depend on them. Seen from this perspective, the state is dependent on the faith of the nation, because the meaning of life and the social attitude of its citizens are based on it[28].

Bearing in mind that today we basically live in secular societies, in which their characteristic and accepted feature is secularization and secularism, it is worth quoting the thought of John Paul II characterizing the Catholic approach to education, which takes these phenomena into account. The Pope emphasizes that in contemporary secular culture, we should notice what has been the essence of the relationship between Christianity and the world from the beginning, i.e. the rejection of the idea of the divinity of the world, a kind of "reverse deification" of the world, which began already in the Old Testament, which can be described by the statement – "the world is not god ". The idea of secularization understood in this way perfectly fits the idea of the Catholic education or education in general, which is to be open to the world and its truth. In this approach, the accusation that the world is sacralized by the Catholic education and school is dismissed. There remains something more important for education – opening to a positive future, different from the present and full of meaning anchored in *the sacrum of the person of Christ* risen from death, who overcomes the forces of this world and is not condemned to the fate assigned to Him by deities or the forces of nature. The truth that the incarnation of God in Jesus is a type of radical secularization is firmly anchored in the Catholic education. Here, Holy God appears as the one who stripped himself of his religious character and his divine attributes in order to take the form of a servant. This aspect of the Christian message undoubtedly has a positive impact on the mature development of human personality, people's consciences, and education[29]. This is especially important today, because the modern man is characterized

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[28] Cf. W. Brezinka, *Wychowanie i pedagogika w dobie przemian kulturowych*, Kraków 2008, pp. 94-95.

[29] Cf. *J. Król, Pedagogika nawrócenia i wychowania w nauczaniu Jana Pawła II*, Wydawnictwo Diecezjalne i Drukarnia w Sandomierzu, 2007, pp. 32-36.

by a kind of nomadic existence. A modern nomad, uprooted from his own cultural tradition that has shaped him so far and at the same time provided him with important motives for the meaning of life, feels lost in the global world[30]. For a secularized man who does not refer to Christ, the future is uncertain and arouses fear. In order to forget about this fear, the "secularized" man directs all his activity towards building earthly reality. His "secularism" does not allow him to see God waiting in the future. Therefore, what means God to a "secularized" but still believing man, portends impenetrable darkness to a "secularized" unbeliever. Probably this dimension of secularization has the most destructive educational impact today in terms of the meaning of education and upbringing itself, and weakens the sensitivity of conscience. Therefore, efforts should be made to ensure that education gives people a new sense of meaning. The Christian message of faith and the possibility of conversion to God, as well as Catholic education, integrally connected with it, comes to the rescue[31]. On the other hand, this education, like the Catholic Church, is supposed to constantly discern the truth among the tendencies emerging in the secularizing world. Without this, upbringing a citizen of this Earth and a citizen of the Kingdom of Heaven would be fruitless[32]. Today, humanity once again needs a model of education that would have the power and transform the world so that the proclaimed and applied educational model could become a synthesis of faith and everyday life. Numerous guidelines in the teaching of John Paul II relate to this aspect. Already in his first encyclical *Redemptor hominis* he emphasizes that man cannot be known without Christ. Since man's earthly life is headed towards God, the path of education cannot be realized without looking at Him who is the Master, Teacher and Guide[33]. A characteristic feature of John Paul II's teaching is that he formulates his teaching in personalistic terms. This characteristic means that in relation to the upbringing, education and formation of a human person, the papal

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[30]   Cf. J. Kristeva, *Pouvirs de l'horreur. Essai sur l'bjection*, Paris 1980; J. Życiński, *Personalizm po śmierci podmiotu ludzkiego*, w: *Personalizm Polski*, ed. M. Rusecki, Lublin 2008, Wydawnictwo KUL, pp. 9-12, 18-19; J. Król, *Wychowanie klasyczne w duchu personalizmu a kontekst współczesnych wyznaczników wychowania według modelu szwedzkiego*, in: *Geniusz patriotyzmu jako koniecznej cnoty społecznej*, ed. T. Guz, S. Zawiślak, Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL 2023, pp. 65-68.

[31]   Cf. Duquoc, pp. 49-54; Cox pp. 104-105.

[32]   Cf. Duquoc, pp. 5-11.

[33]   Cf. J. Zimny, *Współczesny model autorytetu nauczyciela*, Sandomierz 2006, p. 330.

teaching is also of interest to non-Christians. However, elaborating on this idea extends over the boundaries of this paper.

Conclusion

In lieu of a summary, we offer a brief reflection on the role and significance of ideology in education, upbringing. In practical educational activity, we always rely on some kind of theory, which is an integral part of conscious human activity. As Rev. Prof. Marian Nowak notes, it should be remembered that nowadays praxis – praxis is very much related to the type of rational thinking aimed at transforming persons and the natural and social environment. The influence of Marxism is also reflected in this. In free and conscious human action, "to think" and "to act" are linked. Particularly with regard to education, it is difficult to imagine practical action without having clearly formed ideas that fall under the heading of education. Maritain said that "every pedagogy worships its idol" – no one educates or acts without having any ideas. Also pedagogy (of any kind) is based on some general theses on which it makes everything dependent. In this way, knowledge takes on the character of coherence and forms – an ideology as an organically coherent totality of ideas embodying a conception of the world and of life. Ideology understood in this way plays a positive role in science, allowing us to organize our cognition and put it into a certain system, which facilitates the use and application of knowledge in practice. The purpose of this study was to present some of the important ideas that make up Catholic education and upbringing in this perspective. These ideas very clearly cover fields that properly belong to philosophy or theology. However, it is necessary to know them and to bear them in mind, because only in this way can we include in education and upbringing the said coherent totality of ideas relating to the conception of the world and of human life. This positive attitude towards education and upbringing is the foundation of what we call the Catholic upbringing or the ideology of the Catholic upbringing. As indicated above, this coherence of the ideology of education and upbringing was also a feature of the Greek *paideia* with which Catholic education and upbringing has a connection.

This positive understanding of ideology changed under the influence of K. Marx and K. Engels. In their lecture, ideology appears as a reality serving the theoretical justification of the interests of the dominant groups, implies uncriticism and service to a particular, group, party, state, and rejects all criticism. It should be stressed that in a climate

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of freedom, ideologies (understood not in a Marxist spirit) can foster pluralistic thinking that inspires education. Unfortunately, very often nowadays ideology is understood in a Marxist way and combined with economic, social and cultural contexts. Therefore, pedagogy should take on the task of critiquing ideology and help to unmask its presence and influence in the programmes, aims, means, institutions and theories of education. The contemporary pedagogue should be able to unmask the presence of ideology understood in a Marxist way and to counteract its presence. It seems that this skill can contribute significantly to recovering the correct concept and understanding of what we define as Catholic education and upbringing.

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Andrzej Wierciński
University of Warsaw

iD 0000-0001-9096-6535

The *White Crucifixion* and the Radical New of the Resurrection

This paper offers a hermeneutic-theological reading of Marc Chagall's White Crucifixion (1938) as a visual meditation on the paradox of the Cross and the Resurrection – the inseparability of suffering and transfiguration. Painted in the aftermath of Kristallnacht, Chagall's luminous white Christ, draped in a tallit, stands amid burning synagogues, fleeing exiles, and the devastation of Jewish life. Through this audacious fusion of Jewish and Christian symbols, the painting becomes a theologia crucis of endurance ($\dot{\upsilon}\pi o\mu o\nu\dot{\eta}$), lament, and hope. The paper interprets the Crucifixion not as defeat but as divine $\mu\alpha\rho\tau\upsilon\rho\dot{\iota}\alpha$ – witness to a love that abides ($\mu\dot{\epsilon}\nu\epsilon\iota\nu$) within history's darkest hour. Drawing on the theological insights of Hans Urs von Balthasar, the phenomenology of revelation in Heidegger and Gadamer, and the symbolic grammar of color, the analysis shows how Chagall's white radiance anticipates the "radical new" of the Resurrection: not as reversal but as unveiling ($\dot{\alpha}\lambda\dot{\eta}\theta\epsilon\iota\alpha$) within broken-ness. The study concludes that White Crucifixion is both an artistic midrash and a Paschal icon – a space where divine presence dwells in absence, where black and white become the grammar of faith, and where hope, transfigured by waiting, becomes the practice of resurrection.

Key words: Resurrection, Marc Chagall, *White Crucifixtion*, theologia crucis, Hans Urs von Balthasar.

To speak of the Resurrection is not to recount a past event but to step into a mystery that continually disrupts our time-bound categories. Theological thinking resists the temptation to reduce the Resurrection to a symbol, a theoretical formula, or a mere act of remembering. Its task is more radical: to bring into the open ($\dot{\alpha}\lambda\dot{\eta}\theta\epsilon\iota\alpha$, truth-as-unveiling) that which discloses itself to those who allow themselves to be taken captive by the event (*sich selbst in Anspruch nehmen lassen*). This is

not about solving the Resurrection but dwelling in its radiance, with the attentiveness needed to be transformed by it. The Resurrection demands of us a new kind of perception, a readiness to see not only with the eyes but with our whole being. It invites us into a mode of seeing that is no longer a simple observation but *participatory attunement*, inseparable from response and transformation. Hence, it implies thorough receptivity, a kind of *comprehension* that is not mere sense data but a *gathering into oneself*, an *assimilation into meaning*. Perception becomes an act of surrender to the world's self-disclosure, not by mastery and control (*Beherrschung*), but by receptive openness. Resurrection is not a phenomenon to be grasped, not an event to be noted, but a *λόγος – event*, a happening of meaning that gathers us into a new horizon of understanding – a new world. To perceive the Resurrection is to allow ourselves to be seized (*per-cipere*) by the *Λόγος*, to be gathered (*λέγειν*) into its meaning, and to dwell in the truth that is unconcealed (*ἀληθεύειν*) through it. In this sense, perception becomes a mode of existence: not neutral or detached, but *engaged, interpreted, and transformed*. It is a readiness of the whole being – open to the world, responsive to its address, and vulnerable to being changed in the very act of perceiving.

Re-newal of Theology

Resurrection is the moment in which the *ἀρχή* (*An-fang*, beginning) and the *ἔσχατον* (end) are no longer separated by linear time but drawn together in the blessed intensity of *καιρός*. This is not chronological time, but the time of encounter, interruption, and fulfillment. In the risen Christ, the fullness of time erupts into the now: not as a conclusion but as *An-fang*, a new beginning that gathers all history into itself. To think Resurrection is to let ourselves be carried – *Leitenlassen* – into this space where wounds do not disappear but are transfigured. It is here, in the space of transfiguration, that we are called to remain – *verweilen* – with the Crucified to hear the silence between death and life. This is the silence of Holy Saturday, where the world holds its breath between loss and promise, and the heart learns to wait. Theology, if it is faithful, gives voice to this silence – not by explaining it, but letting it resonate in word, image, and liturgy.

This introduction does not introduce in a mechanical sense – it initiates and invites. The unfolding of the Resurrection is where theology begins. It is in this spirit that we now turn to a reading of the work of art – not to illustrate or embellish doctrine, but to enter, with reverence, the visual *καιρός* of Resurrection that Chagall dares to depict: a radiance rising from within the brokenness of the world.

The Crucified Jew(s): Marc Chagall's *White Crucifixion*

The Crucifixion as a Universal Symbol:
A Landscape of Destruction and Endurance (ὑπομονή)

Marc Chagall, though a practicing Hasidic Jew, repeatedly returned to the theme of the Crucifixion in his art. His *White Crucifixion*, painted in 1938, stands as a visual lament for the suffering of the Jewish people, persecuted, exiled, and exterminated. Created in the shadow of *Kristallnacht* – the Night of Broken Glass – when synagogues were torched, sacred scrolls desecrated, and Jewish homes destroyed, the

painting captures the theological and historical rupture of that darkening time. But more than lament, it articulates a paradox: between divine presence and historical absence, between luminous endurance and overwhelming despair. The horizon behind Christ is dark and smoke-filled – a visual embodiment of the existential and moral crisis engulfing Europe. The moral collapse of a continent is inscribed into the scenery, yet the painting does not allow darkness the final word. In the face of cultural erasure and divine silence, *White Crucifixion* becomes a theology of resistance: a proclamation of the enduring light, of a presence that remains when all else turns away.

At the center of the painting, the crucified Christ, wrapped in a *tallit*, radiates silent white light. Around him unfolds a world in chaos – villages aflame, refugees fleeing, elders praying in powerlessness, and a man marked *Ich bin Jude* ("I am a Jew"). These images mirror the horror of *Kristallnacht* and the broader violence against Jewish communities across Europe. Yet the contrast between the dark horizon and the radiant Christ reveals not mere aesthetic tension but theological provocation: How does faith endure when God appears absent?

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The whiteness of Christ's figure is not merely visual. In Christian iconography, white is the color of transfiguration and resurrection, the angel at the empty tomb, and garments made pure through suffering. Resurrection is not painted as victory, but as presence: Ἐμμανουήλ – God with us – even in destruction. This is no triumphalism but rather a μαρτυρία, a witness to divine ἀλήθεια, disclosed in the midst of catastrophe.

The crucified figure is not depicted as a distant Christian savior but as a suffering Jew, drawing Jesus back into the story of his people. The *tallit* affirms his Jewish identity, reframing the Crucifixion as a symbol of Jewish martyrdom and enduring faith. Chagall's bold theological gesture invites both Jewish and Christian viewers to confront shared histories of pain and the possibility of reconciliation through compassion and memory. The destruction around Christ resonates beyond its immediate context, becoming a universal symbol of oppression, exile, and the fragility of human dignity.

Christ's posture is not one of triumph but of witness. He does not command; He abides. His open arms do not impose redemption but invite recognition. In this way, Chagall transforms the Crucifixion into a symbol of μαρτυρία – bearing witness to suffering, to solidarity, and to the irrepressible possibility of renewal. The spiritual heart of *White Crucifixion* is endurance, not as passive survival but as active steadfastness. The New Testament notion of ὑπομονή (Rom 5: 3-5; James 1: 3-4)

evokes not a stoic acceptance of fate but the strength to remain beneath suffering while keeping one's gaze on the horizon. The painting does not negate despair. It acknowledges it, offering a luminous response: the faith that remains and the light that refuses to die out.

One of the most striking elements of the painting is its use of light. Christ glows with a transcendent stillness while a menorah at the bottom corner burns with warmth and tenderness. These lights stand against the backdrop of violence and collapse, signaling that even in devastation, divine presence endures. The menorah and the *tallit* anchor the Crucifixion in Jewish tradition, suggesting that faith survives through prayer, memory, and community even when hope seems eclipsed.

The *Tallit*: covering, identity, and sacred suffering

Among the most striking and theologically resonant features of *White Crucifixion* is Chagall's depiction of Jesus wearing a *tallit*, the traditional Jewish prayer shawl, wrapped modestly around his hips. This seemingly small detail becomes a profound act of reclamation. It restores Jesus to his Jewish identity, not as a universalized Christian icon severed from his roots, but as a Jewish prophet and martyr, a son of Israel, suffering in solidarity with his people. In doing so, Chagall directly challenges centuries of Christian iconography that have often stripped Jesus of his Jewishness. The *tallit* draws him back into the covenantal tradition, into the suffering endured by generations of Jews in exile, pogroms, and genocide. The crucifixion, here, does not belong exclusively to Christian redemptive theology. It becomes, too, an expression of Jewish martyrdom, a visual witness to shared persecution and historical endurance.

In Jewish tradition, the *tallit* is a garment of prayer, modesty, and sanctification. Draped across Jesus's loins, it affirms the dignity of the body even in the most vulnerable moment of death. It stands in stark contrast to traditional images of the crucified Christ exposed and humiliated. In Chagall's vision, suffering is not stripped bare, it is made sacred. The *tallit* becomes a liturgical sign, transforming the crucifixion into an act of intercession: a prayer offered not above suffering, but from its very depths. This gesture of covering recalls the story of Noah's sons, who veiled their father's nakedness with reverence (Gen 9: 23). It is an act of compassion that refuses to turn suffering into spectacle. By clothing Christ with the *tallit*, Chagall shields his humanity and

extends that reverence to all those whose pain has been ignored or who have been exposed to violence.

The *tallit* functions as a double symbol. It honors the personal suffering of Jesus while binding him to the communal trauma of his people. Set against the backdrop of burning synagogues and fleeing refugees, it draws a line of continuity between the crucified body and the wounded body of Jewish history. The substitution of the Roman loincloth with the *tallit* is a confident theological move, offering a vision not of split but of reconciliation. Jesus is no longer a figure pulled away from Judaism, but one returned into its heart. In this way, Chagall's *White Crucifixion* becomes a visual theology of sacred suffering, where pain is neither denied nor sentimentalized but woven into the garments of memory, prayer, and presence. The *tallit* sanctifies Christ's death, reframes it within the story of Jewish endurance, and opens a space where Christian and Jewish viewers alike are called to encounter the crucifixion not as a symbol of separation but as a possibility of shared compassion, memory, and hope.

The pilgrimage interrupted

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White Crucifixion offers a prophetic vision. The central figure of Christ radiates light, symbolizing the mystery of redemption that extends beyond individual suffering to encompass all of humanity. The painting, layered with symbols, challenges and expands our understanding of pilgrimage, chosenness, and covenant. In the biblical narrative, the people of the covenant are often depicted as pilgrims, journeying through history with God as their guide – from Abraham's call to leave his homeland, to the Exodus from Egypt, to the return from exile in Babylon. This pilgrimage is both physical and spiritual, a movement toward the fulfillment of divine promises. Chagall interrupts this narrative. The fleeing figures evoke not the hopeful pilgrim but the displaced and terrified exile. Their movement is not toward a promised land but away from violence, persecution, and ruin. The flames consuming their villages and the destruction surrounding them reflect the historical trauma of pogroms and the Holocaust. These figures are not ascending towards a sacred destiny but escaping annihilation. And yet, this interruption discloses a paradox: their flight, though driven by despair, bears witness to the resilience of a people who continue to move, to hope, to survive. Above the fleeing figures and burning synagogues, a band of light shines, containing Hebrew texts and symbols of divine presence. This light testifies that even in

moments of the deepest darkness, the covenant with the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is not extinguished. The journey continues. The *Shekhinah* – the indwelling presence of God – remains with the people, even in exile and suffering.

This interplay between despair and hope resonates with the prophetic tradition in the Hebrew Bible, where visions of judgment and ruin are often accompanied by promises of renewal. As the *Book of Lamentations* cries out in grief – "How deserted lies the city, once so full of people!" (Lam 1: 1) – it also gestures toward divine compassion: "The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end" (Lam 3: 22). Likewise, Isaiah speaks into exile not with abandonment, but with promise: "Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem" (Is 40: 1-2).

White Crucifixion invites viewers to reflect on the interconnectedness of their histories, faiths, and experiences of suffering. It is a profound visual *midrash* – an expression of solidarity, lament, and resistance. It underscores the universal significance of Christ's suffering and the light of redemption that shines through it. By placing Christ at the center of the Jewish narrative of affliction, Chagall opens a space for theological encounter, dialogue, and mutual understanding. He dares to show the crucifixion not merely as a Christian symbol but as a universal call to hope, resilience, and transformation amid the darkness of human history.

The courage to hope and wait: presence in absence

In *White Crucifixion*, Marc Chagall weaves together two enduring threads of faith: the courage to hope and the patience to wait. Hope is not sentimental optimism but a resilient refusal to let despair speak the final word.

Waiting, too, is not passive. It is $\acute{v}\pi o\mu o\nu\acute{\eta}$, a disciplined, active endurance shaped by centuries of the Jewish exile, persecution, and longing for the Messiah. The stillness of Christ on the cross, the elders lifting their lamenting prayers, the menorah burning through the surrounding darkness – these gestures embody a spiritual posture that holds space for redemption not yet seen. Hope gives waiting its vision; waiting gives hope its strength.

And yet, the painting is populated not only by figures of faith but by those who flee, turning away in fear, sorrow, or the paralysis of disorientation. They reflect the universal impulse to escape suffering and avoid the mystery it conceals. Their absence of presence sharply

contrasts with one who is not depicted but whose biblical presence looms large: Mary.

In the Gospel narrative, Mary remains at the foot of the cross. As Ὁδηγήτρια, she points to Christ. Her silence is not emptiness but a theology of presence. She does not explain suffering; she abides within it. Her steadfastness becomes a hermeneutics of dwelling, a staying that interprets without resolving, a faith not rooted in certainty, but in the willingness to remain when all else breaks apart. In her, we find an interpretive key: the courage to dwell in mystery without resolving it and perceive holiness in what appears forsaken.

Chagall's omission of Mary may be intentional, creating a space into which we are called. Her absence is not a void but an invitation: to become witnesses, remain where others flee, and bear hope not as consolation but as solidarity. Presence in absence is not a paradox to be solved. It is a truth to be lived. To remain, as Mary does, is a spiritual and ethical stance. It is the courage to listen to the silence of suffering and receive it as something that speaks. It is the humility to point, not toward resolution, but the Crucified One, where divine love abides (μένω) in its most vulnerable form. And it is the strength to dwell faithfully in the liminal space between death and resurrection, despair and hope.

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White Crucifixion does not resolve this tension. It intensifies it. Yet in doing so, it invites us to embody a different kind of faith: not one that escapes the darkness, but one that shines quietly within it. Mary's absence becomes a summons. Her fidelity turns into a path (ὁδός). Through the light of the crucified Christ, we are asked to remain: Not to explain, but to witness; not to flee, but to wait. For it is often in the very space of absence that the mystery of divine presence is most fully revealed.

Crucifixion as resurrection: the inseparability of suffering and redemption

The theme of crucifixion as resurrection reveals a profound theological paradox: suffering and glory are not opposites but inseparably joined in the heart of the Christian faith. Drawing on Orthodox theology, Hans Urs von Balthasar, and Marc Chagall's *White Crucifixion*, this vision insists that redemption is not achieved despite suffering, but through it. Suffering is not bypassed but transfigured – it becomes the very place where divine presence is revealed.

In Eastern Orthodox tradition, the Cross is not a defeat to be reversed by the Resurrection, but already the manifestation of divine

glory. The theology of *θέωσις* – divinization – sees in Christ's suffering a transformative act that opens humanity to participation in divine life. Iconographic tradition affirms this: the crucified Christ appears serene, radiant, and crowned with light. Glory does not wait for the tomb to be emptied; it shines forth from the cross itself.

Hans Urs von Balthasar carries this vision further in his theology of Holy Saturday. Christ's descent into the silence of the grave is the deepest movement of love – God's self-emptying (*κένωσις*) reaching even into abandonment. In this radical descent, divine glory is made perfect not through power but through vulnerability. The "white glory of the Cross", as Balthasar names it, is the paradoxical light that emerges from surrender, love that conquers not by overcoming but by remaining.

This theological vision takes visual form in *White Crucifixion*. Chagall's Christ stands not above history, but within it. His body does not transcend suffering; it dwells in its midst. And yet, he radiates white light, not as spectacle, but as quiet fidelity. The whiteness does not erase the darkness – it inhabits it. The chaos surrounding Christ – burning scrolls, shattered synagogues, fleeing bodies – speaks to the historical darkness of Jewish suffering. The blackness of exile and violence is not a background but a force that presses in on every corner of the canvas. And yet, light persists. The burning menorah, like the glowing *tallit*, speaks to faith that refuses extinction. Chagall's vision does not sentimentalize suffering; it bears witness to it and, in doing so, discloses the mystery of resurrection: that divine presence is most luminous where it seems most hidden.

This is the very drama of the Holy Saturday, the liminal space between death and life, where nothing is resolved, but everything is held in tension. Christ's wounds are not erased by resurrection. They remain visible, glorified, not denied but transfigured. The Resurrection does not cancel the Crucifixion; it fulfills it. This is the core of a Christian theology of glory: not a victory over suffering, but a love that remains within it and renders it meaningful. Chagall's *White Crucifixion* thus becomes more than a lament or protest. It is a visual *Paschal* icon. It dwells in the unresolved space between destruction and hope, abandonment and promise. It does not offer closure but invites decision: will we turn away like the fleeing figures or remain in fidelity like Mary at the cross, whose absence in the painting is a space we are called to inhabit?

To remain is not to understand but to accompany. It is to trust that resurrection is hidden in the wound and that presence is born in

apparent absence. Chagall's Christ does not demand belief. He simply abides, luminous and still, asking whether we will turn toward the light or continue to flee. Resurrection here is not a triumph to be grasped but a mystery to be received. It is the quiet courage to believe that even in shattered history, the divine does not vanish but dwells in the silence, the darkness, and the luminous heart of suffering itself.

The logic of love: liturgy (λογικὴ λατρεία) as the enactment of resurrection

In *Sermo Guelferbytanus*, St. Augustine speaks with astonishment of the paradox at the heart of Christian faith: "*Magnum est quod futúrum a Dómino promíttitur nobis; sed multo est maius quod recólimus iam factum esse pro nobis... Multo incredibílius iam factum est, quod mórtuus est propter hómines Deus*" – "Great is what the Lord promises us for the future, but far greater is what we recall has already been done for us... Far more incredible is what has already happened: that God died for humankind." In Chagall's *White Crucifixion*, this incredibility is visualized not as a triumph but as a luminous paradox: the dying God, draped in a Jewish *tallit*, becomes the very site where divine solidarity with human suffering is most visible. Christ's glowing body amidst historical darkness reveals what Augustine names as the most astonishing act of divine love, not only promised glory but an already accomplished descent into human anguish. The painting, like the sermon, invites contemplation (*Besinnung*) of a mystery that resists simple comprehension: the death of God is not a theological scandal but the beginning of new life. In Chagall's rendering, death bears not the weight of defeat, but of a radiant presence – God's unfathomable decision to suffer *with* and *for* – a visual echo of Augustine's awe-filled words. The *iam factum est* – "it has already been done" – shines not as a memory sealed in time, but as a luminous wound still open to the world, revealing that the most *incredibile* act of God is not that He *will* raise the dead, but that He *has already* chosen to die for us all. What could be more incredible? And yet this incredibility, far from closing the book of faith, opens it anew with each generation, each wound, and each cry. In Chagall's painting, the white radiance is not a halo of resolution, but the lingering light of that divine "already," still bleeding into history.

God teaches us not only through the spoken word but by giving Himself. In the Eucharist, *Λόγος* becomes *teacher* (ὁ Διδάσκαλος) and *nourishment* (τροφή), *wisdom* (σοφία) and *life* (ζωή). He gives us not only

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a lesson but Himself as the food that forms, enlightens, and raises us into communion. The *λογικὴ λατρεία*, our "reasonable worship," is not a cold intellectual assent but a worship conformed to the *Λόγος*: it is the worship of those who receive and are thereby transformed.

God, Who is truth and gift, forms us from within. The Eucharist is the place where God feeds us with Himself – *cibus viatorum*, the food of those on the way (*unterwegs*) – and in this nourishment, the Word enters our flesh. As the ancient *Lauda Sion* proclaims in the *Corpus Christi* liturgy: "*Ecce panis angelorum, factus cibus viatorum: vere panis filiorum.*" "Behold the bread of angels, made the food of pilgrims: truly the bread of the children." In receiving Him, we are shaped into disciples who not only understand (*begreifen*) but are also seized (*ergriffen*) by the power of the Word made flesh. Our worship becomes the life that thinks, speaks, and loves in truth.

The unveiling of truth – the *ἀλήθεια* that nourishes and transforms – is never exhausted. It does not age, fade, or settle into certainty. It will always be new because it is not a *concept* (*ἔννοια, Begriff*) but a *living presence* (*ζῶσα παρουσία*). The contrast between thought held vs. presence encountered, mental containment vs. relational unveiling, highlights the movement from static understanding to dynamic encounter. It draws us ever further, ever deeper, into the radiance of divine life. For that which we come to know today will remain forever new. It distills the very rhythm of the Resurrection: not a conclusion, but a beginning that never ends.

When theology speaks of the last things, we often turn to the Greek term *ἔσχατα*, from which we derive *eschatology,* the study of the final realities: death, judgment, heaven, and hell. Yet the Latin tradition offers this reflection a surprising twist. The title of the treatise is *De novissimis*, literally, *On the Newest Things*. What is "last" in sequence is also what is most new in essence. This is not a mere linguistic curiosity but a profound theological affirmation: Christ, in Whom all things find their end (*τέλος*), is also the one Who makes all things new – the *novissima*. He is not outdated, distant, or lost to the past. On the contrary, He is ever-present, ever-new – *semper novus*. The *novissima* are not behind us but ahead, drawing us forward with the freshness of the Spirit.

In this light, the end is not exhaustion or closure, but renewal. The final things are the most up-to-date things. The *ἔσχατον* is not an expiry but a bursting forth. Christ is the one who, even at the end of time, remains the most contemporary presence: *Ego sum Alpha et Omega... Ecce nova facio omnia:Ἰδοὺ καινὰ ποιῶ πάντα* (Rev 21: 5). To contemplate

the *novissima* is to contemplate the radiance of what is to come, not as repetition or return, but as the unveiling of a fullness that has always been waiting to be born. The paradox of the end is that it is the beginning of what never ages.

Before the soaring notes of Händel awaken our ears to resurrectional triumph, we are invited to dwell in the mystery of longing – Christ's longing. "*Desiderio desideravi hoc Pascha manducare vobiscum antequam patiar*" (Lk 22: 15): "With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer." These words open the door to a depth of divine yearning that stretches far beyond the confines of the Upper Room. The phrase – both in its Latin and Greek forms (*ἐπιθυμίᾳ ἐπεθύμησα*) – is a Semitic idiom that intensifies emotion, but its etymological roots evoke even more. *Desiderium*, from *de-sidus*, "from the stars," suggests a celestial ache, a longing born of absence, as though the heavens themselves were leaning in toward this moment. In Greek, *ἐπιθυμία* captures a reaching desire, a holy yearning, no longer a distortion of will but the will of God itself, bending low to embrace the world.

This is no ordinary hunger. It is a cosmic desire: Christ's Paschal longing not merely to share a meal but to become the meal, the Lamb slain, the bread broken, the blood poured out. The Last Supper is not a mere farewell gesture. It is the beginning of a new creation. His longing is not for an event but for communion, not for memory but for presence. *A-dieu* is not a goodbye that signals departure, but a giving-over *to God*. It is the language of offering, trust, and love that allows us to remain more deeply. In the Eucharist, Christ's *a-dieu* becomes an abiding presence: a farewell that does not remove but transfigures.

Here, the Liturgy is born – not as a mere recollection, not as ritualized nostalgia (as longing for the past), but as *λόγος* in act, the embodied Word offered and enacted: *λογικὴ λατρεία* – the rational, responsive worship of the body, both Christ's and ours. This is not worship from afar, but participation in the very movement of Christ, in the very logic of his Incarnation, death, and rising. And so the Church, from that moment on, does not remember a distant Christ. She encounters him. *Desiderio desideravi* becomes the rhythm of the Eucharistic heart. The liturgy is the continuation of Incarnation, a divine *Vollzug*, a performative enactment of love that will not rest until all have tasted the joy of the Paschal mystery.

Thus, when we hear St. Paul cry, "*Pascha nostrum immolatus est Christus, ἐτύθη τὸ πάσχα ἡμῶν, Χριστό*" – "Christ, our Pascha, has been sacrificed" – we are not merely asserting death. We are proclaiming

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passage: a crossing over from suffering into glory, from longing into fulfillment. In this way, the liturgical celebration is not a retreat from history's wounds but their very redemption. It is the communion of heaven and earth, not merely a fellowship but a union through shared gift. To be in communion is to be drawn into one life, one reality, one mystery. Communion is both the path and the form of union, the act of becoming *unum*; *κοινωνία* is the shared life that leads into *ἔνωσις* (union), which is *θέωσις*, the mystical union with God. It is the mystery of heaven and earth brought together, not in theory, but in presence: in Christ, with Him, and through Him, in us (*per ipsum, et cum ipso, et in ipso*). This communion begins not with brass instruments but with the whispered longing of a God who desires to dwell with His people. Only now, in this space of divine desire made flesh, can the trumpet sound. And Händel's exultant music, when it comes, does not begin a new song. It continues one already begun in the yearning heart of Christ.

Händel, *Il Trionfo del Tempo e del Disinganno*

In *Il Trionfo del Tempo e del Disinganno* (1707), Händel stages a spiritual drama to a libretto by Cardinal Benedetto Pamphili. The allegorical figures – Beauty, Pleasure, Time, and Truth (*Disinganno*) – engage in a struggle in which fleeting splendor must ultimately bow before the enduring light of what is real. The music swells with the ache of relinquishment and the quiet majesty of unveiled truth. Händel gives voice to the soul's slow awakening. In one of the libretto's most poignant moments, *Disinganno* sings: "*Più non cura la bellezza / Chi ben vede ove sen va*"–"He no longer cares for beauty, who clearly sees where he is going." Here, truth is not a doctrine but a vision, something revealed only through the relinquishing of illusion. In our modern context, *disillusionment* often implies despair. Simone Weil challenges this: "Illusions are false gods; to consent to their disappearance is to consent to truth." For Weil, as for Pamphili, the stripping away of illusion is not loss but grace. It is a spiritual turning from illusion to the enduring light of *veritas*, echoing the New Testament's *ἀλήθεια*, the truth that sets us free (*ἡ ἀλήθεια ἐλευθερώσει ὑμᾶς*, Jn 8: 32): the soul's slow turning toward what is. In the Greek tradition, truth is *ἀλήθεια* – not a static statement, but an unveiling, a disclosure of what longs to come into the light. *Ἀλήθεια* is the lifting of the veil (*λήθη*, forgetfulness or concealment), the revealing of what has always been present, waiting to be seen. Truth is what comes to light when we no longer resist

the light. Resurrection, then, is not the reversal of disillusionment, but its transfiguration: it is the moment when illusion falls away, and what remains is not absence, but presence.

White Crucifixion captures this theological tension, the moment (*καιρός, Augenblick*) of painful unveiling. The Jewish Christ, luminous in suffering, does not overcome darkness by force but transfigures it from within. Chagall's Christ does not dazzle but bears – silent, radiant, unlooked-for. He is the truth that cannot be manufactured, only revealed. His triumph is not through domination, but through endurance; not beauty untouched, but beauty transfigured by suffering. Truth no longer veiled by time, but made radiant in love. He is the unveiled truth, not dazzling, but dwelling. And in the light of the Resurrection, *Disinganno* is no longer bitter exposure but sacred unveiling: a grace that reveals the *Λόγος* at the heart of what endures. Easter becomes the true *trionfo* of unveiled life. In the Easter dawn, the *ἀλήθεια* of God rises not to overwhelm us but to meet us exactly where the illusion breaks.

To read a work of art – be it a text, a painting, or a piece of music – is not to decode a hidden cipher or extract a pre-existing moral lesson but to enter into a dialogical event where meaning is unveiled through participation. In this hermeneutic encounter, understanding arises not by mastering the object but by dwelling with it, letting it speak. As Rilke inspires us, we are perhaps here not to define, but to *say* – to bring things into the open (*Ins-Offene-bringen*) more deeply than they could ever dream of being. The task of hermeneutics is thus not explanatory but disclosive. When we engage artistically and theologically with Händel's aria, Chagall's *White Crucifixion*, or the poetic intensity of the Bible, we do not simply learn *about* suffering or redemption, we are drawn into (*hineingezogen*) the space in which these become possible. Gadamer's fusion of horizons and Heidegger's *Ereignis* remind us that meaning emerges only in the openness of encounter, not in the security of possession. The work of art, in its autonomy and alterity, addresses us not with answers but with a call to dwell, respond, and be transformed. This is crucial for theology. To think the mystery of God – so utterly concrete that it enters flesh – is to read the world not as an object to be grasped, but as a work of art that invites participation. The Incarnation is not a static datum, but the unfolding of divine presence in the fragility of time. And the Resurrection is not the reversal of suffering, but its luminous transfiguration. In this light, the hermeneutic act becomes a theological gesture: to listen, be addressed, and open ourselves to the *Λόγος* not as explanation, but

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as an event. Through art, we are not mere spectators (*Beobachter*) of the divine mystery – we dwell in its horizon. Interpreting such works means participating in their unfolding and stepping into a space where meaning becomes incarnate.

Resurrection as revelation: from *Weltgeschehen* (world-history) to *Heilsgeschichte* (the history of salvation)

The Resurrection does not take place within history. It transforms history itself. It is not an event added to the sequence of world affairs (*Weltgeschehen*), but the disclosure of God's own history of salvation (*Heilsgeschichte*), into which we are invited not as disengaged spectators, but as participants. At the heart of Catholic teaching, hope – woven inseparably with faith and love – is not merely a virtue (ἀρετή), but a theological grace (χάρις): a gift, freely given, flowing from the mystery of divine generosity. "From His fullness we have all received – grace upon grace" (Jn 1: 16). Such superabounding grace does not impose; it invites. It longs to be welcomed. We are called to open ourselves to the revelation of God and to the quiet outpouring of His mercy. This grace does not leave us untouched. It empowers. It bestows upon us a strength not our own, a holy power that enables us to remain open in the face of mystery. And in this gesture of receptivity, salvation does not delay. It is already being born within us. "To all who received Him, who believed in His name, He gave the power to become children of God" (Jn 1: 12). To be saved is to be born anew – cradled in the tender, trembling dawn of divine life.

Christ is risen – *Χριστὸς ἀνέστη*. The response comes not merely as confirmation, but as revelation: *Ἀληθῶς ἀνέστη – truly* He is risen. In the word ἀληθῶς, we hear more than assent; we hear the pulse of *ἀληθεύειν* – to live and speak the truth, to let what is hidden be disclosed. The Resurrection is not a doctrine to be grasped. It is a reality that grasps us, a truth that unveils. It opens the tomb not only of Christ but of our own hearts. It is the *λόγος* breaking open our silence. The Resurrection is not an event locked in the past, but the eternal act of divine *ἀλήθεια*, the unveiling of life in the face of death, of God at the heart of our wounded world, beautifully holding together the divine *paradox of presence*. It is the moment when the tomb becomes a threshold, and truth is no longer an idea but a presence that moves within us.

Christ is risen not only *for* us but *within* us. In that rising, the silence of the grave is broken open by the Word who speaks. He is risen,

indeed, risen into us as the truth that frees, the light that reveals, the love that can be crucified but will never die. We are called to firmly believe that time and eternity belong to Christ. He is the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the Risen Lord, to whom be glory and dominion forever. In His Resurrection, Christ opens for us the way into a new world – *κόσμος καινός* – and He Himself *introduces* us there (*εἰσ-άγω*, *intro-ducere*), for He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life (*ἡ ὁδὸς καὶ ἡ ἀλήθεια καὶ ἡ ζωή*, Jn 14: 6). The stone that seals the grave of our despair and unbelief is not removed by our efforts. It is God's work (*τὸ ἔργον τοῦ Θεοῦ*, *opus Dei*). Our task is to allow ourselves to be led (*Leitenlassen*), to be brought in (*Einführenlassen*), to be drawn into this new life (*Bringenlassen*) that has already begun in Him.

The Resurrection is not the conclusion of the story but the radical-ization of divine Revelation. "Read Moses and the prophets," Jesus says. Believe. That is the request and the gift. When He entrusts the message of Resurrection to women, He does not simply challenge so-cial expectations. He discloses what is essential: *faith*. It would have been easier to believe the apostles. Yet the point is not what we think of *who* speaks, but *what is spoken*, and whether we dare to believe it. God often chooses what is weakest and disregarded by the world (Paul's scandal of the Cross, *σκάνδαλον τοῦ σταυροῦ*, *scandalum crucis*). So too the prophets, who often spoke words they themselves struggled to believe. Their greatness lay in announcing what they could barely comprehend, trusting that it came from God. This is the tension we find in the divine teaching. Revelation is happening, the revelation of Revelation. The question is whether we will listen. And yet, even in this fragility of faith, divine glory does not withdraw. In the *Exsultet*, the Easter Proclamation, we are invited into the joy of the earth itself: "Be glad, let the earth be glad, as glory floods her, ablaze with light from her eternal King." Even amidst war, catastrophe, and the deep-est shadows, this glory still descends. It shone at Golgotha – precisely there – when Christ was crucified between criminals.

The glory of God does not wait for human worthiness. It diffuses itself (*bonum diffusivum sui*) through brokenness, illuminating the world's brutal facticity (*Weltgeschehen*) and transforming it into salva-tion history. But this requires another kind of vision: the dialectic of seeing. We must learn to see that what seems most ordinary – earth, time, wounds – is already being flooded with divine radiance. As the Good Friday intercessions proclaim, it is this glory that has the power "to cleanse the world of all errors, banish disease, drive out hunger, unlock prisons, loosen fetters, grant to travelers safety, to pilgrims

return, health to the sick, and salvation to the dying." To the Risen Christ belong time and eternity. He will not simply be with us at the end – He is the End that gives meaning to everything. And with Him, the end is not a ceasing, but a new beginning (*ein neuer Anfang*).

Coda: A hermeneutics of black and white – resurrection as a hermeneutic event

To live in the horizon of Resurrection is not to flee the blackness of suffering, nor to naïvely bask in the whiteness of hope. Rather, it is to remain in the space between, where lament and promise meet, where the Crucified and the Risen are one. *White Crucifixion* does not offer resolution, but revelation. The stark contrast of black and white is not an aesthetic device; it is a theological grammar of human existence. In the luminous whiteness of the suffering Christ, we are drawn into the paradox of divine presence: not a glory that eclipses pain, but one that transfigures it from within. The same Cross on which Jesus was hanged – the very sign erected to mock and humiliate Him – becomes, in the light of Resurrection, the most poignant sign of victory. It is the victory not of force but of love. The victory of mercy over mockery, of divine patience over the cruelty that sought to extinguish Him. In *White Crucifixion*, Chagall chooses to paint this Cross not as distant theology but as a way of dealing with his own suffering. Upon this Cross converges all the anger and meanness of humankind, all our failures to love, all our cruelty when love is refused. And yet, from within this violence, another reality shines forth: the immensity of God's love for humankind. The Cross becomes, paradoxically, the gate of heaven, the very threshold through which all who believe may enter into life. The ladder leaning toward the Cross evokes Jacob's dream in Genesis 28, a ladder set up between heaven and earth. It is as if Chagall were saying: this is the new Bethel, the house of God, and the gate of heaven (cf. Gen 28: 17). The ladder that once led to an unseen realm now leads to the Crucified One, who has made Himself the bridge between suffering and glory. The Cross, thus, is not only the site of death but the ascent toward life. It is not a spectacle to be gazed upon but a mystery to be entered – one that draws us in, calls us to dwell, and invites transformation. The ladder does not simply point upward; it invites us to climb, with trembling trust, into the heart of divine mercy.

In *White Crucifixion*, Chagall does not offer simple answers but instead presents his visionary theology. He merges Jewish and Christian

symbols to underscore the shared human condition and the hope for divine illumination that cuts through even the deepest shadows. This painting, in its complexity, serves as an artistic *midrash*, urging us to ponder the mystery of divine light in a world often overcome by darkness. It resonates as a powerful meditation on hope, resilience, and the enduring search for meaning in the face of profound suffering. The tension between black and white in *White Crucifixion* offers not only a way of seeing the painting but a horizon for interpreting our own experience of suffering and hope. Black becomes the space of lament – the burning villages, the fleeing figures, the disoriented silence. It asks us not to look away, not to resolve too quickly, but to dwell in the truth of affliction. White becomes the space of promise, a quiet, luminous presence that does not erase suffering but transfigures it. The whiteness of Christ, radiant yet wounded, opens a space where hope can speak gently without overpowering the real. This contrast does not invite easy interpretation but calls us to remain in the tension – to stay, like Mary, at the foot of the cross. Not to explain but to bear witness. Not to overcome the paradox but to live within it. We are summoned to hold black and white together – death and resurrection, lament and promise, despair and hope – without turning away from either. This is the space of faith. Such remaining is not passive. It is a call to *bear witness to hope*: to dwell with those who suffer and to carry the quiet light of the Resurrection as a sign of what may yet be. It is the invitation to *practice resurrection*: not only to proclaim a future promise but to live it now – to seek life amid death, to trust that God's transformative power is at work, even when hidden. Unlike a human promise, which may or may not be fulfilled, God's ἐπαγγελία is performative: it brings forth what it proclaims. It is the space where announcement is already participation in fulfillment, where *disclosure* is not after the fact but constitutive of the reality of divine presence. We are summoned to *see the hidden Christ*: not dazzling but present, not triumphant in the world's terms, but unveiled in the fragility of love.

Resurrection is not merely a truth to be believed, but a horizon that calls us to live differently. It fulfills the Incarnation not by cancelling the Cross but by opening it. White, as the color of resurrection, becomes not an escape from blackness but its illumination from within. It transforms the painting from a depiction of suffering into a proclamation of hope. And we, like Mary, are called to remain within the paradox, within the tension, within the silence, trusting that Resurrection will have the final word.

Leszek Marius Jakoniuk
Uniwersytet w Białymstoku

(iD) 0000-0001-6571-3923

Sprawozdanie z działalności Katedry Teologii Katolickiej Uniwersytetu w Białymstoku w roku akademickim 2024/2025

Kadra Katedry Teologii Katolickiej

Na Uniwersytecie w Białymstoku w katedrze Katedry Teologii Katolickiej w roku akademickim 2024/2025 zatrudnionych było trzech pracowników. Wśród nich jest dwóch pracowników naukowo-dydaktycznych. Na stanowisku profesora nadzwyczajnego zatrudniony był ks. dr hab. Andrzej Proniewski na całym etacie, który jest także kierownikiem Katedry Teologii Katolickiej. Ksiądz dr Tadeusz Kasabuła był zatrudniony na stanowisku adiunkta w wymiarze pół etatu. Oprócz pracowników naukowo-dydaktycznych na stanowisku pracownika administracyjnego w Katedrze Teologii Katolickiej był zatrudniony ks. mgr lic. Leszek M. Jakoniuk na całym etacie. Siedziba Katedry Teologii Katolickiej mieści się przy ul. Zamenhofa 15 w Białymstoku, w pomieszczeniach należących do Uniwersytetu w Białymstoku.

Działalność dydaktyczna

W ramach działalności dydaktycznej pracownicy KTK przeprowadzili następujące wykłady:

ks. dr hab. Andrzej Proniewski, prof. UwB (210 godzin)
– seminarium licencjackie (50 godz.), cz. 1 i cz. 2, Wydział Nauk o Edukacji;
– seminarium magisterskie (50 godz.), cz. 1 i cz. 2, Wydział Nauk o Edukacji;

- seminarium magisterskie (25 godz.), cz. 3 i cz. 4, Wydział Nauk o Edukacji;
- seminarium magisterskie (25 godz.), cz. 3 i cz. 4, Wydział Nauk o Edukacji;
- seminarium magisterskie (60 godz.), cz. 1 i cz. 2, Wydział Studiów Kulturowych.

ks. dr Tadeusz Kasabuła, adiunkt (30 godzin)
- wykład: *O kondycji kulturowej Europy przełomu XX/XXI wieku* (30 godz.), Wydział Studiów Kulturowych.

Konferencje naukowe

Katedra Teologii Katolickiej UwB w okresie sprawozdawczym była współorganizatorem konferencji naukowych:
- międzynarodowa konferencja naukowa „Synodalność w Kościele. Fundamenty biblijno-historyczno-teologiczno-prawne" (Białystok, 16 listopada 2024) (organizator);
- „Pielgrzymi nadziei – Jubileusz Zwyczajny 2025 roku w perspektywie duszpasterskiej" – konferencja naukowa (Białystok, 11 stycznia 2025).

Reports

Działalność naukowo-badawcza

Pracownicy Katedry Teologii Katolickiej Uniwersytetu w Białymstoku w roku sprawozdawczym opublikowali następujące publikacje naukowe:

ks. dr hab. Andrzej Proniewski, prof. UwB
Monografie:
- *Kulturowo-etyczne implikacje międzynarodowego prawa wojennego*, Białystok 2025, ss. 142.

Rozdziały książek:
- *W kierunku teleologii dziecka*, w: E. Kryńska (red.), *Dziecko w historii. Między godnością a zniewoleniem. Wychowanie od Bolesława Chrobrego do współczesności*, t. 3, Białystok 2025, w druku.

Artykuły naukowe:
- *Theological and Empirical Knowledge in the Discovery of the Eucharistic Presence. The Example of Sokółka*, „Rocznik Teologii Katolickiej", 23 (2024), s. 47-63;
- *Sakrament chrztu świętego źródłem t r i a m u n e r a C h r i s t i w nauczaniu papieża Franciszka*, „Studia Teologii Dogmatycznej", 10 (2024), s. 80-97;

– *The Contribution of Eugenio Corecco to Understanding the Synodality of the Church*, „Verbum Vitae", 2 (2025) 43, s. 413-430.
Publikacje popularyzujące naukę:
– *Nasz Arcybiskup*, „Drogi Miłosierdzia", 11 (2024) 171, s. 8-10;
– *Nadzieja*, „Drogi Miłosierdzia", 2 (2025) 174, s. 14-15.

ks. dr Tadeusz Kasabuła

Artykuły naukowe:
– *The Genesis and Evolution of Non-collegiate Canon Chapters at the Cathedral Chapter in Vilnius (1388-1945) and in Białystok (1945-1993)*, „Rocznik Teologii Katolickiej", 23 (2024), s. 79-92;
– *Nauczanie prawd wiary w diecezji wileńskiej w dobie reform i zmierzchu Rzeczypospolitej Obojga Narodów*, „Studia Teologii Dogmatycznej", 10 (2024), s. 29-40.

ks. mgr lic. Leszek M. Jakoniuk

Artykuły naukowe:
– *Paryska Katedra Notre-Dame. Kilka słów na temat tłumaczenia tekstów Laurenta Ulricha, arcybiskupa Paryża (La cathédrale Notre-Dame de Paris. Libres propos sur la traduction des textes de Monseigneur Laurent Ulrich, archevêque de Paris)*, „Studia Teologii Dogmatycznej", 10 (2024), s. 119-123.
Tłumaczenia tekstów na język polski:
– Laurent Ulrich, *Słowa wdzięczności wypowiedziane po przemówieniu prezydenta Republiki Francuskiej (sobota, 7 grudnia 2024 r., Notre-Dame de Paris)*, tłum. Leszek M. Jakoniuk, „Studia Teologii Dogmatycznej", 10 (2024), s. 124-125;
– Laurent Ulrich, *Homilia abp. Laurenta Ulricha – nabożeństwo ponownego otwarcia paryskiej katedry Notre-Dame (sobota, 7 grudnia 2024 r., Notre-Dame de Paris)*, tłum. Leszek M. Jakoniuk, „Studia Teologii Dogmatycznej", 10 (2024), s. 126-127;
– Laurent Ulrich, *Homilia abp. Laurenta Ulricha – msza z obrzędem konsekracji ołtarza w paryskiej katedrze Notre-Dame (niedziela, 8 grudnia 2024 r., Notre-Dame de Paris)*, tłum. Leszek M. Jakoniuk, „Studia Teologii Dogmatycznej", 10 (2024), s. 128-131.

Udział w konferencjach, zjazdach naukowych i wydarzeniach kulturalno-naukowych, referaty

W roku akademickim 2024/2025 pracownicy Katedry Teologii Katolickiej oprócz uczestniczenia w wydarzeniach współorganizowanych

przez KTK wzięli udział w konferencjach, sympozjach, zjazdach, prelekcjach, wernisażach, wystawach:

ks. dr hab. Andrzej Proniewski, prof. UwB
- konferencja naukowa „Kompleksowa ekspedycja jaćwieska, czyli o uprawianiu nauki bez widoków na punkty" (Ełk, Muzeum Historyczne, 7 listopada 2024), udział jako członek Komisji Nauk Humanistycznych przy Oddziale PAN w Olsztynie i w Białymstoku z siedzibą w Olsztynie;
- międzynarodowa konferencja naukowa „Synodalność w Kościele. Fundamenty biblijno-historyczno-teologiczno-prawne" (Białystok, Centrum Wystawienniczo-Konferencyjne, 16 listopada 2024), otwarcie konferencji i merytoryczne wprowadzenie;
- konferencja naukowa „Pielgrzymi nadziei – Jubileusz Zwyczajny 2025 roku w perspektywie duszpasterskiej" (Białystok, 11 stycznia 2025), członek komitetu organizacyjnego, prowadzenie konferencji;
- XXVI Międzynarodowy Kongres Mariologiczno-Maryjny „Jubileusz i synodalność – Kościół mający oblicze i praktykę maryjną" (Rzym, 3-7 września 2025), referat: „Komunia – Uczestnictwo – Misja – wymiana darów pomiędzy Maryją Matką Kościoła (*Maria Mater Ecclesiae*) i Kościołem Synodalnym Matką (*Ecclesia Mater Synodalis*)";
- konferencja naukowa „Wokół chrześcijańskiej nadziei" (Gniezno, 15-17 września 2025), udział zgodnie ze statutem TTD;
- konferencja naukowa „Wokół zagadnienia wolności religijnej – perspektywa fundamentalno-teologiczna" (Opole, 17-19 września 2025), udział zgodnie ze statutem STF;
- konferencja naukowa „Potrzeba, tworzenie i działalność diecezjalnego zespołu ds. formacji prezbiterów" (Częstochowa, 23-24 września 2025), udział.

ks. dr Tadeusz Kasabuła
- wystawa „Dziedzictwo do życia przywrócone" w kościele parafialnym pw. św. Agnieszki w Goniądzu w ramach obchodów jubileuszu 600-lecia parafii i 100-lecia budowy kościoła parafialnego (Goniądz, 9-29 listopada 2024), organizacja, kustosz wystawy;
- wystawa „Dziedzictwo do życia przywrócone" w kościele parafialnym pw. św. Kazimierza w Białymstoku (Białystok, 30 listopada – 15 grudnia 2024), organizacja, kustosz wystawy;

- konferencja naukowa „1000-lecie koronacji królewskich w katedrze gnieźnieńskiej" (Gniezno, 3-5 kwietnia 2025), udział, głos w dyskusji;
- wernisaż wystawy „Wilno – Kraków (1925-2025). 100 lat stołecznych prowincji kościelnych na kartach pocztowych dwudziestolecia międzywojennego" w ramach Nocy Muzeów 2025 (Białystok, 17-18 maja 2025), organizacja;
- wernisaż wystawy „Jan Styka – portrety" (białostocka premiera) w ramach Nocy Muzeów 2025 (Białystok, 17-18 maja 2025), organizacja;
- wernisaż wystawy „Ocalone od zapomnienia. Wileński rodowód Kościoła białostockiego" w ramach Nocy Muzeów 2025 (Białystok, 17-18 maja 2025), organizacja;
- międzynarodowa konferencja naukowa „Otoczmy troską życie" w ramach VII Dni Godności Życia (Białystok, 5-6 września 2025), współorganizacja.

ks. mgr lic. Leszek M. Jakoniuk

- konferencja „«Serce Miłości»: duchowe i społeczne przesłanie encykliki papieża Franciszka *Dilexit Nos"* (Białystok, 6 grudnia 2024), prelegent;
- cykl konferencji popularyzujących naukę poświęconych głównym prawdom wiary „Credimus. Taka jest nasza wiara, taka jest wiara Kościoła" (Białystok, 19 stycznia – 15 czerwca 2025), prelegent;
- cykl konferencji popularyzujących naukę „Konferencje poświęcone katechizmowej nauce o sakramencie namaszczenia chorych" (Białystok, 3-10 lutego 2025), prelegent;
- konferencja naukowa „Katecheza w Polsce – nowa rzeczywistość, nowa szansa" (Pelplin, 20-22 maja 2025), uczestnik;
- konferencja naukowa „W trosce o skuteczną katechizację" (Skorzeszyce, 8-10 września 2025), uczestnik;
- konferencja naukowa „Nadzieja zawieść nie może (por. Rz 5,5). W poszukiwaniu perspektyw działalności edukacyjnej i katechetycznej Kościoła katolickiego w Polsce" (Porszewice, 19-18 września 2025), uczestnik.

Studia podyplomowe

Katedra Teologii Katolickiej, analizując dynamiczne przemiany społeczne, kulturowe i technologiczne, zauważyła, iż współczesne duszpasterstwo potrzebuje nowych kompetencji. Stąd też w roku akademickim 2024/2025 pracownicy KTK podjęli prace, które doprowadziły

do sfinalizowania opracowania pełnej koncepcji, programu oraz dokumentacji niezbędnej do otwarcia nowych dwusemestralnych studiów podyplomowych pod nazwą „Duszpasterstwo i współczesne wyzwania Kościoła".

Studia te mają na celu przygotowanie duchownych do skutecznej posługi w XXI wieku, podnosząc ich kwalifikacje oraz wyposażając w umiejętności niezbędne do mierzenia się z aktualnymi wyzwaniami Kościoła katolickiego. Uczestnicy studiów zapoznają się z zagadnieniami teologii praktycznej, problematyką społeczno-kulturową współczesnego duszpasterstwa oraz narzędziami sprzyjającymi bardziej efektywnej pracy parafialnej. Program studiów obejmuje sześć kluczowych bloków tematycznych, wprowadzających do zagadnień biblijno-teologicznych, psychologiczno-pedagogicznych, duszpasterskich, społecznych, prawnych i historyczno-kulturowych. Studia podyplomowe zostały umiejscowione w trzech dyscyplinach: nauki teologiczne, nauki społeczne i nauki humanistyczne. Efekty uczenia się zostały zdefiniowane z uwzględnieniem realnego zapotrzebowania otoczenia społeczno-gospodarczego. W procesie konsultacji wykorzystano opinie interesariuszy zewnętrznych, jakimi jest lokalna społeczność Podlasia wchodząca w struktury archidiecezji białostockiej, diecezji łomżyńskiej, ełckiej i drohiczyńskiej. W definiowaniu efektów uczenia się uwzględniono także zapotrzebowanie potencjalnych słuchaczy w formie wypełnionej ankiety opracowanej przez socjologów z Uniwersytetu w Białymstoku. Po przyjęciu stosownej uchwały Senatu UwB studia podyplomowe zostały włączone do oferty edukacyjnej tej uczelni. Ich pierwsza edycja rozpocznie się w roku akademickim 2025/2026.

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Wydawnictwo

Nakładem Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu w Białymstoku w ramach działalności KTK ukazały się w roku akademickim 2024/2025 następujące pozycje:
- „Rocznik Teologii Katolickiej", Białystok 2024, t. 23 (40 punktów);
- „Studia Teologii Dogmatycznej", Białystok 2024, t. 10 (20 punktów).

Seria wydawnicza Katedry Teologii Katolickiej: *Teologia (w) dialogu*:
- Tom 1: A. Proniewski, *Kulturowo-etyczne implikacje międzynarodowego prawa wojennego*, Białystok 2025, ss. 142.
- Tom 2: D. Adamski, *Porównanie technologii przetwarzania wielowątkowego na platformie .NET na przykładzie aplikacji przeszukującej zasoby Internetu*, Białystok 2025, ss. 124.

Projekty

Katedra Teologii Katolickiej Uniwersytetu w Białymstoku realizuje projekt „Synodalność w Kościele. Konferencja międzynarodowa «Historia i Perspektywy»". Projekt został przyjęty do finansowania w drodze konkursu. Dofinansowanie w kwocie 31 405 zł ze środków budżetu państwa zostało przyznane przez Ministra Nauki i Szkolnictwa Wyższego w ramach programu „Doskonała nauka II". Realizacja projektu: 31 grudnia 2023 r. – 30 grudnia 2025 r.

Działalność międzynarodowa

Zainicjowanie, uruchomienie i kontynuacja projektu teologiczno-katechetycznego kursu dokształcającego w Wilnie na Wydziale Ekonomiczno-Informatycznym Filii Uniwersytetu w Białymstoku w Wilnie we współpracy z Katedrą Teologii Katolickiej w ramach podpisanych umów pomiędzy Archidiecezją Wileńską a Uniwersytetem w Białymstoku (rok akademicki 2024/2025).

Współpraca naukowa z Wydziałem Teologicznym w Lugano w ramach międzynarodowego projektu *Opera omnia di Eugenio Corecco*.

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Authors

ARMITAGE DUANE, is a Professor of Philosophy at The University of Scranton.
ORCID 0000-0002-8645-4921

CHMIELEWSKI MIROSŁAW, Hab., PhD, assistant professor. Affiliation: Faculty of Theology, John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin. Professional experience: lectures on catechesis, catechetical didactics, andragogy, social media in the transmission of faith, interpersonal communication, the Church's teaching on media, the image of the Church in the media, media education, public relations, interpersonal communication, media spirituality, and scientific research methodology. Research interests: pastoral theology, media theology, social media and AI, religious communication in digital culture, media education, catechetical didactics, adult education, pedagogical bibliography. Research on: methods of communicating faith in media culture, the place of media education in evangelization, the media image of the Church, drama methods in proclaiming the word of God (catechesis, religious education, preaching), social media in the Church's mission, Church communication in crisis situations. Research interests: pastoral theology, media theology, media education, social media and AI, religious communication in digital culture, catechetical didactics, adult education. Consultant of the Council for Social Communication of the Polish Episcopal Conference; member of the Media Commission of the Conference of Major Superiors of Religious Orders in Poland, the Polish Society for Social Communication, Polish Society for Media Education; co-founder of the Association of Polish Catechists, co-founder and member of the Board (2007-2016) of the NATAN Teachers' Association.
ORCID 0000-0002-6903-479X

DREWICZ MATEUSZ, undergraduate student at the Faculty of Archaeology of the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, research-technical specialist at the Faculty of Archaeology of the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań. Main fields of research: Bronze Age and Iron Age archaeology in Central and Eastern Europe, public archaeology, national and international security, identity in historical policy.
ORCID 0009-0002-7712-3386

GOLISZEK PIOTR TOMASZ, Prof. of KUL, Hab., PfD, assistant professor. Affiliation: Faculty of Theology, John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin. Professional experience: e.g. lectures in catechetics, foundations of didactics, didactics of catechesis, methodology of catechesis, special catechetics, organisation of catechesis in Poland, teacher education, and educational law. Intercultural brokering: broker in an educational environment, Social Communication Studies and Media. Research interests: pastoral theology, catechetics, realist-dialogical personalism, personalist hermeneutics, catechetical hermeneutics, personalist pedagogy, philosophy of education, formation of catechists, theology of pilgrimage, didactics of catechesis, pastoral ministry for teachers. Research areas: personalist aspect of catechesis, personalist education, dialogue in education, moral education, personalised medicine. Expert role: Expert in the evaluation of Religious Education curricula and catechetical textbooks for the Commission for Catholic Education of the Polish Bishops' Conference. Membership: Association of Polish Catechists, Scientific Society of the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin, Lublin Scientific Society, Lublin Archdiocesan Catechetical Council, European Forum for Religious Education in Schools, and the Scientific Council of the series Education – Media – Theology.
ORCID 0000-0002-3821-0439

GULTOM JONI MANUMPAK PARULIAN, is the Head of the Doctor of Theology Program at REAL Theological Seminary, Batam, Republic of Indonesia. He holds a Doctor of Theology and a Master of Theology, with academic expertise in Church Growth Theology and Pastoral Studies. His scholarly interests focus on ecclesial development, spiritual formation, and pastoral leadership in contemporary contexts. He has authored several publications, including *Transformative Theology in the Digital Era: A Qualitative Exploration of Generation Z's Perception of the Fullness of Life in Christ (Colossians 2: 6-7)*, *Pastoral Strategies in Forming Leadership Generation 'Z'*, and *Protestant Church Strategy in Building Spiritual Identity for Generation Alpha*.
ORCID 0000-0001-6195-5781

HAGGERTY DANIEL, is a Professor of Philosophy at the University of Scranton and head of the Special Jesuit Liberal Arts (SLJLA) program.
ORCID 0009-0002-0218-415X

HAREFA OTIELI, is a full-time lecturer in the Doctor of Theology Program at REAL Theological Seminary. He holds a Doctor of Theology and a Master of Theology, with specialization in Ethical Theology. His academic work centers on Christian ethics, social engagement, and the church's moral responsibility in contemporary societal challenges. Dr. Harefa has produced several scholarly publications, including *Fruit in the Unfruitful Season: A Case Study of the Indonesian Bethel Church's Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic*, *The Concept of Christ's Redemption in the Perspective of Pentecostal Theology*, and *Human Trafficking at the Gateway of the Archipelago: The Church's Responsibility as a Liberating Community*
ORCID 0000-0002-3034-4264

JAKONIUK LESZEK MARIUS, Rev., was born in 1976. He obtained his a Licentiate of Theology at the Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw. He completed a special course in catechetics (pedagogie de la foi) at the Catholic University of Paris and he completed his third degree doctoral studies at the University of Strasbourg in France. Since 2014, he has worked in the Department of Catholic Theology at the University of Białystok and served as the Managing Editor of the publication Annual of Catholic Theology and as the Managing Editor of Studies on Dogmatic Theology. Member of the Association of Polish Catechists. President of the Mess'AJE Polska Association, which promotes adult biblical catechesis in Poland, Vice Director of the Metropolitan Curia of Białystok's Department of Catechesis. His research interests include: the dimensions of the liturgy and catechesis that are conducive to the growth of the Church as a community, ecclesial identity in a united Europe, subjectivity in intercultural and interfaith dialogue, and adult biblical catechesis. He has authored and co-authored many articles inter alia: *Pedagogical Principles of Culture in Pope Francis' Exhortation "Gaudete et exsultate"* ("Rocznik Teologii Katolickiej" 2023), *Exsultet (wymiar katechetyczny)*, in: *Leksykon katechetyczny* (Kielce 2022), *Les chants de Taizé* (Paris 2021), *Archbishop Edward Kisiel: The "Primary Catechist" of the Diocese* (Białystok 2018), *The French and Polish Versions of the Catechism of the Catholic Church: An Examination of Certain Passages of the Catechism's Teaching on the "Mysterium Ecclesiae" from a Philological and Translational Perspective* (Białystok 2017), *L'Exultet – une catéchèse vécue* (Białystok 2013), *L'Exultet – La Bonne Nouvelle chantée* (Białystok 2012).
ORCID 0000-0001-6571-3923

KASABUŁA TADEUSZ, Rev., PhD, is a priest of the Archdiocese of Białystok. After graduating from the Major Seminary of the Archdiocese of Białystok (AWSD), he obtained his Master in Theology degree from the Catholic University of Lublin (KUL) in 1989 and his Doctorate of Theology degree with a specialization in the History of the Church from the same university in 1996. Since then, he has been a lecturer in the history of the Church at AWSD and the Pontifical Faculty of Theology in Warsaw – Theology Studium in Białystok. Since 1999, he has been an adjunct of the Department of Theology at the University of Białystok. Since 2012, he has served as Director of the Archdiocesan Archives and Museum in Białystok. He has advised approximately 70 masters, diploma, and licentiate theses and is the editor and co-editor of a few selected and independently printed collections. He has published more than 250 academic and popular science articles, reviews, reports, and dictionary and encyclopedic entries. His research focuses on the history of the Catholic Church within the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.
ORCID 0000-0003-3731-5324

KICIŃSKI ANDRZEJ, Prof. of KUL, Hab., PfD, assistant professor. Head of the Department of Specific Catechetics and Contemporary Forms of the Transmission of Faith, Head of the Section of Pastoral Theology and Catechetics, Institute of Theology, John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin. Member and expert of international and national bodies and scholarly societies, among others: the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of the New Evangelization (for the Directory for Catechesis), Équipe Européenne de Catéchèse, Eufres – European Forum for Religious Education in Schools, Associazione Scientifica per il Dialogo Interculturale ed Interreligioso, the Lublin Scientific Society, the Scientific Society of the Catholic University of Lublin, and the Francis de Sales Scientific Society. He serves as an expert for the evaluation of religious education programs and catechetical textbooks at the Commission of Catholic Education of the Conference of the Polish Episcopate. He has published 19 authored and edited books, including: *The Study of Love, Courage and the Cross. 40th Anniversary of the Defence of the Cross at the Agricultural School Complex in Miętne*, Kielce: Jedność 2024. He has published 17 catechisms, among others: *Catechism according to Blessed Edmund Bojanowski*, Dębica: Congregation of the Sisters Servants of the Blessed Virgin Mary Immaculate 2022; Catechisms for the Polish Catholic Mission in Germany, and catechisms used in Christian initiation in the Diocese

of Siedlce. He is the author of 135 scholarly articles and 31 entries in encyclopedias and lexicons. Supervisor of 23 doctoral dissertations and 130 master's theses. Principal investigator and researcher in projects funded by NCBiR and MNiSW, among others: On the Defence of the Cross in Miętne. He conducts research in the fields of catechetics and media education, pedagogy and special catechetics, adult catechesis, catechist formation, Catholic catechisms, and the teaching of Catholic and Orthodox religion in public schools in Europe and Poland.
ORCID 0000-0003-3076-6878

KRÓL JERZY, Doctor of Humanities and Theology. Employed at the Faculty of Social Sciences of the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin, in the Department of Christian Pedagogy and Pedagogical Biography. He served as Rector of the Italian Catholic Mission in Stockholm, studied at the University of London, and conducted research at Stockholm University. The result of this research is the book Determinants of the Contemporary System of Education and Upbringing in Sweden. He is the author of three books and numerous scholarly articles. He has actively participated in academic conferences held in Poland and abroad and has lectured at foreign universities within the Erasmus program.
ORCID 0009-0005-9942-0455

LIPIEC DARIUSZ, Prof. Hab. PfD, is a priest of the Diocese of Siedlce, a professor of pastoral theology at the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin (JPII KUL), and a researcher and educator in the Institute of Theology at JPII KUL. He is a member of the Learned Society of the Catholic University of Lublin, the Polish Society of Pastoralists, the Polish Academy of Sciences, and PosT-Netzwerks der mittel- und osteuropeischäischen Pastoraltheologinnen und Pastoraltheologen. He wrote the monographs *Duszpasterstwo niewidomych i słabowidzących w Polsce. Studium pastoralne* [*Pastoral Care for the Blind and Visually Impaired in Poland*] (2011) and *Formacja pastoralna młodych prezbiterów w diecezjach w Polsce. Studium teologicznopastoralne* [*Pastoral Formation of Young Priests in Polish Dioceses: A Theological and Pastoral Study*] (2020). He is also the editor and co-editor of several anthologies, the author of several dozen articles on pastoral theology, but specifically on organizing pastoral care, the lay apostolate, and the pastoral care of those with disabilities.
ORCID 0000-0002-8890-2062

PAAT VICKY BGD is a full-time lecturer in the Doctor of Theology Program at REAL Theological Seminary. He holds both a Doctor of Theology and a Master of Theology, with academic expertise in Mission Theology and Pluralism. His scholarly interests include Christian mission studies, interreligious relations, and the role of the church in multicultural contexts. Dr. Paat has authored several academic works, including *From Gospel to Reality: Spiritual and Social Challenges in Papua After the Ottow and Geisler Mission*, *The Implementation of Christological Understanding in Christian Religious Education in Schools in the Era of Industry 4.0*, and *Christian Mission, Spiritual Leadership, and Personality Development of the Digital Generation*.
ORCID 0000-0001-7782-4655

SMUNIEWSKI CEZARY, Rev., Professor of the University of Warsaw, habilitated doctor in security studies, habilitated doctor in theology, staff member of the Faculty of Political Sciences and International Studies of the University of Warsaw, director of the Interdisciplinary Research Center of the University of Warsaw "Identity – Dialogue – Security". His scientific interests include: security axiology, migrations, patriotism, societal security, relationship between religion and security, health security, cultural security, security psychology, and interdisciplinarity of security studies.
ORCID 0000-0002-8973-3539

WADOWSKI DARIUSZ, Asssistant Professor, cultural sociologist. Affiliation: Department of Media Culture, Faculty of Social Sciences, Catholic University of Lublin. Education: MA in sociology (1991), Phd in sociology (1998), postdoc (2014). Work experience: lectures in: cultural sociology, popular culture, myths in media, mediatization of memory, statistical methods, social research methods, evaluation procedures; research on: social bonds and cultural identity in Poland, cultural memory in Poland, religiosity in Poland, evaluation research on projects and social institutions. Research interests: cultural sociology, media sociology, popular culture, cultural identity, cultural memory, cultural myths, evaluation studies. Membership: Polish Society of Evaluation, Polish Society for Film and Media Research, Polish Sociological Association, The Learned Society of the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin.
ORCID 0000-0001-8936-9557

WIERCIŃSKI ANDRZEJ, Rev., PfD in Philosopy (KUL), PfD in Theology (Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München), Dr. Hab. Theol. in Philosophy of Religion (Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg), Professor of Social Sciences in Education, currently Distinguished Professor at the Department of Artes Liberales, University of Warsaw. His latest books are *Hermeneutik und Metaphysik: Bildung im Gespräch zwischen Philosophie, Theologie und Dichtung*, *Hermeneutics of Education: Exploring and Experiencing the Unpredictability of Education*, *Existentia Hermeneutica: Understanding as the Mode of Being in the World*.
ORCID 0000-0001-9096-6535

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