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## Personalistic Dimension of Ecclesia-Forming Catechesis

The article addresses the personalistic dimension of the Church's catechesis presented as a process of including children and young people in the mystery of the Church seen in a personal way, as the *Communio Personarum et personarum*. The personal view of the Church and the personalistic dimension of ecclesial education in catechesis is intended as a safeguard against understanding and grasping the Church in rheistic, institutional, hierarchical, juridical, and sociological terms. It is also meant to open up to anthropological, personalistic and communal dimensions. A new personal quality and a higher way of existence for the person being catechized as coexistence with Christ should be the most important fruit of a personalistic introduction to the Church.

**Key words:** Church, community, catechesis, personalism.

### Introduction

In today's world, indeed in the ecclesial community itself, one notices a simplistic way of understanding the Church. Analysis of the way the Church functions, its daily life and presence in the world, reveals many flaws in the understanding of its nature and essence. Analysis of the situation of the Church, which many consider as difficult and in need of renewal, indicates the need for the Church to develop a deeper awareness of its own identity.

Since the Church as a community is the first subject of companionship in faith, it is thus the subject of catechesis, and catechesis is invariably the work of the Church. Therefore, for the Church, catechesis is an instrument of ecclesial communion, ecclesial formation, ecclesial maturity, and ecclesial faith. Therefore, one of the many challenges

for the religious education of children and young people includes ecclesial education as a major task of ecclesial catechesis. Knowing the aspirations of young people to belong to a group and community of persons, it seems that the most appropriate and creative ecclesial formation will be a personalistic one, which introduces the *Communio Personarum et personarum* into the Church.

## The situation of understanding the Church within the Church

Ecclesial formation is necessitated not only by the low awareness of being the Church, but also by the fact that many people experience crises and uncertainties in their understanding and belonging to the Church during their school education. In recent years, an additional confluence of numerous external factors has significantly undermined the authority of the Church, which, as M. Chmielewski observes, is the first bitter fruit of the Covid-19 pandemic<sup>1</sup>. Faced with these difficulties, many young people have developed excuses to sever ties with the Church because of reservations and doubts about the Church.

In addition, numerous events that have taken place within the Church have led to an evident erosion of trust in it. *The Directory for Catechesis* adds some more causes: “As for ecclesial experience, at this stage of life many young people distance themselves from the Church, treat it with indifference or distrust. Reasons include a lack of witness, credibility, spiritual and moral support from the family, as well as inadequate catechesis and a nondescript religious community” (DC 151)<sup>2</sup>. Therefore, the low understanding of the Church within it necessitates religious education and sets out the urgent task of in-depth ecclesial formation within the framework of religious instruction at school, in order to adequately prepare and educate the catechesis students for life and responsibility for the Church of tomorrow<sup>3</sup>.

However, questions arise as to whether those who still accept Jesus yet reject His Church realise that they owe Him to the Church. Another issue to be considered is that of what Church people today want to

<sup>1</sup> See M. Chmielewski, *The Catholic Church in Poland, Her Faithful, and the Restrictions on Freedom to Practise Religion during the First Wave of the COVID-19 Pandemic*, in: *Catholic Education*, ed. P. Mąkosa, Basel 2023, pp. 183-207.

<sup>2</sup> Pontifical Council for the Promotion of the New Evangelization, *Directory for Catechesis*, Vatican 2020, (hereinafter abbreviated to: DC).

<sup>3</sup> Cf. P. Mąkosa, *Formacja eklezjalna w edukacji religijnej młodzieży szkół ponadgimnazjalnych*, in: *Katecheza w Kościele i dla Kościoła*, ed. R. Czekalski, Płock 2006, pp. 79-80.



be in and what Church they wish to accept Christ's message from<sup>4</sup>. It is therefore necessary to consider what kind of Church catechesis should introduce students to, and whether there is still a need for the Church in today's mentality. Questions about the grounds of trust in the Church or issues related to its existence as a real community, living in true brotherhood, rather than as a business or service institution, must also be addressed.

These and other questions, patterns of conduct and attitudes stem from reductionism: "Christ – yes, Church – no". Before attempting to resolve the above issues, it should be noted that very often the doubts referred to are born out of a distorted image of the Church in the media<sup>5</sup>. This is evident, among others, in the detachment of the Church from God, an overly organizational view of its functioning and the position of the faithful next to the Church community without the awareness of being its co-authors. Witnessing such phenomena, many young people identify the Church exclusively with its institutional and hierarchical structure, theological and hermetic teaching or with descriptive abstract theoretical terms. At this point, we must also note a misconception of the term "Church" itself. More often than not, it is a sociological and legal *a priori* understanding that deprives it of the qualities of personality and communion.

In the context of the emerging simplifications, criticisms, and errors of perception of the Church, a need arises to rediscover this work of God in the world. Above all, we need more faith in the Church today. It is also necessary to believe more in the Church, since it speaks and teaches in the name of God. It constitutes God's home on earth; it is a reality more divine than human; it has its source in God. Its greatness, its value, and its authority have their source in Christ, who is the Head and also the Bride of the Church<sup>6</sup>. Furthermore, we need a mature perception of the Church and a better awareness of it. "We urgently need good catechesis about the Church or rather about the presence of Christ in the Church. It is indispensable for itself and for the faithful. In particular, it is necessary to think in terms of the Gospel"<sup>7</sup>.

<sup>4</sup> J. Szymik, *Theologia benedicta*, Vol. 2, Katowice 2012, p. 236.

<sup>5</sup> See M. Chmielewski, *Ewangelizacyjna misja Kościoła a social media*, "Studia Leopoliensia" 2017, Vol. 10, pp. 191-205.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. A. Czaja, *Wiara w Kościół i jej podstawowe treści*, in: *Wierzę w Kościół Chrystusowy*, eds. R. Chromy, W. Musioł, K. Piechaczek, Katowice 2022, pp. 33-35.

<sup>7</sup> Polish Bishops' Conference, Letter to Priests for Holy Thursday 2008, *Umowa – przymierze z Najwyższym Kapłanem*, no. 4.

Therefore, analysis of current ecclesial consciousness calls for raising the self-awareness of the Church. Deepening ecclesial awareness first requires a reliable communication of the truth about the Church, an explanation of the meaning and values and basic tenets, especially the nature and salvific mission of the Church. As a significant task of catechesis, ecclesial formation will respond most adequately to the contemporary needs of building a positive image of the Church if it has a personalistic focus. Such catechesis will not only be ecclesial formation and education, but also Ecclesia-forming catechesis.

## Catechetical foundations of ecclesial formation

The Church is the real and ultimate subject of the knowledge of Jesus Christ. Christ lives and makes Himself present in the reality of the Church<sup>8</sup>. An encounter with His Person is made possible through catechesis, which aims to uncover the divinity and humanity of Jesus in the catechesis student and to help the latter establish a profound intimacy and communion with Christ (DC 75). The communion of living with Christ and the attendant “experience of a new grace” (GDC 116)<sup>9</sup> assume union with the subject of catechesis, i.e. the Church. Total adherence to the Person of Christ means at the same time adherence to His Church, and acceptance of the Person of Christ is synonymous with acceptance of the Church of Christ.

The interaction between catechesis and the Church is bilateral. “On the one hand, catechesis finds its source, justification, context, and effectiveness of influence in the Church, and on the other hand, the Church carries out the mission of salvation through catechetical ministry. Catechesis, participating in the Church’s prophetic function, finds itself in the Church, but at the same time its sameness and dynamism promote the vitality of the Church”<sup>10</sup>. Catechesis, through its ecclesial dimension, is an activity that guides the Christian community towards both a mature faith and a deeper understanding of the reality of the Church<sup>11</sup>. Catechesis is, therefore, both ecclesial and Ecclesia-forming. In his apostolic exhortation *Catechesi tradendae*, John Paul II indicates

<sup>8</sup> Cf. J. Ratzinger, *Chrystus i Jego Kościół*, trans. W. Szymona, Kraków 2005, p. 95.

<sup>9</sup> The Congregation for Clergy, *General Directory for Catechesis*, 11 August 1997, (hereinafter abbreviated to: GDC).

<sup>10</sup> T. Panuś, *Zasada wierności Bogu i człowiekowi i jej realizacja w polskiej katechizacji*, Kraków 2001, p. 223.

<sup>11</sup> See M. Zając, *Wymiar eklezjalny katechezy*, in: *Katechetyka materialna*, ed. J. Stala, Tarnów 2002, pp. 195-233.

that ecclesial formation is one of the fundamental tasks of catechesis: “Catechesis is intimately bound up with the whole of the Church’s life. Not only her geographical extension and numerical increase, but even more, her inner growth and correspondence with God’s plan depend essentially on catechesis” (CT 13)<sup>12</sup>.

Ecclesial education is addressed also in the *General Directory for Catechesis*, which observes that “Through catechesis [the Church] feeds her children with her own faith and incorporates them as members into the ecclesial family” (GDC 79). While discussing initiation and education to community life in catechesis, the same document sets out its ecclesial community building task by stating that “Catechesis prepares the Christian to live in community and to participate actively in the life and mission of the Church” (GDC 86). Explaining the induction to mission work, the *Directory* urges catechesis to prepare catechetical students to “cooperation to the different ecclesial services, according to their proper vocation” (GDC 86). Thus, the *General Directory for Catechesis* encourages ecclesial formation at all stages of religious education and demands that catechesis show the community aspect of the Christian faith.

The need for catechesis to address the community aspect is likewise indicated in *The Catechetical Directory of the Catholic Church in Poland*. The document explains that education for community in catechesis and through catechesis should first of all consider education to the community of the Church and, apart from the transmission of the tenets of the faith, should show the true image of the Church and foster the sense of membership in an ecclesial community. The Polish *Directory* assigns a special role in this respect to catechesis in the parish, which helps the faithful to experience an ontological (through Baptism) membership in the Church at the existential level (PCD 28)<sup>13</sup>.

Further on, *The Catechetical Directory of the Catholic Church in Poland* highlights that catechesis aims at giving flesh to the Church as a salvific community and at building ecclesial awareness. The latter task must start from an enhanced message of the knowledge of the Church. Furthermore, it is vital that the smallest links of the Church (families, movements, and associations) be connected with the parish. The parish should become their main facilitator, especially for all

<sup>12</sup> John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation *Catechesi tradendae*, 16 October 1979, (hereinafter abbreviated to: CT).

<sup>13</sup> Cf. The Polish Bishops’ Conference, *The Catechetical Directory of the Catholic Church in Poland*, Kraków 2001, (hereinafter abbreviated to: PCD).

forms of ministry to young people, and a privileged place which young people can identify with (PCD 52).

In turn, the amended *Directory for Catechesis*, defining the tasks of catechesis, including introduction into community life, confirms the need for ecclesial formation. The document makes it clear that catechesis is to “foster the sense of *membership* in the Church; to teach a *sense of unity* in the Church, which lead to the acceptance of the Magisterium, unity with the pastors of the Church and fraternal dialogue; to form to a sense of *joint responsibility* for the Church, so that its members actively participate in the building of the community and contribute to its growth as disciples-missionaries” (DK 89). The same document points to the ecclesial criterion as the core of the proclamation of the message of the Gospel; referring to Pope Francis’ encyclical *Lumen fidei*, the document recalls that “Faith is necessarily ecclesial; it is professed from within the body of Christ as a concrete communion of believers” (LF 22)<sup>14</sup>. Subsequently, the *Directory* points out that “catechesis introduces the faithful to the mysteries of the community, not only in the relation with the Father through Christ in the Spirit, but also in the community of believers, through the agency of the same Spirit. By educating to community, catechesis educates to life in the Church and as the Church” (DC 176).

Analysis of the above documents shows that catechesis in all respects, being an ecclesial act, points to the Church as its unquestionable subject and inherent reference. The content conveyed by catechesis about the Church and its activities facilitates the understanding of its essence. Thus, catechesis contributes to mature thinking about the Church and understanding of its meaning. It nurtures in the students the ability to identify with the community, brings up a sense of belonging to and identification with the Church. Each person is seen as an indispensable part of the Church. As A. Kiciński notes, this truth contributes to building interpersonal ties, fraternity, and respect for each person, including people with disabilities and their families. It is an Ecclesia-forming factor that extends to the entire ecclesial community<sup>15</sup>.

The experience of the Church possible through catechesis, is first and foremost the experience of the community in which catechesis takes place. Thus, the catechized gathered to listen to the Good News

<sup>14</sup> Francis, Encyclical Letter *Lumen fidei*, 29 June 2013.

<sup>15</sup> A. Kiciński, *Eklezjocentryzm w katechezie osób z niepełnosprawnością intelektualną*, in: *Kościół – Communio jako podmiot i środowisko współczesnej katechezy*, ed. A. Draguła, Szczecin 2009, pp. 209-221.

not only experience, but already by this very gathering and grouping they build the Church. "Not only is catechesis implemented in the Church and speaks about the Church, but is itself an experience of the Church, positive or negative, depending on its quality. Therefore, it is vital that it makes possible a positive experience of the Church and that it is direct and clearly brings out its educational value, inherent actually in all experience"<sup>16</sup>.

## Personalistic concept of the Church

The personalistic concept of the Church assumes that the Church is both a material and a spiritual world, external and internal, subjective and objective. From the very beginning of its existence, the Church has been a personal entity. After Christ's death, resurrection and glorification, His salvific activity was not limited to the non-historical realm. He assumed a new Body, which is present in history in a personal way. This body is the Church. The task of this Church is to reveal Christ's divine personal presence in the world. Christ, taking on a new Body, creates with it a personal reality with a Divine-human structure. The Church, therefore, has a personal existence. Christ is the head, and the community of believers makes up the remainder of the organism. This Divine-human reality of the Church forms a personal unity of being. The Church is thus a social and personal manifestation of Christ or, more precisely, is the presence of the Holy Spirit in the period between the Ascension and the Parousia. Christ therefore continues to live, teach, sanctify, and reign in and through the Church. Therefore, it is also a hierarchical and personal community, intrinsically connected to Christ<sup>17</sup>. This Church present on earth is meant to be Christ, ever living; for all its imperfections, the Church is truly His body.

Christ is therefore the cornerstone and creator of the Church. The Church is the gift of the Lord to man. *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* teaches that "The Church is born primarily of Christ's total self-giving for our salvation" (CCC 766). Therefore, the Church derives directly from the Person and Event of Jesus Christ<sup>18</sup>. As a result, the Church is a religious and social Person<sup>19</sup>. The Church and Christ,

<sup>16</sup> E. Alberich, *Katecheza dzisiaj. Podręcznik katechetyki fundamentalnej*, Warszawa 2003, p. 172.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. M. Rusecki, *Traktat o wiarygodności chrześcijaństwa. Dlaczego wierzyć Chrystusowi?*, Lublin 2010, p. 348.

<sup>18</sup> Cz.S. Bartnik, *Istota chrześcijaństwa*, Lublin 2004, p. 55.

<sup>19</sup> Cz.S. Bartnik, *Dogmatyka katolicka*, Vol. 2, Lublin 2003<sup>2</sup>, p. 55.

being one, meet within a person, as observed by St. Augustine: “Our redeemer has shown himself to be one person with the holy Church whom he has taken to himself” (CCC 795), while St. Thomas Aquinas adds: “Head and members form as it were one and the same mystical person” (CCC 795). Ultimately, the Church is a Mystical Person<sup>20</sup>, a religious and social Person.

The personal concept of the Church reveals the fact that the Church has a Trinitarian genesis. It is the work of the entire Trinity, i.e. the Community of Persons. The origin is the Person of God the Father, who is the principle of creation and the “starting point” for the other Divine Persons. God the Father is thus the first and primary cause, the “Parent of the Church”. The Church then becomes the Body of Christ, who as a Person is in a filial relationship with the Father. In turn, the Love between the Father and the Son is embodied in the Person of the Holy Spirit. “The Holy Spirit is the soul of the Church” (EN 75)<sup>21</sup> which brings All into a single Mystical Person. The Person of the Holy Spirit is likewise the foundation of the love between God and people, between man and people and of the love that people have for one another<sup>22</sup>.

The Church exists to the fullest where there are many persons. Beginning with the fact that the Church has been subjected to the Triune God, who is a unity of Persons. The Church is a community of Divine Persons and a community of human persons. The Church is a multipersonal entity and is therefore always social. The community understanding of the Church exposes the social element in it, while keeping in mind that the idea of community is more than a simple “collection of people”. This is because it constitutes an inter-personal body with strong personal mutual bonds. This organism is strongly internally unified, thanks to which the community of the Church “blends” into a single *communio personarum*<sup>23</sup>. Importantly, the Church of the *communio personarum* is not the sum total of the particular Churches

<sup>20</sup> M. Rusecki, *Personalistyczna koncepcja teologii fundamentalnej*, “Personalizm”, Vol. 12, 2007, p. 65.

<sup>21</sup> Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii nuntiandi*, 8 December 1975, Vatican.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. E. Sienkiewicz, *Communio w Bogu a wspólnota Kościoła jako dzieło Ducha Świętego*, in: *Duch Kościoła Kościół Ducha*, ed. A. Proniewski, Białystok 2014, pp. 58-80.

<sup>23</sup> Personalism interprets the Church in social terms as a “social person”, “collective person”, “community person”.



or their federation<sup>24</sup>, but first and foremost a “new personal quality”<sup>25</sup> and a bond between people as individuals and communities with the Community of Persons of the Holy Trinity. Only this kind of personal union of man within a group of human persons with the Divine Persons (vertical aspect) and the community of man with other people and their interpersonal relations (horizontal aspect) results in a *Communio Personarum et personarum*.

It is clear from the above reflections that the Church is subjectified both in the human person and in the community of persons. Neither one of these dimensions should be diminished or downplayed. The most perfect image of the Church is the combination of the Church-person and the Church-community; the Church forms the phenomenon of “person,” and as a community it has its subjectivity. Although the Church-community has primacy over the Church-person, it does not depreciate it. The highest values of the Church always exist in social and personal terms. For this reason, the Church serves not only the individual person, but first and foremost the human community. The socio-personal lens is a safeguard against a realist and institutional treatment of the Church.

## Catechesis about the Church

A personalistic understanding of the Church helps notice the existing bond between the Church and catechesis via the lens of a person. Catechesis also has its personalistic dimension because the Person of Jesus Christ is at its very core. The goal of this catechesis is to bring the human person to an encounter with Jesus, and then to union and even deep intimacy with Him (CT 5, DC 75). At the same time, it should be clearly emphasized that the personalistic dimension of catechesis also concerns its foundations, for it refers to the Person of God the Father, the Person of Jesus Christ and the Person of the Holy Spirit, as well as to the Mystical Person of the Church. It should

<sup>24</sup> “The universal Church is not the sum of the particular Churches, or a federation of the latter, or even the result of their communion as such, since, in the expression of the early Fathers and the liturgy, in her essential mystery the Church precedes creation itself. In the light of this teaching, we can add that the relationship of mutual interiority existing between the universal Church and each particular Church, whereby the particular Churches are formed in the likeness of the universal Church, and in and from the particular Churches there comes into being the one and only Catholic Church”. John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation *Pastores gregis*, Vatican, 16 October 2003 no. 8.

<sup>25</sup> Cz.S. Bartnik, “Kościół”. “Byt osobowy”, in: *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. IX, col. 1007.

also be added that catechesis takes place in the world of persons and involves many people in the process of initiation to, and growth and maturation in faith.

In a personalistic spirit, catechesis should also involve the process of Church formation. It should start with explaining the **meaning** of the Church, which is not an aim in itself but is rather a gift of the Triune God so that the inner life of the Persons may be shared with the humanity. The sense of the Church is, therefore, the Triune God and man as a person. As John Paul II observes in the encyclical *Redemptor hominis*, “man is the primary route that the Church must travel (...), he is the primary and fundamental way for the Church, the way traced out by Christ himself” (RH 14)<sup>26</sup>. “Since the Church is in Christ like a sacrament or as a sign and instrument both of a very closely knit union with God and of the unity of the whole human race” (LG 1)<sup>27</sup>, the Church is inherently interested in the life of man in Christ (LG 32). “Established by Christ (...), it is also used by Him as an instrument for the redemption of all and is sent forth into the whole world” (LG 9). In personalistic terms, the Church is a personal being conducive to man, turned to man and offering itself to man. It is predominantly a sign and tool of this proximity of God which took place already in Incarnation, cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is God’s gift to man and to the world, expressive of mercy for human sin and confusion.

It is also necessary in ecclesial formation to emphasize the Trinitarian genesis of the Church. The community of the Church takes its origin in the community of the Persons of the Trinity and moves toward the community in which it finds its existence. The source of the Church’s communion is the unity of the Trinity taking place between the Persons of God, and which, through Christ, has been revealed to man. The Church as the People of God is a community of a particular group of people. The Church manifests itself in the form of community as coexistence, patterned on the unity that takes place in God. The Trinity is the highest model of the Church: just as in God the Three Persons constitute a real distinctiveness and yet absolute unity, so do Christians form the Church’s real plurality of persons<sup>28</sup>.

Under the ecclesiology of *communio*, the Church should be shown as a communal reality, or a “communal person”. Community, especially

<sup>26</sup> John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Redemptor hominis*, 4 March 1979.

<sup>27</sup> The Second Vatican Council, *Lumen gentium*, 21 November 1964, (hereinafter abbreviated to: LG).

<sup>28</sup> Cz.S. Bartnik, *Personalizacja Kościoła według Karola Wojtyły*, “Personalizm” 2004, Vol. 6, p. 73-74.



for a young person, has a unique credibility and power of attraction. The communal character of the Church is necessary in ecclesial formation through catechesis because many young people are interested in small communities, often without discerning their sectarian character. The Trinitarian dimension will help show that the Church is different from any community of people, and that the Church is God's rather than a human work. The Church is "a community composed of men. United in Christ, they are led by the Holy Spirit in their journey to the Kingdom of their Father and they have welcomed the news of salvation which is meant for every man" (GS 1)<sup>29</sup>.

In explaining to the catechesis student the specifics of the Church as community, it is crucial to realize the personal bond of man with Christ and with other people. Communion in the Church means a community that shares in the Divine life. It cannot be compared only with a human community or organization, association, or congregation. The origin of ecclesial communion is not a contract, agreement, or settlement, but personal communion with Jesus Christ, and its source and goal is the unity of the Son with the Father in the Holy Spirit (ChL 18)<sup>30</sup>. This is not a unity of a moral but an existential nature, as God's "plan was to raise men to a participation of the divine life" (LG 2). The essence of the union and community is a personal link, the gift of belonging (*participatio*) in the life of the Triune God (LG 2).

In the context of the communal nature of the Church, it is necessary to renew the understanding of ecclesial community outlined by John Paul II. The pope indicated that we must "make the Church *the home and the school of communion*" (NMI 43)<sup>31</sup>. It is a call to foster a spirituality of communion, consisting of openness to God and His mercy. It involves an attitude of turning and trusting God, and adoration and worship of Emmanuel, who is God with us. In turn, the contribution of the catechized person consists in accepting God and His self-giving to man. This should be an adherence of the entire person to God, not just intellectual assimilation of the content of faith.

Furthermore, it is necessary to explain during catechesis that the Church cannot be relegated to the role of philanthropy and charity. While it is true that there are many tasks for the Church in this area, what can the ecclesial community offer the world unless it is first filled with Christ. The Christian community develops by receiving

<sup>29</sup> The Second Vatican Council, *Gaudium et spes*, 7 December 1965, (hereinafter abbreviated to: GS).

<sup>30</sup> John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation *Christifideles laici*, 30 December 1988.

<sup>31</sup> John Paul II, Apostolic Letter *Novo millennio ineunte*, 6 January 2001, no. 43.

gifts from God and only then comes the sharing with others of what has been received. First, one must receive Christ. A person's Christian identity and mission are formed in the act of openness to Christ, in feeding on the word of God, and in the use of the holy sacraments. One must show the catechized the richness of participation in the Eucharist, and then to share Christ and His Gospel<sup>32</sup>.

In line with the teaching of the Second Vatican Council, the nature of the Church must be seen as complex, Divine-human (teandric), transcendent and historical (LG 9-17; CCC 770-776). It is composed of two elements: Divine and human; the former is supernatural and superior, hence the "ontological" element of the Church. Its identity was offered in the Divine genesis of the Church and at the same time assigned to its incarnation in reality. Thus, its "substance" is not built by man (naturalism) by severing ties from their supernatural source; this would be activism which treats the Church as a reality created solely by man.

It is crucial to show the Mother of God in catechesis and explain that she is the Mother of the Church as the Advocate of the faithful. It is clearly necessary to indicate to the catechesis student to look to Mary as a paragon of union with Christ, walking in His path and professing faith. As the Icon of the Church, Mary is a paragon of holiness for the entire ecclesial community. She is also the core of personalisation of the Church as the bride. The Blessed Virgin Mary is a model for us, "a preeminent and . . . wholly unique member of the Church" (CCC 967). The Blessed Virgin Mary, at the head of the Church's pilgrimage, shows by her person the greatness of the one who can say yes (*fiat*) to God.

Looking up to Mary, one must see the creative power of shaping the existence of the believer in the Holy Spirit. Christian identity is a gift of the Holy Spirit, who He grafts each baptized person into Christ. It is necessary to emphasize in catechesis the role and action of the Holy Spirit in the Church. As a Person, He is its Vivifier. Thanks to him, Christians abide in Christ (inexistence)<sup>33</sup>.

There is also a need to show to the catechesis student the meaning and value of office in the Church and the entire institutional aspect of the Church: "For the nurturing and constant growth of the People of God, Christ the Lord instituted in His Church a variety of ministries"

<sup>32</sup> Cf. A. Czaja, *Aktualne samorozumienie Kościoła wyzwaniem dla katechezy*, in: *Katecheza w Kościele i dla Kościoła*, ed. R. Czekalski, Płock 2006, pp. 30-31.

<sup>33</sup> See A. Czaja, *Credo in Spiritum Vivificantem. Pneumatologiczna interpretacja Kościoła jako komunii w posoborowej teologii niemieckiej*, Lublin 2003.

(LG 18). When explaining the importance of offices in the Church, it is necessary to raise awareness of responsibility and integrate the catechised students into the Church community, especially that of the parish. Emphasis should be placed on creating a parish community through gathering at the Eucharist and standing by its pastors. Of great value in building parish community, which should be recommended to the catechesis student, is the witness of exemplary Christian life, sensitivity to the poor, a childlike attitude, fraternal admonition, common intercessory prayer, and readiness for reconciliation and forgiveness.

Keeping in mind the focus on the aggiornamento of the Church, the catechesis on the Church must not lack the interpretation of the new signs of the times. In the context of the Church's aggiornamento, it is essential to show in what sense the unification of Europe is compatible with the salvific mission of the Church. Since the Church is by divine appointment called to be "a sacrament of salvific unity" (LG 9) and to carry out "the ministry of reconciliation" (2 Cor 5:19) among the dispersed people of God, the unification of Europe matches its mission and is a gift and a task for the Church<sup>34</sup>.

## Conclusion

The proposal presented above regarding the personalistic dimension of ecclesial catechesis has been shown as the inclusion of the catechesis student in the mystery of the Church that is understood personally as a *Communio Personarum et personarum*. The basic condition for the personalization of ecclesial education in catechesis is to understand the Church as a community of a personal nature, that is, that the Church is not an object, thing, or some extra-personal substance, but the ultimate personal event of God and man. Next, the Church is not an individual person. The Church is where there are many persons. It is invariably a multipersonal entity and thus it is social, communal, human, and fraternal, although it never disregards the individual person. The Church is a community of persons and at the same time one person in many persons. Furthermore, the the Person of Jesus Christ is the keystone of the Church in individual and collective terms. The person of Christ is the core of the religious community, oriented toward God the Father in the Holy Spirit. Through Christ, the ecclesial community has a special kind of personal bond with the Triune God (vertical aspect) and between human persons (horizontal aspect).

<sup>34</sup> Cf. A. Czaja, *Aktualne samorozumienie Kościoła wyzwaniem dla katechezy*, p. 34-36.

This bond develops into a close communion, into a full communion of persons, while the communion creates a special subjectification of the Saviour in man. Finally, the essential meaning and content of the Church is the salvation of the entire human race, that is, every human person. The Church is where participation in salvation takes place, and unification is where salvation is and where Christ is, i.e. the Church.

The personal view of the Church and the personalistic dimension of ecclesial education in catechesis is vitally important as it protects the Church from being understood and embraced in rheistic, institutional, hierarchical, juridical, and sociological terms, opening it instead to anthropological, personalistic and communal categories. It is not easy to identify with an institution or organization. One can only co-create, be involved with and responsible for, and love a person. Therefore, only the Church – the Mystical Person – can be chosen, accepted, loved, and worshipped. Such ecclesial consciousness should be born not so much from the truth grasped intellectually, but from love for Christ and for the persons contributing to His Mystical Body. Total adherence to the Person of Christ, which is the goal of catechesis, is also adherence to His Church. By enabling an encounter with the event of the Person of Christ, catechesis becomes an Ecclesia-forming experience as a community of persons gives birth to the Church provided these persons are united with Christ. In terms of catechesis, this personal relationship takes place when the catechesis students are *christianoï*, which means they are like Christ; they are “a new creation in Christ” (Gal 6:15). Man is within the Church and is the Church inasmuch as they are “in Christ” (Rom 8:9-10). This means that catechesis, while introducing people into the community of the Church, must bring them into a new existence with Christ and in Christ. Being in Christ is the cornerstone of being in the Church, whereas being in the Church means to be in Christ (*esse in Christo*). This perception leads to a deeper sense of belonging to and identity with the Church and responsibility for the actions taken up and carried out by the Church. The most important fruit of the personalistic introduction to the life of the Church should be a new personal quality, a superior way of existence of the catechesis student as coexistence with Christ. This will ultimately contribute to a mature commitment to apostolate, ecumenism, interreligious dialogue, and missionary dynamism, i.e. to the Church of tomorrow.

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## Pedagogical Principles of Culture in Pope Francis' Exhortation *Gaudete et exsultate*

Francis characterizes contemporary culture as: nervous and violent anxiety that distracts and weakens us; negativity and sadness; hedonism; consumerist and egoistic acedia; individualism; and many forms of false spirituality devoid of encounter with God, prevailing in the contemporary religious space. In many speeches, he calls it a "culture of exclusion". The Pope's response to the threats and limitations of modern culture is based on the pedagogical principles found in the exhortation *Gaudete et exsultate*. The aim of this article is to analyse the teachings of Pope Francis in order to show the need to renew thinking and attitudes in the face of various challenges that arise in religiously, culturally, and politically diverse societies, in the context of the family's educational duties.

**Key words:** family, Francis, culture, pedagogical principles.

During his pontificate, Francis has already published three encyclicals – *Lumen fidei* in 2013, *Laudato si'* in 2015, *Fratelli tutti* in 2020 – and five exhortations: *Evangelii gaudium* in 2014, *Amoris laetitia* in 2016, *Gaudete et exsultate* in 2018, *Christus vivit* in 2019, and *Querida Amazonia* in 2020. Although in all these documents one can find elements of Francis' teaching on culture, the theme is outlined clearly



and in great detail in the exhortation *Gaudete et exsultate*, which is a manifesto of the call to holiness in the modern world.

Francis characterizes contemporary culture as: nervous and violent anxiety that distracts and weakens us; negativity and sadness; hedonism; consumerist and egoistic acedia; individualism; and many forms of false spirituality devoid of encounter with God, prevailing in the contemporary religious space<sup>1</sup>. In many speeches, he calls it a “culture of exclusion”. He describes it in the following words: “There is no place in it for an old man or for an unwanted child. There is no time to stop with the poor on the side of the road”<sup>2</sup>. Individuals and groups pushed to the fringes of social life, considered incompetent, inferior, and stigmatized by negative characteristics, should be able to access education, vocational training, employment, housing, medical care, and care benefits. The “culture of exclusion” will be deprived of its reason for existence when it is replaced by circumstances conducive to participation in social life, real access to resources, goods, institutions, and social systems is available, and the poverty of deprivation processes subsides and social rights are respected. Then we will witness the transformation of the “culture of exclusion” into the “culture of encounter”.

The Pope’s response to the dangers and limitations of contemporary culture is based on pedagogical principles, which can be found in the exhortation *Gaudete et exsultate*. They are important from the perspective of teaching religion at school. The purpose of this article is to analyse the teachings of Pope Francis, which will reveal the need to renew thinking and attitudes in the face of the multiple challenges that arise in religiously, culturally, and politically diverse societies.

## Endurance, patience and gentleness

The first of them speaks of vigilance and the fight against their own aggressive and self-centered inclinations<sup>3</sup>. Inner perseverance and renunciation of selfishness keep us from being carried away by the violence that permeates social life, weaken vanity, and make gentleness of heart possible. Therefore, let us not complain about the mistakes of

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Francis, *Apostolic exhortation Gaudete et Exsultate on the call to holiness in today’s world*, [https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost\\_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco\\_esortazione-ap\\_20180319\\_gaudete-et-exsultate.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20180319_gaudete-et-exsultate.html), No. 111 (abbreviation: GE).

<sup>2</sup> Franciszek, 28. *Światowy Dzień Młodzieży w Rio de Janeiro*, <https://www.ekai.pl/swiatowy-dzien-mlodziezy-w-rio-de-janeiro/>.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. GE, No. 116.



others; let us try to remain silent in the face of the faults of our brothers and sisters and avoid verbal violence that destroys and damages. Let us not look down on others, putting ourselves in the role of merciless judges who constantly try to instruct others.

This principle also speaks of the need for humility, which can only take root in the heart through humiliations. Francis stresses that this does not mean walking around with eyes lowered, not saying a word, and fleeing the company of others<sup>4</sup>. At times, precisely because someone is free of selfishness, he or she can dare to disagree gently, to demand justice, or to defend the weak before the powerful, even if it may harm his or her reputation.

In order to achieve the goal of education, it is necessary that the whole process be constantly accompanied by the virtue of patience, the task of which will be to master and overcome discouragement and stimulate positive action. Pope Francis' proposal is in line with the teaching of his predecessor Benedict XVI, who claimed that

it is becoming ever clearer that only moral values and strong convictions and sacrifices make it possible to live and to build the world. [...] In the end, in fact, love alone enables us to live, and love is always also suffering; it matures in suffering and provides the strength to suffer for good without taking oneself into account at the actual moment. [...] Here too, of course, we are in need of patience, but also active patience in the sense of making people understand: You need this<sup>5</sup>.

## Joy and a sense of humor

This rule is based on joy, which brings deep security, serene hope, and a spiritual fulfilment that the world cannot understand or appreciate<sup>6</sup>. It is worth emphasizing that Christian joy is usually accompanied by a sense of humour. In this respect, Francis refers to the examples of St. Thomas More, St. Vincent à Paulo, and St. Philip Nereus<sup>7</sup>. A bad mood is not a sign of a happy person. We often receive so much that sadness can be a sign of ingratitude. We can get so caught up in ourselves that we are unable to recognize offers of help and gifts.

The Pope is not concerned, however, with the consumerist and individualistic joy that is present in certain contemporary cultural

<sup>4</sup> Cf. GE, No. 119.

<sup>5</sup> Benedykt XVI, *Spotkanie z duchowieństwem diecezji Aosta*, "L'Osservatore Romano" 2005, No. 1(10), p. 37.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. GE, No. 125.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. GE, No. 126.

experiences<sup>8</sup>. Consumerism only bloats the heart. It can offer occasional and passing pleasures, but not joy. A real joy is lived in communion, which shares and is shared, since “there is more happiness in giving than in receiving” (Acts 20:35). Fraternal love increases our capacity for joy since it makes us capable of rejoicing in the good of others.

The papal encouragement to an attitude of joy can also be found in the encyclical *Laudato si'*. In his encyclical, Francis proposes the development of temperance and the capacity to rejoice in having few material goods<sup>9</sup>. It is about the conviction that “less is more”. It is a return to that simplicity that allows us to stop and appreciate the little things, to be grateful for the opportunities that life affords us, and not to succumb to sadness for what we lack. This requires avoiding the dynamics of domination and gathering wealth just for pleasure. It is not easy to develop joy and a sense of humour if modern man becomes self-sufficient and excludes God from his life, allowing the place of God to be taken by his own ego, and if he finally believes that he himself can determine what is good and what is bad.

In *Laudato si'*, Pope Francis calls for a certain attitude of heart, experiencing life with serene attentiveness, being completely present to everyone without thinking of what happens next, an attitude of self-gift offered each and every moment as the gift of God<sup>10</sup>. One expression of this attitude is the ability to stop and give thanks to God before and after meals. The Pope proposes to return to this precious custom and to experience it profoundly<sup>11</sup>. That moment of blessing reminds us of our dependence on God; it strengthens our feeling of gratitude for the gifts of creation. Prayer before and after meals acknowledges those who, by their labours, provide us with worldly goods. Also, one cannot overestimate the role of reaffirming our solidarity with those in greatest need.

## Boldness and passion

To explain this pedagogical principle, the Pope uses the biblical word *parrhesia*. It is boldness – an impulse to evangelize and to leave

<sup>8</sup> Cf. GE, No. 128.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Francis, *Encyclical letter Laudato si' on care for our common home*, [https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco\\_20150524\\_enciclica-laudato-si.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html), No. 222 (abbreviation: LS).

<sup>10</sup> Cf. LS, No. 226.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. LS, No. 227.

a mark in this world<sup>12</sup>. The ability to lead a life open to God and to others and the freedom to speak out complete the meaning of the word. Francis emphasizes that we are constantly tempted to flee to a safe haven. It can have many names: individualism, spiritualism, living in a little world, addiction, intransigence, the rejection of new ideas and approaches, dogmatism, nostalgia, pessimism, and hiding behind rules and regulations<sup>13</sup>.

Sometimes it is difficult for us to leave the already familiar area, which is at our fingertips. Deceitful habits tell us that our attempts to change things do not make sense, that we cannot do anything in a given situation, that it has always been the case, and that we have managed to survive anyway. This principle is therefore about waking up, shaking off our numbness, liberating ourselves from inactivity, challenging ourselves to not succumb to habits, and opening our eyes and ears, and especially our hearts, to the change that happens around us.

This teaching echoes the teaching of St. John Paul II, who reminded the faithful that “the process of education ultimately leads to the phase of self-education, which occurs when the individual, after attaining an appropriate level of psycho-physical maturity, begins to educate himself on his own. In time, self-education goes beyond the earlier results achieved by the educational process”<sup>14</sup>. Thus, what counts above all is to lovingly instill in the child the processes of maturation in their freedom, learning, comprehensive development, and the cultivation of true autonomy.

## In community

By distinguishing this principle, Pope Francis points out that every act of isolation makes our fight against concupiscence and the snares and temptations of the selfishness of the world difficult<sup>15</sup>. The common life, whether in the family, the parish, the religious community, or any other, is made up of small everyday things. They have an impact on the culture, too. Here it is worth recalling three key phrases: “please, thank you, I am sorry”, because the right words, spoken at the right time, protect and nurture love. Only a community whose members

<sup>12</sup> Cf. GE, No. 129.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. GE, No. 134.

<sup>14</sup> John Paul II, *Letter to Families “Gratissimam sane”*, [https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/letters/1994/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_let\\_02021994\\_families.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/letters/1994/documents/hf_jp-ii_let_02021994_families.html), No. 16.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. GE, No. 140.

care for small, loving details and one another can create an open and evangelizing environment.

Community education should be a space for dialogue. Unfortunately, more and more often, the modern world offers us imitations of dialogue. These are: bilateral monologue (two people speak, but what they say does not interest the other person at all), teaching (one of the interlocutors speaks as a teacher, and the other is supposed to listen like a student), and information (one of the interlocutors reports some pieces of information that are unknown to the other side)<sup>16</sup>. Authentic dialogue requires mutual openness, modesty, and humility, associated with the willingness to correct what has been proven wrong in the discussion. Dialogue in the community requires honesty, the opposite of which is a lack of integrity in presenting one's own position, as well as taking advantage of the weaknesses of the interlocutor. Dialogue requires trust in the other person and systematic correction of oneself in light of his or her thoughts. Finally, dialogue requires respect for others, tact, culture, tolerance, and pluralism<sup>17</sup>.

Marian Śnieżyński notes that "the task of the school is to create the conditions to ask questions and to teach this art so that this skill serves development and is increasingly educational"<sup>18</sup>. Educational dialogue presupposes consent to ask questions. The preparation of children by parents for dialogue becomes an inalienable necessity and is inextricably linked to the educational process. Educational dialogue teaches us a culture of conversation, unleashes faith in finding answers to troubling problems, mobilizes us to ask questions, teaches responsibility for the word, unleashes intellectual anxiety, produces social bonds, and undoubtedly helps in seeking and answering life questions.

## In constant prayer

The last principle of the pedagogy of culture proposed by Francis in *Gaudete et exsultate* is expressed in prayer and adoration. It is worth talking about it when modern man often finds it difficult to withstand the experience of being closed to the immanence of this world. Therefore, some moments spent alone with God are necessary. The Pope emphasizes that trust-filled prayer is a response of a heart open

<sup>16</sup> Cf. N. de Martini, *Odnova rodziny*, Warszawa 1997, p. 21.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. J. Mastalski, *Samotność globalnego nastolatka*, Kraków 2007, p. 314.

<sup>18</sup> M. Śnieżyński, *Zarys dydaktyki dialogu*, Kraków 1997, p. 7.

to encountering God face-to-face, where all is peaceful and the quiet voice of the Lord can be heard in the midst of silence<sup>19</sup>.

In his exhortation *Amoris laetitia*, Pope Francis reminded the faithful that “moments of family prayer and acts of devotion can be more powerful for evangelization than any catechism class or sermon”<sup>20</sup>. Pope Francis believes that an effective education of children and youth must take place within the space of prayer. Education in prayer means helping to establish contact with God and initiating and participating together in prayers of thanksgiving, praise, apology, and supplication. Parents should also develop prayer skills with their loved ones, peer group, and ecclesial community<sup>21</sup>. Introducing a child to the world of prayer requires purposeful pedagogical interactions. It is necessary to promote the development of dialogue and creative prayer in order to show the child that prayer brings joy to life, helps to overcome all difficulties, and allows children to discover the closeness of Jesus, who is a true and unshakable support for all men<sup>22</sup>.

## Conclusion

Broadly defined, education is an extremely topical issue that affects both individuals and societies living in a global village of civilizational transformations. The modern world, with its indeterminacy and liquidity in the sphere of principles and values, hinders the educational process. Parents and educators are burdened with an extremely difficult task because, by not keeping up with the pace of change, they face changing trends, ideologies, and generational desires. For years, Poles have pointed to family as the greatest value<sup>23</sup>. The pedagogical principles of culture presented, important for the modern teaching of

<sup>19</sup> Cf. GE, No. 149.

<sup>20</sup> Francis, *Post-synodal apostolic exhortation Amoris laetitia. Christian married couples and all the lay faithful on love in the family*, [https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost\\_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco\\_esortazione-ap\\_20160319\\_amoris-laetitia.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20160319_amoris-laetitia.html), No. 288.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. M. Borda, *Antropologiczne podstawy przyszłego autonomicznego życia wiarą w nauczaniu religii dzieci w wieku przedszkolnym*, in: *Edukacja małego dziecka. Wychowanie i kształcenie – kierunki i perspektywy zmian*, Vol. 10, eds. E. Ogrodzka-Mazur, U. Szuścik, B. Oelszlaeger-Kosturek, Cieszyn – Kraków 2017, p. 184.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. A. Solak, *Człowiek i jego wychowanie. Zagadnienia wybrane*, Tarnów 2001, p. 75.


<sup>23</sup> K. Walancik-Ryba, *Family in Poland. Social and Legal Contexts*, Berlin 2021, pp. 70-73.

religion in schools, are the answer of Pope Francis, who promotes “the culture of encounter” over “the culture of exclusion”. He points out that “today we put the culture of encounter first, or everyone loses”. What is this “culture of encounter”? “It is not the culture of selfishness and individualism that often prevails in our society, but the culture of solidarity and encounter”, the Pope explained, visiting Favela Varginha in Rio de Janeiro on July 25, 2014<sup>24</sup>. He said that it is only when we are able to share with others that we become truly rich, and the measure of the greatness of a society depends on the way it treats the poorest.

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<sup>24</sup> Franciszek, *Spotkanie z mieszkańcami faweli Varginha*, “L'Osservatore Romano” 20013, No. 8-9 (354), p. 6.

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## Karol Wojtyła as Philosopher of Encounter

The article's presupposition is that the encounter with the other is one of the central themes in Karol Wojtyła's works. In order to show Karol Wojtyła as a philosopher of encounter, the article examines his epistemological method and its purpose, his concept of freedom and love, and finally his understanding of man in the ethical perspective. First, the article describes Wojtyła's attitude of realism and turning to experience as indispensable elements of his personalism. Wojtyła's idea of human freedom is then discussed against the backdrop of determinism and indeterminism and in the context of the autonomy of created things. Next, the article outlines Wojtyła's concept of love by applying his hermeneutics of the gift. The ontological and moral dimension of love in and between human persons is explained through the reality of the law of the gift. Finally, the discussion on love is complemented by the ethical reflections on the hierarchy of values, including the objective and subjective aspects of ethos.

**Key words:** realism, experience, freedom, love, gift, ethos.

### Introduction

We are justified to say that the encounter with the other is one of the central themes in Wojtyła's philosophy as well as his theology and poetry. This theme will function as a lodestar for my reflections. Although my presentation will focus on his philosophical thought, I will not shy away from using his theological or even poetic insight. In order to show Karol Wojtyła as a philosopher of encounter, I will examine his epistemological method and its purpose, his concept of freedom and love, and finally his understanding of man from the ethical perspective.



## Contact with the reality

### Realism

Let me begin by describing Wojtyła's cognitive (epistemological) attitude toward the world. Above all, we can call him a realist. That is, he sees the existing world as something ontologically transcendent with respect to the knowing subject (that is, man), though knowable. This realistic approach recognizes two things. First, there exists the other outside of me; this other (whether the world in general or any beings living in it) is one that I did not create. He exists independently from my self. Second, this other is knowable and lovable – I am able to interact with him. In other words, I am able to encounter this other; I can enter into some kind of dialogue with him. Third, I – as well as every man – possess the inclination to know the truth about others. Realism acknowledges the following fundamental fact: something exists outside of the subject-man, while he strives to know the truth about this something. Ultimately, Wojtyła sees realism as the harmony between the subject and the objective reality while recognizing the ontological distinction between them.

### There is no encounter without realism

Consequently, authentic encounter is impossible under the presuppositions of – on the one hand – empiricism (which morphs into agnosticism, phenomenalism, and materialism) and – on the other hand – rationalism (whose excess leads to idealism and apriorism). Wojtylian realism in cognition avoids these two epistemological extremes, as they prevent or limit full cognition and knowledge. What I want to stress now is the fact that *realism is a necessary, indispensable condition of any authentic encounter*. This realistic attitude applies not only to natural knowledge but also to the encounter with God, especially in faith. For, as the late Pope Benedict reminds us, faith is “entrusting oneself to that which has not been made by oneself and never could be made and which precisely in this way supports and makes possible all our making.”<sup>1</sup>

### Turning to experience

If we agree that an encounter with the other requires a realistic cognitive attitude, the next step is to recognize that a unique feature

<sup>1</sup> J. Ratzinger, *Introduction to Christianity*, San Francisco 2004, p. 70.



of Wojtyła's realism is his turning to experience (and lived-experience). Experience supports encounter because it is the immediate and direct contact with what exists, a contact that involves human consciousness and understanding. To experience (*doświadczyć*) means to be a direct eyewitness of something in oneself.<sup>2</sup> This "direct eyewitness" is a component of fully human, intellectual cognition. By experience, Wojtyła does not mean the contact with the sensual-affective data alone, which the mind then orders and interprets. He distances himself from the phenomenalist concept of experience, in which experience is reduced to the function and content of the senses alone.<sup>3</sup> Instead, experience is already a certain understanding (intellectual, interior vision) of what is experienced.<sup>4</sup> Hence, in *Person and Act*, Wojtyła states that "every experience is also some understanding."<sup>5</sup> (This understanding is linked to mental consciousness, though we shall not discuss the relation between consciousness and cognition here). Most importantly, however, the anthropological value of experience lies in its reflexive character: in some way, man experiences himself in his every experience.<sup>6</sup>

However, Wojtyła is aware that whatever exists in relation to the person exists *really* (outside of consciousness) and *intentionally* (in consciousness).<sup>7</sup> This also applies to the moral subject: the human person and his action. There is no other way for a person to encounter

<sup>2</sup> Already, the Polish word used for experience (*doświadczenie*) speaks to the fact of understanding, as it relates to the word "witness" (*świadek*) or "to witness" (*świadczyć*). See G. Ignatik, *Person and Value: Karol Wojtyła's Personalistic and Normative Theory of Man, Morality, and Love*, Lanham-Boulder-New York-London 2021, p. 6.

<sup>3</sup> K. Wojtyła, "Person and Act" and *Related Essays. Volume 1 of The English Critical Edition of the Works of Karol Wojtyła/John Paul II*, Washington DC 2021, pp. 100-101.

<sup>4</sup> K. Wojtyła, *Person and Act*, p. 96. See *ibid.*, p. 100. Nonetheless, in my opinion, Wojtyła's concept of experience is not equivalent to phenomenological experience, which is identical to understanding.

<sup>5</sup> K. Wojtyła, *Person and Act*, p. 96. See a similar statement on p. 39: "in human cognition (regardless of whether scientific or pre-scientific cognition), there is no experience that does not already include some understanding."

<sup>6</sup> K. Wojtyła, *Person and Act*, p. 95. See also K. Wojtyła, *The Person: Subject and Community*, in: "Person and Act" and *Related Essays. Volume 1 of The English Critical Edition of the Works of Karol Wojtyła/John Paul II*, Washington DC 2021, p. 470.

<sup>7</sup> This statement does not contradict the fact that, according to Wojtyła, consciousness possesses a non-intentional character, that is, it does not posit objects vis-à-vis itself, but reflects and subjectivizes them. See K. Wojtyła, *Person and Act*, p. 211.

reality in a personal way except with the help of his mind and, consequently, consciousness. Hence, in *Love and Responsibility*, he writes, “The person is an objective being, which, as a definite subject, most closely contacts the whole (external) world and most thoroughly inheres in it precisely through his interiority and interior life.”<sup>8</sup> We see that Wojtyła’s realism is fully personalistic – the encounter with the other cannot but be personal. Therefore, one can choose to learn about the human person as the ontological subject of being and action (*suppositum*) directly from his experience of living and acting in the world and seek explanation for this lived-experience in the sphere of being. In other words, the order of consciousness (*percipi*) reflects what occurs in the order of being (*esse*). Man can also condition this latter order through his conscious action. At any rate, the scientist-thinker can focus on the lived-experience of human acts as they are reflected in consciousness without falling into subjectivism and idealism (where *percipi* = *esse*). In his masterpiece *Person and Act*, Wojtyła integrates the interior experience (introspection) and exterior experience (observation) in describing and interpreting the experience of man. In that work, the goal with its method is to understand the person by studying his proper action.<sup>9</sup> The goal of understanding and interpretation is an adequate (true) image of the experienced object – the human person and his conscious action in the world.<sup>10</sup>

### Meeting between the objective and subjective profiles

The point of these anthropological reflections is that realism demands not only an objective look at the person but also a subjective, psychological insight. In other words, in order to understand the human person in his richness and depth, he should be considered from the objective perspective as a metaphysical subject of being and action (that is, as a *suppositum*) as well as from the perspective of consciousness as a psychological subject who is an interiority, full of specific lived-experiences. To put it in Wojtyła’s words, “the human person exists in these two profiles and knows himself in them.” The profile of being and that of consciousness do not exclude or obstruct but reveal and complement each other. Hence, Wojtyła advocates using methods

<sup>8</sup> K. Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, Boston 2013, p. 5.

<sup>9</sup> Wojtyła writes: “The study nevertheless will not be of the act that presupposes the person... *this study will concern the act that reveals the person; it will be a study of the person through the act.*” K. Wojtyła, *Person and Act*, p. 103 (emphasis original).

<sup>10</sup> K. Wojtyła, *Person and Act*, pp. 110-11.

corresponding to each of the profiles together in correlation (namely, the method of integral experience and that of internal experience or introspection). Otherwise, one may fall into a unilateral vision of man (empiricism or idealism, to name a couple). According to Wojtyła, the encounter with consciousness does not have to obscure being but rather manifests the suppositum all the more.

In sum, Wojtyła does not consider the phenomenological and meta-physical methods as contradictory but – quite the contrary – as complementary and mutually enriching in understanding and interpreting the person and his encounter with the other.

Dogmatic  
Theology

### Overall Wojtylian attitude of trust

Wojtyła's epistemological position expresses his profound trust toward man and the world. Wojtyła is not one of the so-called "masters of suspicion," who condemn what is human in advance, as it were, by their aspectual and negative anthropology.<sup>11</sup> We can call his attitude toward the reality "integral" as well as "optimistic," both from the perspective of the subject and the object of knowledge. For the Polish thinker, man with his cognitive faculties can be trusted in his perception of the world. Man is capable of detecting falsehood and deception – human experience can be trusted as the reliable means of contacting the reality.<sup>12</sup> On the other hand, Wojtyła trusts the reality itself – the existing beings and facts do not attempt to deceive man. Quite the opposite, they are generous in their very existence: in a sense, they want to be known, to share the truth about them. They open themselves to the knowing subject by manifesting their essence to him and, so to speak, expect to be loved.

<sup>11</sup> The examples of such "masters" are Friedrich Nietzsche, who sees the desire for glory and power as the driving force in human life, Karl Marx, who understands man in light of his desire to possess and produce, and Sigmund Freud, for whom man is a (sexual) pleasure seeking animal. We could add here Immanuel Kant, who understood the phenomena of the world as a reality closed upon itself, separated from the human mind. See John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them: A Theology of the Body*, Boston 2006, 46:1-2.

<sup>12</sup> Hence, Wojtyła is able to say that "We can cognitively venture very deeply into the structure of man without fostering a fear that the particular aspects of experience lead us into error." K. Wojtyła, *Person and Act*, p. 100.

## Engaging the world in freedom

### Man's freedom and the autonomy of creation

#### Dogmatic Theology

Properly human, personal engagement with existing beings happens through human action, hence, it demands freedom. Karol Wojtyła is a defender of authentic human freedom. He rejects two extremes in understanding of it. The first one is *determinism*, which holds that man is not free. Instead, it views man as determined from within (by psychosomatic processes, drives, and instincts) and from without (by nature and society). A deterministic view is often coupled by a reduction of man to the visible world and the processes in it. The second extreme is *indeterminism*, which postulates freedom from all determinism. It is basically an independence from all goods and beings and indifference to the other. In the Hegelian (idealistic) version, freedom is an independence from matter that requires a return to the spiritual absolute, to the world of pure ideas. In the Marxist (materialistic) version, freedom is the awareness of necessity, which allows one to use this knowledge to dominate oneself and nature in accord with one's own goals.<sup>13</sup>

According to Wojtyła, freedom is neither an escape from the goods of the world or from one's body, nor a manipulation of beings. In my opinion, Wojtyła saw that the indifference, disrespect, or hatred of things – of created beings – is eventually transferred to the disregard and abuse of human persons with their bodies and their drives and instincts. In other words, the contempt for creation, for nature, is a cause of human alienation, an estrangement from self (although the true root of alienation, according to Wojtyła, is moral evil). Instead, freedom is a sort of respectful collaboration or sincere dialogue with beings. Wojtyła recognizes that man is not a necessary being but dependent on others for existence and happiness (he's contingent). Man is also a potential being: no one is perfect in this world, but everyone strives for happiness. Therefore, human freedom is exercised within man's orientation to goods within which man rationally chooses the means needed for actualization of his being. Grasped in the context of contingency and possibility, human freedom cannot be the origin and the norm of truth. Rather, freedom is a condition of the being's growth in perfection and fulfillment.

<sup>13</sup> This makes us realize that a lot of the Western world – so engrossed in its technological advances – has been afflicted by Marxism.

## Contemplative outlook in free action

Realizing authentic human freedom presupposes a contemplative attitude toward creation. Wojtylian concept of freedom corresponds to that presented by the pastoral constitution *Gaudium et spes*, which discusses the significance of science and technology vis-à-vis the autonomy of created things. The constitution recognizes this autonomy as the possession of proper laws and values by created things and societies. In virtue of being created, all things are endowed with “their own stability, truth, goodness, proper laws and order.” Man is to distinguish, consult, and manage them with due respect.<sup>14</sup> In order to be faithful to his realistic attitude, man ought to heed the following principle in his action: “In all your activity remain in harmony with the objective reality.”<sup>15</sup> In other words, act in accord with your own (rational) being and your inherence (involvement) in the world of other beings. By defending the autonomy of created things, *Gaudium et spes* defends epistemological and ethical realism. Again, man is not to arbitrarily use creation as he sees fit but exercise conscious stewardship. In his work *Sources of Renewal*, Wojtyła recognizes that living in this world and transforming it through human work means an engagement with the Maker. He writes, “It may be said that this autonomy [of created things] indirectly indicates the necessity of ‘ordering’ (or rather subordinating) ‘all things in truth,’ a necessity which applies to man and all his activity in relation to the world. As the Council teaches, at this point there is always an encounter with the Creator.”<sup>16</sup>

Dogmatic  
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## Understanding the reality in terms of love

### The hermeneutics of the gift

Wojtyła’s cognitive approach expresses his fundamental attitude toward the world, called “the hermeneutics of the gift.” The concept of “gift” is for him the hermeneutical key to reality precisely because this reality is fundamentally and existentially a gift. According to St. John Paul II, the meaning of creation lies not only in the fact that, by his word, God makes everything out of nothing (*ex nihilo*) but also

<sup>14</sup> This thought is more clearly expressed in original Latin than in the official English translation. The Latin says, “per terrenarum rerum autonomiam intelligimus res creatas et ipsas societates propriis legibus valoribusque gaudere, ab homine gradatim dignoscendis, adhibendis et ordinandis” (*Gaudium et spes* 36).

<sup>15</sup> K. Wojtyła, *Ethics Primer. Elementarz Etyczny*, Lublin–Roma 2017, p. 53.

<sup>16</sup> K. Wojtyła, *Sources of Renewal: The Implementation of the Second Vatican Council*, San Francisco 1980, p. 50.

in the motive for this act, namely, love. Hence, the Polish pontiff understands *creation* as a bestowal of being out of love: that which exists is a gift from someone who loves.<sup>17</sup> In other words, God does not create because he must or because he needs his creation for some practical reason.<sup>18</sup> Creation out of love is a bestowal of value that is followed by an affirmation of it (God the Creator “saw everything... and indeed, it was good” [Gen 1:31]). The point here is for us to see that creation possesses meaning, hence, value, by virtue of being created: its fundamental value arises from the fact of being a gift from a loving God. Furthermore, Wojtyła believes that a work always manifests its author (or, speaking metaphysically, we can demonstrate something about a cause from its effect). Consequently, every creature of God bears within itself the mark of the gift – the most original and fundamental mark of creation. However, to recognize all creatures as gifts, that is, as beings-with-value, is not only to see them as given for me but also to affirm them as – in some analogous sense – given to themselves. Any encounter and interaction with them postulates this awareness. This is true especially with respect to human persons: to apply the hermeneutics of the gift to them means to see them as beings created “for their own sake” (persons), that is, the way God sees them.

## Love as the foundation of human life

Bearing the mark of the gift, man begins to understand his existence in terms of love. Love, however, is not merely an aspect of life – it is not something superadded to existence. Wojtyła recognizes an intrinsic bond between life and love. Both are bound together from the beginning of creation. However, more can be said: *Wojtyła considers love as foundational for life!* This conviction has a theological origin, namely, the truth that God is love (see 1 Jn 4:8), and only as such is he the source of life. Hence, the Polish thinker can affirm that God “is Life because he is Love.”<sup>19</sup> The conviction that love is the basis of

<sup>17</sup> See John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them* 13:3. St. John Paul II links the Genesis account of creation (Gen 1:31) with the Pauline description of love (1 Cor 13). Of course, theologians confirmed the link between love and gift long ago. In his reflections on the proper names of the Holy Spirit, St. Thomas beautifully observes that love is the first gift, through which all other gifts are given. See *Summa theologiae* I, q. 38, a. 2.

<sup>18</sup> We see this truth succinctly expressed by St. Thomas Aquinas in his treatise on the Trinity. See *Summa theologiae* I, q. 32, a. 1, ad 3.

<sup>19</sup> K. Wojtyła, *Misterium życia – misterium miłości*, in: *Do Wrocławia przybywałem wiele razy...: Kazania, wykłady i słowa pozostawione mieszkańcom Dolnego*



life drives his theory and interpretation of the human person, the human society, as well as the whole creation. This conviction drives his hermeneutics of encounter.

Because of this primacy of love, Wojtyła is able to say that “love explained everything to me.”<sup>20</sup> Unless it is the foundation of all life, love would be unable to explain everything. This is exactly what is stated on the John Paul II Institute’s website: “Nuptiality opens the person to the truth of love, and from this, unlocks the truth of all reality.”<sup>21</sup> This is exactly why, in his first encyclical *Redemptor Hominis*, John Paul II asserts that man will fail to understand himself and everything else without love.<sup>22</sup>

Dogmatic  
Theology

## The law of the gift

To say that love is the foundation of life means to acknowledge that love penetrates and orders the human being not only on the most profound, ontic level but also in the dimension of his action. By applying this truth to the human person, Wojtyła will say that the fundamental principle that governs human existence and action is “the law of the gift.”<sup>23</sup> In itself, the law of the gift is “the potency and power of giving oneself” that is rooted in the structures of self-possession and self-governance proper to man.<sup>24</sup> It is precisely because the human person

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Śląska, Wrocław 2008, p. 147. This fact is manifested and fulfilled in the person and action of Jesus Christ, who “loved the church and gave himself up for her that he might sanctify her” (Eph 5:25-26).

<sup>20</sup> See K. Wojtyła, *Pieśń o Bogu ukrytym (Song of the Hidden God)*, in: *Poezje – Poems*, Kraków 1998, p. 10 and 11.

<sup>21</sup> See <https://www.johnpaulii.edu/>.

<sup>22</sup> See John Paul II, *Redemptor hominis*, 10, where John Paul II says: “Man cannot live without love. He remains a being that is incomprehensible for himself, his life is senseless, if love is not revealed to him, if he does not encounter love, if he does not experience it and make it his own, if he does not participate intimately in it.”

<sup>23</sup> See K. Wojtyła, *On the Meaning of Spousal Love*, in: *Love and Responsibility*, Boston 2013, p. 282, 286, and 287-288.

<sup>24</sup> K. Wojtyła, *On the Meaning of Spousal Love*, p. 281. To identify the law of the gift as a principle that regards not the beginning, but the supernatural perfection of life misses the ontological depth of this law, hence, the ontological depth of love in the human person. It is another matter that the law of the gift can be fully realized only in the order of grace. George Weigel beautifully captures this ontological depth of the law of the gift in its relation to the origin: “The Law of the Gift written into the human heart is an expression of the self-giving love that constitutes the interior life of God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.” See

is endowed with freedom (*sui iuris and alteri incommunicabilis*) that he is able to give himself to others. This freedom is exercised precisely in virtue of the person's ontic incommunicability. What is relevant here, however, is that this law identifies the person as someone who exists "from" the other (especially, the Other) and "for" the other and, therefore, finds his final end in the encounter and communion of persons. For this reason, this law possesses a hermeneutical and, we could say, even normative significance.

Wojtyła admits that the law of the gift permeates the entire human person, including his body and sexual distinctness.<sup>25</sup> This means that the gift of self to another can be truly total, for even the psychosomatic sphere of the person falls under the scope of the law of the gift. Although this is the case, the law of the gift is primarily a spiritual reality that is simply unfolded in the visible sphere. It is that which determines all actions and passions of man, including those that have a sensual or even vegetative character (some of which are not even made conscious). Wojtyła captures this important principle as follows: "the very need to give oneself to another person is deeper than the sexual drive and is connected above all with the spiritual nature of the person. It is not sexuality that evokes in a woman and a man the need for reciprocal self-giving but, quite the contrary, the need for self-giving, which is latent in every person, is unfolded in the conditions of bodily existence and on the substratum of the sexual drive through the bodily and sexual union of a man and a woman in marriage."<sup>26</sup> This passage does not affirm dualistic views on the person à la Plato or Descartes. Quite the contrary, it simply introduces us to the vision of man as a sign, according to which the body is the terrain for the expression of the entire person.<sup>27</sup> At the same time, it grounds the personalistic principle of conjugal life in which it is love that governs (should govern!) the sexual expressions of spouses and not vice versa. Another point of the above-quoted passage is to show that it is not possible to understand the body and its sex outside of the proper understanding of the person, outside of the proper personalistic hermeneutics.

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George Weigel in his *Witness to Hope: The Biography of Pope John Paul II*, New York 2001, p. 846.

<sup>25</sup> K. Wojtyła, *On the Meaning of Spousal Love*, p. 288.

<sup>26</sup> K. Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, p. 239.

<sup>27</sup> See K. Wojtyła, *Person and Act*, p. 312-313.



## The presupposition of love as self-gift

But what lies at the foundation of this self-giving attitude and action is certain reciprocity or, rather, reception. The first anterior disposition of love is the welcoming of the other into one's own heart. Love presupposes an encounter in which I affirm the presence of the other in my heart in full wonder and appreciation of this other. In his *Theology of the Body*, John Paul II states that "Love makes the other 'I' in a certain sense one's own 'I'... Love not only unites the two subjects, but it allows them to penetrate each other so mutually, thereby belonging spiritually to each other... The 'I' becomes in a certain sense 'you' and the 'you' becomes 'I.'"<sup>28</sup> In other words, John Paul II sees the essence of love as a certain *perichoresis* (mutual indwelling), to use the Trinitarian term. Let me also note that this welcoming of the other into your interior self is the anterior disposition of not only spousal but also parental love. In my opinion, to welcome the child into one's heart (especially before the child's conception) is the essence of what is commonly called the "pro-life mentality."

Dogmatic  
Theology

## Receiving the word and its love

### Initial questions and problem

As we saw, interiority is necessary for freedom and the encounter with the other is necessary for love. Human acts are expressions of freedom that establish a kind of dialogue with the other in the world. Nevertheless, having described Karol Wojtyła's cognitive encounter with the reality and his understanding of one's encounter with other persons, a particular problem arises. How can we affirm the value of each being in what is exactly due to it in virtue of what it is? How do we know that our love is genuine, or – to use the famous formulation – "true love"? In theological terms, we could pose the question as "Is it at all possible to see the world through the eyes of God and, if so, how to act accordingly?". Cardinal Ratzinger recognizes this problem when, in his *Introduction to Christianity*, he writes that love can become "an arbitrary deed" and "self-righteousness."<sup>29</sup> In his book *Ordering Love*, David L. Schindler portrays this problem as "instrumentalization"

<sup>28</sup> John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them* 117:4.

<sup>29</sup> J. Ratzinger, *Introduction to Christianity*, p. 270. There, he writes that "the principle of love includes faith... for without faith (which we have come to understand as a term expressing man's ultimate need to receive and the inadequacy of all personal achievement) love becomes an arbitrary deed. It cancels itself out and becomes self-righteousness."

built on the foundation of so-called “ontological Pelagianism.”<sup>30</sup> And Card. Wojtyła speaks of “sinful love” that can be reduced to sensual lived-experience for which pleasure alone is the greatest good.<sup>31</sup> Examples of “self-righteous love” or “sinful love” are not difficult to find nowadays, as any consensual behavior between persons – usually based on some sort of covetousness – is attempted to be portrayed as genuine love or even participation in Christ’s self-gift.

## Ethos and its hierarchy

This question can be answered in different ways. Joseph Ratzinger speaks of the indispensability of faith, which is based on “man’s ultimate need to receive and the inadequacy of all personal achievement.”<sup>32</sup> David Schindler identifies the necessity of “an anterior gratitude (listening, patience, contemplativeness, wonder)” for the personal response to be genuinely loving.<sup>33</sup> Karol Wojtyła speaks about the need for integrating the transcendent into what is immanent in man and his action. What I want to emphasize now as the indispensable component of genuine encounter of persons in love is love’s ethical character. For Wojtyła, morality is something essentially human, personal – something that is indispensable for proper, genuine encounter with man and with God as well as with the whole of reality. It is the experience of morality that affords insight into what is deeply and essentially human. Therefore, Wojtyła says, “Thanks to this aspect of morality – one that we can also call dynamic or existential – we are able to more deeply understand man precisely as a person.”<sup>34</sup> He continues, “The

<sup>30</sup> See, for instance, D.L. Schindler, *Ordering Love: Liberal Societies and the Memory of God*, Grand Rapids–Cambridge 2011, p. 187. There, Schindler explains ontological Pelagianism as “the self’s relation to the other is consequently first an enactment or construction by a self not yet formed by the effective presence of the other in the self.”

<sup>31</sup> K. Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, p. 150: “‘Sinful love’ is nothing else but precisely a system of reference between two persons Y and X in which affection alone, and even more so pleasure alone, assumes the dimension of the self-reliant good and determines everything, ignoring the objective value of the person and the objective laws and principles of interaction and relations between persons of different sex.” There, he also speaks of “bodily love” that seeks carnal satisfaction through using. See *ibid.*, p. 131.

<sup>32</sup> J. Ratzinger, *Introduction to Christianity*, p. 270.

<sup>33</sup> D.L. Schindler, *Ordering Love*, p. 209.

<sup>34</sup> K. Wojtyła, *Person and Act*, p. 105. In fact, Wojtyła is able to say that the becoming of the moral value in man “reveals the person to us even more deeply and thoroughly than the act itself.” See *ibid.* (emphasis original).

experience of morality in its dynamic, that is, existential, aspect is, after all, an integral part of the experience of man, the experience that, as we stated, constitutes for us the broad basis for understanding the person.”<sup>35</sup> For example, you will find a lot about the lived-experience of duty when you read *Person and Act* and a great deal about shame when you pick up *Love and Responsibility* (although there is more to *Love and Responsibility* than just a treatment on shame).

One profound element that ensures the proper vision of the world in truth and contact with it is “ethos.” The Polish thinker understands ethos as a certain interior “world of values” that is experienced with its hierarchy by an individual or a community in a particular epoch.<sup>36</sup> In his works, Wojtyła recognizes a hierarchy of beings or goods, which man apprehends (discovers), and which is based on the beings’ immanent perfection in the world.<sup>37</sup> He affirms that there also exists a hierarchy of values, that is, a certain order of importance among them. Without spending much time on this point, let me simply remark that if we consider the values of beings themselves, the latter hierarchy (of values) is in some sense correlated to the former (of beings-goods). Values are objective in the sense that they are not merely constructed the subject who experiences them.

At any rate, I want to highlight three points about the hierarchy of values. First, there exists such a hierarchy: some values are superior to others, and some values are subordinated to others. This hierarchy is simply given to (and experienced by) man and not logically constructed by him, even though the ethos of an individual or an entire society may change with time and culture. The task of the human person is to correctly recognize this hierarchy and adopt it. In other words, man’s task is to have the proper ethos. Second, this correctly recognized hierarchy of values must be retained in human praxis so that the human person can experience and affirm beings for what they truly are. Third, if we consider values from the perspective of their bearer, that is, the person, it is he who is the highest value. All the other values are subordinated to this central value because they serve it. Against

<sup>35</sup> K. Wojtyła, *Person and Act*, p. 105.

<sup>36</sup> K. Wojtyła, *An Assessment of the Possibility for Building a Christian Ethics Based on the Presuppositions of Max Scheler’s System*, in: “The Lublin Lectures” and *Works on Max Scheler. Volume 2 of The English Critical Edition of the Works of Karol Wojtyła/John Paul II*, Washington 2023, p. 420–421, and *The Lublin Lectures*, *ibid.*, p. 147–148. See also M. Scheler, *Formalism in Ethics and Non-formal Ethics of Values: A New Attempt toward the Foundation of an Ethical Personalism*, Evanston 1973, p. 301ff.

<sup>37</sup> K. Wojtyła, *Ethics Primer. Elementarz Etyczny*, p. 103.

all objective values, Wojtyła places the moral value (moral goodness or evilness) as highest, for, as he declares, “the superior value is that which perfects the human person as such.”<sup>38</sup> By the way, another valid – and complementary – interpretation of this saying is that God is the highest value of man.

## The objective dimension of ethos

Furthermore, he recognizes an objective dimension of ethos. Ethos itself is shaped by an objective system of values, such as the Gospel or, in other words, by a transcendent norm of morality – a norm that is a principle of actualizing the dignity of the human person (being good as a person and acting well). Hence, it is proper to speak of the Christian ethos – an ethos that accepts the commandments (and the hierarchy of values that corresponds to them) entrusted to mankind by Jesus Christ.<sup>39</sup> Nevertheless, due to a particular sensibility of the individual or the community to various values, ethos can develop over time, thus shaping a different response to these values in a particular culture and epoch.

Let me remark that, according to Wojtyła, the ultimate source of all moral norms is God.<sup>40</sup> This supernatural origin of moral norms is easily acknowledged in Sacred Scripture. There we find multiple normative statements in the form of commandments, counsels, and examples for imitation – all expressions of God’s wisdom aimed at helping man govern his conduct. Finding the created human nature as the source of moral norms (in the form of natural law) only coincides with the norms’ supernatural origin.

Now, we are ready to define the norm of morality. In order to grasp the norms that govern man’s moral life, we need to step beyond the lived-experiences of value, responsibility, and duty – while remaining in close union with them. We call these norms moral in contradistinction to other kinds, such as logical, aesthetic, technical, adaptive, or legal. These particular norms shape human duty and perfect some aspects of man through action in conformity with them. However, only the norm of morality (the moral norm) conditions the moral value of the human act, by which man as a person (as such) becomes good or evil. Wojtyła defines the norm of morality as “the principle of action

<sup>38</sup> *Acta Synodalia*, vol. I, pars III, 609 (n. 43) (my translation of “Tamquam valor superior fungitur illud, quod personam humanam qua talem perficit.”).

<sup>39</sup> Consequently, it is proper to speak of God as man’s supreme value.

<sup>40</sup> K. Wojtyła, *Ethics Primer*, p. 41-49.

– the act of a person – which immediately and ‘from within’ gives that act its moral character, causing the person performing that act to become through it morally good or evil.”<sup>41</sup> Being a principle, the moral norm substantiates all the other particular norms, that is, the rules or prescriptions of conduct. The best-known examples of the norms as principles are the personalistic norm and the commandment to love. If we ask about the normative principle of the norm, Wojtyła will immediately indicate it to be the truth about the object and its value. Hence, we could reduce the definition of the moral norm to the statement that the norm is the truth about the good.<sup>42</sup>

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### The subjective dimension of ethos

The characteristic trait of the human person is that the transcendence of his moral action is coupled with its immanence, that is, with the fact that man is wholly in his act. In the previous paragraph, we intimated that man’s expression in action should correspond to the intention of God the Creator and Redeemer. Now, we shall highlight the subjective or personal moment of human morality. This moment is nothing other than the opening of the human person’s heart and mind to the self-giving of God in Jesus Christ – to the mystery of love and life. John Paul II describes this personal moment in terms of human ethos. As we explained, ethos is man’s interior world (hierarchy) of values that shapes his action. Ethos is formed precisely through the subject’s experience of value in truth: “Ethos denotes in a sense the entering of the ‘I’ into the depth of the norm itself and at the same time the descending of the norm itself into the interiority of man, the subject of morality. Moral value is connected with the dynamic process of human interiority.”<sup>43</sup> By being rooted in the experience of values in truth, ethos becomes the interior shape, or form, of human morality. Ethos is an element of the “living morality,” that is, the perception and lived-experience of value, from which duty proceeds as an expression of conscience.<sup>44</sup> In other words, we begin to see ethos as an encounter between the eternal word and the human heart, one that flourishes into

<sup>41</sup> K. Wojtyła, *Man in the Field of Responsibility*, South Bend 2011, p. 34.

<sup>42</sup> K. Wojtyła, *Man in the Field of Responsibility*, p. 44ff. See also K. Wojtyła, *The Lublin Lectures*, p. 153 and 158.

<sup>43</sup> John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them* 24:3 (emphasis original, translation modified in light of Polish text).

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

good works. This is the Christian ethos, that is, “a shape of morality that corresponds to the action of God in the mystery of redemption.”<sup>45</sup>

What our reflections demonstrate is that man’s encounter with the world and all the beings in it in all his actions and interactions inevitably possesses an ethical character. It is thanks to the moral norm accepted into the person’s heart that the person has the properly human contact with the world and especially with other persons.

## Conclusion

I outlined Karol Wojtyła’s philosophy of encounter by emphasizing several themes (realism, freedom, love, and ethos) from various perspectives (objective and subjective, horizontal and vertical, individual and reciprocal). Karol Wojtyła’s optimistic attitude toward the other attests to the fundamental meaningfulness of reality. It also attests to the power of love to renew this world through the word of God amidst man’s experience of evil. Indeed, by his perennial teaching, Karol Wojtyła’s words bring hope and encouragement to every human person to lead his life with God. His philosophy of encounter is also a philosophy of hope, which could be summarized by God’s words he repeated so often: “Do not be afraid” – “*Ego sum, nolite timere*” (Mt 14:27, Mk 6:50, and Jn 6:20).

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## Apophatic Character of Christian Creatology According to Vladimir N. Lossky

According to Vladimir N. Lossky, one of the most eminent Orthodox theologians of the twentieth century, the Christian doctrine of creation does not constitute something like a philosophical *preambula fidei*, but is a dogma of faith, since its subject is the God-Trinity, and the difference between the Creator and the creation is in its essence inaccessible outside the Revelation accepted in faith. This truth has a radically apophatic character, founded on the apophatic mystery of Trinitatis, presentation of which is the purpose of the present text. Therefore, issues such as *creatio ex nihilo*, the absolute freedom of the creative act, the Trinitarian character of creation, creation in the perspective of theosis will be examined in turn. The whole will be crowned with a synthetic recapitulation of the most relevant issues, exposing the profound apophatic nature of the Lossky's creatology.

**Key words:** Vladimir N. Lossky, creatology, apophaticism, deification, orthodox theology.

### Introduction

The creation of the world and of man, as the de-divine establishment of the imperishable relationship between Creator and creation, in which, or in virtue of which, the creation is called into existence and becomes itself, appears as being omnipotently apophatic, and therefore anchored in the apophatic fundamentality of God<sup>1</sup>. As Vladi-

<sup>1</sup> We adopt the following understanding of apophaticism: it is an attitude, not only cognitive but lifelong, of man/creation, according to which man/creation's access to God is always already possible "from within" His self-revelation-self-giving, in which man/creation is called to exist and continually transcend itself in a deifying union with God, in itself, in its essence inaccessible and unknowable, incomprehensible even at the highest stages of union with Him – which



mir N. Lossky emphasises, from an (Eastern) Christian perspective, “God is known in revelation as in personal relationship. Revelation is always revelation to someone; it is made up of encounters which order themselves into a history. Revelation in its totality is therefore; it is the reality of history, from creation to parousia. Revelation is thus a ‘theocosmic’ relationship which includes us. Not only can we not know God outside it, but we cannot judge it ‘objectively’ from outside. Revelation knows of no ‘outside’, for it is this relationship between God and the world within which, like it or not, we find ourselves. But in the immanence of revelation, God affirms Himself to be transcendent to creation. If one were to define as transcendent that which escapes the sphere of our knowledge and experience, one must say that God not only is not a part of world but even transcends His own revelation”<sup>2</sup>.

This paper aims to outline the most significant dimensions of the apophatic character of creatology in the thought of one of the most important Orthodox theologians of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and at the same time a radical defender of the apophatic character of Christianity and its theology<sup>3</sup>, Vladimir N. Lossky, without claiming to present the entirety of the subject of creation as seen by him<sup>4</sup>. This issue will be discussed in four parts: in the first we will look at the problem of *creatio ex nihilo* as a truth of faith, then we will analyse the absolute

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guarantees the preservation of the ontological difference and otherness-self of Creator and creation. The constitutive ontological-epistemological-teleological relationship of man/creation with God results in the apophaticity of man/creation-they are for themselves, in their essence as creations, and even more so as creations aiming at deification, not fully accessible, cognisable and garrnibled, and as such always more themselves outside of themselves in God than in themselves. Viewed in this way, apophaticism is more than negative theology, which is its cognitive element but does not exhaust it, after all, cognition is in the function of union, which transcends cognition. It is therefore a kind of “spirit”-dynamism of apophaticism, founding and embracing the whole of Christianity and its theology, moreover: the whole of created reality, whose mystagogue is the Holy Spirit – cf. V. Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of Eastern Church*, New York 1976 – further MT, pp. 238-249.

<sup>2</sup> V. Lossky, *Orthodox Theology: An Introduction*, New York 1978 – further OT, p. 31.

<sup>3</sup> See R. Williams, *The Via Negativa and the Foundations of Theology: an Introduction to the Thought of V.N. Lossky*, in: S. Sykes, D. Holmes (eds.), *New Studies in Theology I*, London 1980, pp. 95-117.

<sup>4</sup> The text is a modified and thoroughly reworked extract from an unpublished MA thesis, and then bachelor’s thesis (canonical bachelor’s degree) entitled *The Trinitarian Essence of Christianity as seen by Vladimir Lossky*, written and defended at the Faculty of Theology of the Pontifical University of John Paul II in Cracow.

freedom of the creative act, next we will show the Trinitarian character of creation, and finally we will raise the issue of the orientation of creation towards deification. The whole will conclude with a summary, in which the most relevant intuitions concerning the title issue will be collected and its apophatic character exposed.

### *Creatio ex nihilo* as a truth of faith

The creative act of God is the “beginning”, the basis and foundation conditioning all relationship between God and non-God, and thus creation. More than that, it does not only establish or make the relationship possible, but itself is a relationship, being the volitional relation of the God-Trinity to that which is different from Him. Lossky notes that

the world was created by the will of God. It is of another nature than God. It exists outside of God, “not by place but by nature” (St. John of Damascus). These simple affirmations of faith open onto a mystery of unfathomable as that of the divine being: the mystery of the created being, the reality of a being external to any presence of God, free in relation to His omnipotence, having an interiority radically new in face of the trinitarian plenitude, in brief the reality of the other-than-God, the irreducible ontological density of the other<sup>5</sup>.

In short, the mystery of the God-Trinity founds the mystery of creation<sup>6</sup>, the mysteriousness of which is founded on the relationship with the Creator and, in the first instance, on the creative relationship of God to His creation. Therefore, according to Lossky, we are not dealing here with a philosophical truth, but with a truth of faith<sup>7</sup>. Its constitutive components are, first of all, the *ex nihilo* of the divine *creatio* and the absolute non-necessity, the freedom of the creative *actio Dei*.

“Christianity alone, or more precisely, the Judaeo-Christian tradition, knows the notion of absolute creation. Creation *ex nihilo* is the

<sup>5</sup> OT, p. 51. “We might say that by creation *ex nihilo* God ‘makes room’ for something which is wholly outside of Himself; that, indeed, He sets up the ‘outside’ or nothingness alongside of His plenitude”, MT, p. 92.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. MT, p. 91. This is precisely why E. Jüngel described God as the mystery of the world, *Gott als Geheimnis der Welt: zur Begründung der Theologie des Gekreuzigten im Streit zwischen Theismus und Atheismus*, Tübingen 1977.

<sup>7</sup> Lossky views the creation of the world primarily, if not exclusively, from the perspective of deification, being convinced that only in the context of this unifying orientation-transformation can the entire scientific and philosophical discourse on *creatio* find its fulfillment.

dogma of faith”<sup>8</sup>, “for outside revelation nothing is known of the difference between the created and the uncreated, of creation *ex nihilo*, of the abyss which has to be crossed between the creation and the Creator”<sup>9</sup>. The biblical expression and at the same time the basis, of this truth of faith is seen by Lossky particularly in the following words from 2 Maccabees: “Behold the heavens and the earth, and seeing all that is there, you will understand that God has created it from nothing’ (ἐκ οὐκ ὄντος, according to the translation of the Septuagint)”<sup>10</sup>. Commenting on the translation of the Septuagint, Lossky draws attention to the linguistic procedures employed in this passage, contrary to the rules of grammar, but ‘understandable’ if we remember that we are dealing here with an attempt to utter the unspeakable, something that human language is incapable of encompassing, since it itself is a derivative of<sup>11</sup>.

Ecumenism

The nothingness of creations is as mysterious and unimaginable as the divine Nothingness of apophatic theology. The very idea of absolute nothingness is contradictory and absurd: to say the nothingness exists is a contradiction in terms; to say that it does not exist is to state pleonasm, at least unless we are trying awkwardly to express, in this way, the idea that nothing exists outside God; that, indeed, there is no such thing as “outside God”. Yet creation *ex nihilo* does mean just such an act producing something which is “outside of God” – the production of

<sup>8</sup> OT, 51. See in this context the very relevant remarks of K. Barth, *Dogmatik im Grundriss*, Zollikon-Zürich 1947, pp. 57-58.

<sup>9</sup> MT, p. 32. Of course, Islam, too, has an absolute concept of what is created in its *ex nihilo*, but if one remembers the Judeo-Christian roots of Islam (despite all the criticism it makes of it, claiming that both Judaism and Christianity have perverted the original Revelation) then one must recognise, that we remain essentially within the same vision of the world understood in terms of a creation that is not God (not to get into the further complexity of the often different interpretations of this basic given, or rather the consequences that follow from it, after all, the understanding of creation in its *ex nihilo* depends to a large extent on the conception of God as Creator according to the principle of *aggere sequitur esse*, hence creation seen through the lens of the Trinity is ultimately not fully the same as that seen from the perspective of Judaic or Islamic monotheism, bearing in mind also the differences between these monotheisms).

<sup>10</sup> OT, p. 51.

<sup>11</sup> „If one remembers that οὐκ is a radical negation which, by contrast with the other adverb of negation, μή, leaves no room for doubt, and that is here used systematically against the rules of grammar, one can measure the total implication of the expressions: God has not created starting from something, but starting with what is not, from ‘nothingness’”, OT, p. 51.

an entirely new subject, with no origin of any kind either of the divine nature or in any matter or potentially of being external to God<sup>12</sup>.

Lossky emphasises in this connection that to arrive properly at the revealed truth of creation out of nothing, an inverted apophaticism, a kind of *à rebours* apophaticism, is necessary<sup>13</sup>.

## The absolute freedom of the creative act

Since the creative act is the result of the will and not the nature of God<sup>14</sup>, and therefore comes from His absolute freedom, upon which the existence of all created entities is grounded<sup>15</sup>, this inverted apophaticism of creation *ex nihilo* is therefore based on the apophaticism of the mystery of God Himself. In other words, the existence of anything “outside” God is founded solely on His will:

Creation is therefore a free act, a gratuitous act of God. It does not respond to any necessity of divine being whatever. Even moral motivations which are sometimes attributed to it are platitudes without importance: the God-Trinity is plenitude of love; It has no need of another to pour out Its love, since the other is already in It, in the circumincession of the hypostases. God is therefore creator because He wishes it thus: the name of creator is secondary in relation to the three names of the Trinity. God is eternally Trinity. He is not eternally creator, as Origen believed [...]<sup>16</sup>.

When Lossky emphasises that God is not eternally creator, as He is eternally Trinity, he is not concerned with any distinctions in the key of time-eternity or changeability-unchangeability, since they are adequate only from the perspective of created being, while the living God in His eternity transcends them, hence Lossky again appeals to apophatic optics<sup>17</sup>. This procedure is intended to indicate the absolute non-necessity of creation and the impossibility of apprehending it from the side of creation in a positive way, thus “from the place” of

<sup>12</sup> MT, 92. On the impossibility of any reflection on nothingness in the absolute sense, which annihilates all thought about it see OT, 54. The paradox of the impossibility of thinking and speaking about nothingness is encapsulated by M. Heidegger in a brief yet eloquent statement: “Das Nichts selbst nichtet”, *Was ist Metaphysik*, Frankfurt am Main 1986, p. 34.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. MT, p. 91.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. MT, p. 93.

<sup>15</sup> MT, p. 93.

<sup>16</sup> OT, p. 52-53.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. OT, p. 63.

God “before creation”. Apophasis is an approach that preserves the unshakeable unconditioned Divinity of the God-Trinity as independent of whether creation is or is not. The God-Trinity is the God-Trinity, nothing is gained or lost as a result of the existence of creation or because of its absence. Creation, on the other hand, is radically in all its dimensions conditioned by being a creation, better: being created by the will of God. “The very being of God is reflected in the creation and calls it to share in His divinity. This call and possibility of responding to it constitute for those who are within creation the only justification of the latter”<sup>18</sup>.

Creation understood in this way is not found in other religions or metaphysical systems, whose doctrines can, with great simplification, be reduced on this point to two views: some form of demiurgic shaping of the world from primordial building blocks, or some variant of the divine process<sup>19</sup>. The Christian faith, therefore, sees the creative act as “a work which has had a beginning; and a beginning presupposes

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<sup>18</sup> Cf. OT, p. 53. In this context Damascenus contrasts the volitional and temporal creation of the world with the eternal birth of the Word in God, which is an act of nature, cf. Joannes Damascenus, *De fide orthodoxa*, I, 8, PG 94, 813 A. Losski is aware of the difficulty of thinking of creation as a completely free act, especially in the context of contamination by sin: “If the idea of creation as a totally free act embarrasses us, it is because our thought, being vitiated by sin, identifies liberty and license. God therefore seems to us a whimsical tyrant. But if for us liberty, when it does not adhere to the laws of creation within which we find ourselves, is an evil licence which disintegrates being, for God, who transcends creation, liberty is infinitely good: it gives rise to being. In creation, indeed, we recognize order, finality, love—all the very opposite of the license. The qualities of God, which have nothing to do with our dissolute pseudo-liberty, here manifest themselves”, OT, p. 53. Thus, Lossky seems to emphasise that when speaking of creation as founded solely on the will of God, this is not to be understood as if the divine will were separate from God’s other qualities, but the creative act is to be grasped in the entire integrity of God’s action. It is God who is the will, and not the will who is God – let us remember, at the same time, that according to our author, God is not defined-limited by His attributes, hence the will is situated in God at the level of energy, not nature, according to the patristic-palamic model, or in the case of Lossky, the neo-palamic model, which, while not recognizing the non-complexity, the simplicity of God, distinguishes “in” Him: Three Divine Persons, one divine nature and eternal, uncreated divine energies, eternal and uncreated divine glory, see MT, pp. 67-90. On this concept and its problematic nature in Lossky’s thought see A. Papanikolaou, *Divine energies or divine personhood: Vladimir Lossky and John Zizioulas on conceiving the transcendent and immanent God*, “Modern Theology” 2003, Vol. 19, pp. 357-385.

<sup>19</sup> See OT, 51-52.

a change, the passage from not-being into being”<sup>20</sup>. Hence, the divine *creatio* itself also defines the mode of existence of creation:

The creation is thus, by virtue of its very origin, something which changes, is liable to pass from one state into another. It has no ontological foundation either in itself (for it is created from nothing), nor in the divine essence, for in the act of creation God was under no necessity of any kind whatever. There is, in fact, nothing in the divine nature which could be necessary cause of the production of creations: creation might just as well not exist. God could equally well not have created [...]”<sup>21</sup>.

However, creation, which is ultimately the realisation of God’s will<sup>22</sup>, in spite of its contingency and non-necessity, began and will never cease to exist, and death and decay are not to be seen as annihilation – the perpetuity of God’s Word and the immutability of his will are the guarantee of the permanence of creation<sup>23</sup>. While the creation of the world is not a necessity, after all the God-Trinity might not have created the world, for the creation appears as a created necessity of existence, and of existence forever, as a result of God freely making it so<sup>24</sup>. In this, Lossky perceives, “the positive meaning of divine gratuitousness appears to us”. Interpreting this gift in terms of the poet’s generosity, and seeing in God the “Poet of the heavens and of the earth”, he points to a poetic way of understanding the mystery of creation, according to which to create is to call into existence that which is new, to take the risk of novelty, the apogee of which is the creation by God’s freedom of a new and different freedom<sup>25</sup>. However, this novelty of creation cannot be seen as adding something to the fullness of God. It is necessary in this case to resort to analogical thinking, which takes into account the simultaneity of similarity and difference, for the creation

<sup>20</sup> MT, p. 93. It should be borne in mind that the category of ‘beginning’ in relation to creation, which presupposes a temporal optic, as well as speaking in a spatial way of the creature being ‘next to’ God, should be interpreted apophatically, in the knowledge that they bear the stamp of created conditions, after all, time and space are the dimensions of creation, creation exists in a temporal-spatial way, while God remains transcendent in relation to them – see OT, pp. 58-63.

<sup>21</sup> MT, p. 93.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Gregorius Nyssenus, *In Hexaemeron explicatio apologetica*, PG 44, 69 A.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. MT, pp. 94.104.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. OT, p. 53.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. OT, p. 53. This refers to the creation of personal beings, angels and humans, in their relation to the whole cosmos. A special place is given here, however, to human beings, created in God’s image, in order, in cooperation with God, to attain God’s likeness and to bring with them the whole creation into a deifying union with the Creator.

does not exist except in God, in His creative will, which at the same time establishes it as different from God, as non-God, and therefore precisely as a creation<sup>26</sup>. In other words:

Thus the whole dialectic of being and nothingness is absurd: nothingness has no existence of its own (it would anyway be contradiction *in adjecto*); it is correlative to the very being of creatures; the latter are founded neither in themselves nor in the divine essence, but uniquely on the will of God. Stability, permanency for the creation is therefore its relation to God. In relation to itself it amounts to nothing<sup>27</sup>.

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## The Trinitarian character of creation

Creation, being a free act rather than a natural outpouring similar to the eternal radiation of uncreated divine energies<sup>28</sup>, is proper to the personal God-Trinity in His one will acting according to divine thought<sup>29</sup>. Lossky emphasises that “creation is the work of the Trinity. The Credo names the Father ‘creator of heaven and earth’, the Son ‘He through whom all things were made’, the Holy Spirit ‘creator of life’ (ζωοποιόν). The will is common to the three, and it is this that creates: the Father can therefore not be creator unless the Son and the Spirit are also creators”<sup>30</sup>. Although creation is the work of the whole Trinity, each of the Divine Persons participates in it in its own unique way, so that one can speak of a trinitarian co-creation in which both the infinite unity and the infinite diversity of the *mysterium Trinitatis* are revealed<sup>31</sup>. Lossky concludes: “Here we have the ‘economical’ manifestation of the Trinity: the Father operating by the Son in the Holy

<sup>26</sup> Cf. OT, pp. 54-55.

<sup>27</sup> OT, p. 54.

<sup>28</sup> Divine energies are often described using the metaphor of light, hence the reference to radiation – see MT, pp. 217-235; V. Lossky, *The Theology of Light in the Thought of St. Gregory Palamas*, in: ILG, pp. 45-69

<sup>29</sup> Cf. MT, p. 94.

<sup>30</sup> OT, p. 53; Council of Constantinople III states: “There is only one God and Father, from whom all things come, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things are, and one holy Spirit, in whom all things are”, N.P. Tanner (ed.), *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils. Volume One Nicea I to Lateran V*, Washington 1990, p. 114.

<sup>31</sup> See OT, pp. 41-42; V. Lossky, *Apophysis and Trinitarian Theology*, in V. Lossky, *In the Image and Likeness of God*, J.H. Erickson, T.E. Bird (eds.), New York 1974 – further ILG, p. 16.



Spirit”<sup>32</sup>. It is on this ‘economic’ operation of the Trinity, in which the Son is referred to according to his function in the ‘economy’ as Word-Logos, that the Greek Fathers’ interpretation of creation according to Divine ideas is based.

Every created thing has its “logos”, its “essential reason”. [...] Nothing exists which is not founded on the Logos, the *raison d’être par excellence*. By It has everything been made; It gives to the created world not only the order signified by Its name, but its very ontological reality. The Logos is the divine hearth whence fly the creative rays, the “logoi” peculiar to the creations, these causative words of God which at once raise up and name all beings. Every being therefore has its “idea”, its “reason” in God, in the thought of the Creator who produces not through caprice, but with “reason” (and this is yet another meaning of Logos). Divine ideas are the eternal reasons of creations<sup>33</sup>.

The special “place” occupied by the Son-Logos in the work of creation arises, on the one hand, from his specificity as the Second Person of the Trinity, and, on the other hand, from his eternally divinely willed Incarnation<sup>34</sup>, which is the summit of the deifying union of Creator and creation while preserving their distinctness<sup>35</sup> and, at the same time, in the Holy Spirit, the space of participation in that union

<sup>32</sup> MT, p. 100. “In the order of the economic manifestation of the Trinity in the world, all energy originates in the Father, being communicated by the Son in the Holy Spirit [...]. Thus is it said that the Father creates all things by the Son in the Holy Spirit”, MT, p. 82. With reference to the Fathers, Lossky recalls the distinction between ‘theology’, whose subject is the Trinity in itself, and ‘economy’, which concerns its relation to creatures. According to this view, the divine uncreated energies, thus existing independently of the creation of the world, belong to the “theology”, while at the same time, by the will of God and not in the manner of natural eternal radiation, they belong to the “economy”, moreover, it is they who constitute it, or rather the Trinity present in them, cf. MT, pp. 81-82.

<sup>33</sup> OT, p. 56.

<sup>34</sup> See MT, pp. 136-139; see also V. Lossky, *Redemption and Deification*, in: ILG, pp. 98-99.

<sup>35</sup> According to the formula of the Council of Chalcedon, describing the relationship between the divine and human natures in Christ by means of four negations: “no confusion, no change, no division, no separation”, N.P. Tanner (ed.), *Decree of the Ecumenical Councils. Volume One Nicea I to Lateran V*, Washington 1990, p. 86. Interestingly, St. Maximus the Confessor, cited by Lossky in this context, made the Chalcedonian definition the basic metaphysical structure of reality and built his worldview on it – see H.U. von Balthasar, *Kosmische Liturgie. Das Weltbild Maximus des Bekenntners*, Einsiedeln 1961. In Lossky, there is a reference to the first edition of von Balthasar’s 1941 book. See V. Lossky, MT, p. 99, note 1.

for the whole of creation<sup>36</sup>. It must be remembered that this is possible and happens through the eternal, uncreated Divine energies in which the Trinity, inscrutable in its essence, is realistically and completely divinely present to its creation<sup>37</sup>, whose “ideas” are found in the Son-Logos (not in the creations!), but at the level of energy – thus conditioning the various modes of participation in the energies<sup>38</sup> and not at the level of the essence of God- otherwise, the creation could not be a deified, yet creation for ever, directly identical with God.

Thus, the apophaticism of creation appears to be founded on the apophaticism of the source Trinitarian antinomy<sup>39</sup>, existing eternally in a wholly uncomposed manner simultaneously in the essence and outside the essence, and thus in the energies; the apophaticism of creatology is founded on the apophaticism of Trinitarian theology<sup>40</sup>; and the whole of Christianity and its theology on the apophatically understood vocation of creation to union with God, to deification, to *theosis* of the Greek Fathers<sup>41</sup>.

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## Creation in the perspective of *theosis*

Referring to the concept of Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, Lossky adopts a hierarchical vision of creation, according to which all

<sup>36</sup> See K. Kupiec, *Pneumatologicznie ukierunkowana chrystologia Vladimira Losskiego*, “Analecta Cracoviensia” 1985, Vol. 17, pp. 267-279.

<sup>37</sup> The Trinity is realistically present both in and beyond its essence and thus in eternal energies, cf. MT, p. 73; V. Lossky, *The Vision of God*, New York 1983, p. 157. They are the eternal, uncreated radiation of nature’s superabundance, and its creative presence, yes, accomplished in energies that are both in and out of all, is the result of God’s will, not the natural radiation of energies. The act of creation founds the relationship between the Divine energies and that which is not God in an entirely free manner, thereby establishing it and thus creating the creation, cf. MT, pp. 73-75.89 “This will has created all things by the energies in order the created being may accede freely to union with God in the same energies”, MT, pp. 89-90. The Eastern tradition, according to Lossky, places all the attributes of God, and thus also His will, precisely at the level of energies, cf. MT, pp. 80-81.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. MT, pp. 94-97. Lossky, referring to St. John Damascene, refers to them as “thought-will” or “volitional thought”, cf. MT, p. 94; see Joannes Damascenus, *De fide orthodoxa*, I, 10, PG 837 A.

<sup>39</sup> See M. Płóciennik, *The Source Antinomy of the Mystery of the Trinity as the Foundation and Hermeneutical Key of Christian Apophaticism in the View of Vladimir N. Lossky*, “Verbum Vitae” 2023, Vol. 41/3, pp. 713-734.

<sup>40</sup> V. Lossky, *Apophasis and Trinitarian Theology*, in: ILG, pp. 13-29.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. MT, p. 9.

creations, though analogous to their mode of existence and therefore to their potentialities, by virtue of the creative act participate by divine will in divine ideas – “acts of wills”, “located” at the level of eternal divine energies<sup>42</sup>. It is clear that we are dealing here with an understanding of creation in the context of the central idea of *theosis*, hence Lossky writes: “Thus all creations are called to perfect union with God. The notion of creation in Dionysius is so close to that of deification that it is hard to distinguish between the first state of creations and their final end, union with God”<sup>43</sup>. However, this first state must not be equated with the final state, but must be seen as an impermanent and embryonic form of perfection for two reasons: firstly, because of the unfulfilled freedom of the creation, which must attain union through cooperation in fulfillment of the idea-will of God<sup>44</sup>; secondly, because of the limited, changeable, dynamic and yet transgressive nature of created beings, which have their end outside themselves, in God, who alone is beyond all movement and change, being an infinitely fulfilled “being”<sup>45</sup>.

The question must be raised at this point as to how this approach is to be properly understood? After all, on the one hand, Lossky points out that the Divine energies are in everything, and thus, as it were, by virtue of the creative act, or rather in it, creations receive a share in the existence of the Trinity in its eternal energies, which is also, after all, their ultimate goal, and, on the other hand, it turns out that this share in the Divine energies is not, after all, this ultimate deification, and the creation must only strive for it. Although it seems that we are dealing here with an aporetic relationship between the Divine energies, i.e. uncreated grace and the creation, Lossky emphasises that any distinction between the original state of the creation and the state of participation in the divine energies is artificial, since it acquaints us with the fact that we are dealing with the totality of the process of becoming of created entities destined to become like God<sup>46</sup>. Lossky also states that

<sup>42</sup> Cf. MT, pp. 96-97; see Dionysii Areopagitae, *De coelesti hierarchia*, III, 3, PG 3, p. 168.

<sup>43</sup> MT, p. 97.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. MT, p. 97.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. MT, pp. 97-98.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. MT, p. 101. Even sin and the consequent need for redemption must be seen within this integral process-plan of God, yes, not as a part of it, but as an aberration, a negative side of it, arising from the free choice of personal creations, which, however, at most affects its further course and the means to bring it

the Eastern tradition knows nothing of “pure nature” to which grace is added as a supernatural gift. For it, there is no natural or “normal” state, since grace is implied in the act of creation itself. The eternal determination of the divine Counsel, the divine ideas cannot really be made to correspond with the “essences” of things which are postulated in the so-called natural philosophy of Aristotle and of every other philosopher whose experience reaches only to nature in its fallen state. “Pure nature”, for Eastern theology, would thus be a philosophical fiction corresponding neither to the original state of creation, nor to its present condition which is “against nature”, nor to the state of deification which belongs to the age to come. The world, created in order that it might be deified, is dynamic, tending always towards its final end, predestined in the “thought-wills”. These latter have their centre in the Word, the hypostatic Wisdom of the Father who gives expression to Himself in all things and who brings all things, in the Holy Spirit, towards union with God. For there is no “natural beatitude” for the creation, which can have no other end than deification<sup>47</sup>.

about, but not to alter the primacy of its very nature and the end to which it aims, that is, the universal deification of creation as the one fulfillment which Divine Love desires for its creations and which is to be realized through the wholly voluntary union of personal beings, angels and men, and through them the whole cosmos with God – cf. OT, 110-111; see also V. Lossky, *Redemption and Deification*, in ILG, 97-110.

<sup>47</sup> MT, p. 101; see also, MT, p. 241. On the dynamism of creation see J. Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology. Historical Trends and Doctrinal Themes*, New York 1974, pp. 132-134. In the statements cited above, Lossky refers to the Western Christian conception of the relation of nature and grace, as already indicated by the use of the term “natural happiness”, especially to the theory of so-called “pure nature” (*natura pura*). The Western doctrine of grace and its relation to created nature was shaped primarily as part of the Augustinian confrontation with Pelagianism and then in dispute with the thought of the Reformers. Its basic formula was: *gratiam supponit naturam*. Post-Tridentine scholasticism this co-relation of grace Post-Conciliar scholasticism relativised this co-relation of grace and nature in the form of the aforementioned “pure nature” theory, according to which grace is not something “necessary” for nature (yes, grace is not necessary for creation and is a free gift of God – this is what the founders of the “pure nature” theory wanted to emphasise, but on a par with its existence, the very fact of creation’s existence is gratuitous grace), for it could have been created even without grace, which means that the order of grace is merely an incidental superstructure for the natural order, having no *de facto* effect on the identity of nature. The extent of the influence of this dualism of nature and grace was significant and, in a sense, became the basis of Western modern theological thinking (the theory of “pure nature” can still be found in Pius XII’s 1950 encyclical *Humani generis*), the consequences of which are still evident today – in the dualism of nature and grace J. Milbank sees the basic foundation and assumption of modern theology, cf. *The Programme of Radical Orthodoxy*, in: J. Milbank, G. Ward, C. Pickstock, *Radical Orthodoxy. A New Theology*, London–New York 1999, p. 35. A significant contribution to the process

What is more: Lossky believes that, the Christian East thinks inside the “created – uncreated” distinction, where the latter corresponds to what Western Christianity understands by “supernatural”. According to Lossky, uncreated grace in this context is the God-Trinity eternally present in His uncreated energies, making Himself absolutely freely present to His creation in order to deificate it. The finalisation of the original – and only, despite redemptive modifications – plan of *theosis* can be, as Lossky claims, be summarised as follows:

“God shall be all in all”, or (looping at it in the other way around) created beings will become by grace what God is by nature, to cite the bold saying of St. Maximus. This is the dialectic of the dominion of God in

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of overcoming this dualism was made in particular by the *Nouvelle théologie* headed by Henri de Lubac, although his most important book on the subject, *Surnaturel. Études historiques*, Paris 1946, appeared even before *Humani generis*. However, representatives of one of the most interesting theological projects of recent years, Radical Orthodoxy, believe that de Lubac did not fully overcome the dualism of nature and grace because he did not draw definitive consequences from his insights – see J. Milbank, *The Suspended Middle: Henri Lubac and the Debate concerning the Supernatural*, Grand Rapids 2005 – and their thought seeks to address the shortcomings of his theology and to redefine the non-dual hermeneutic of the relationship between grace and nature by recognising their complete perichoreticity. On *Radical Orthodoxy* see J.K.A. Smith, *Introducing Radical Orthodoxy. Mapping a Post-secular Theology*, Grand Rapids 2004. In connection with the above issue, attention should certainly also be drawn to the numerous works of the Polish theologian A. Zuberbier on the subject – of particular merit is his demonstration of the post-Thomas genesis of the dualism of grace and nature, which has no place in Aquinas thought and invoking it in this approach is unauthorised, see A. Zuberbier, *Znaczenie wyrażenia “nadprzyrodzony” u św. Tomasza z Akwinu*, “*Studia Theologica Varsaviensia*” 1970, Vol. 8(2), pp. 61-90; *Nadprzyrodzoność działania ludzkiego w wypowiedziach Tomasza z Akwinu*, “*Studia Theologica Varsaviensia*” 1971, Vol. 9(1), pp. 327-357; *Bóg ponad wszelką naturę*, “*Studia Theologica Varsaviensia*” 1972, Vol. 10(1), pp. 91-112; “*Nadprzyrodzone*” i “*naturalne*” według Tomasza z Akwinu, “*Studia Theologica Varsaviensia*” 1973, Vol. 11(2), pp. 75-97. Also noteworthy is the synthesizing work by Zuberbier *Relacja natura – nadprzyrodzoność: w świetle badań teologii współczesnej*, Warszawa 1973, presenting the history of this issue in the West with an analysis of twentieth-century theological proposals by, among others, de Lubac and Rahner on this issue. An interesting account of the understanding of the relationship between grace and nature in the East and West is presented in E.L. Mascall, *The Openness of Being. Natural Theology Today*, Philadelphia 1971, pp. 217-250. In an ecumenical context it is worth seeing e.g. R. Flogaus, *Theosis bei Palamas Und Luther. Ein Beitrag zum ökumenischen Gespräch*, Göttingen 1997; A.N. Williams, *The ground of union. Deification in Aquinas and Palamas*, Oxford 1999.

Trinity of Persons, transcendent in His unknowable nature, immanent in His love<sup>48</sup>,

thus emphasising the thoroughly apophatic character of deification<sup>49</sup>.

## Summary

Let us bring our considerations together at this point by recalling, yes, a somewhat longer excerpt from Lossky's most important work, *The Mystical Theology of Eastern Church*, which brilliantly synthesises the totality of what we have attempted so far to grasp in analytical form, that is, the apophatic character of Christian creatology. The divine, Trinitarian will on which the existence of creation is suspended

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for us is a mystery, for the will is a relationship with another, and there is nothing to which is "other" to God: creation *ex nihilo* is incomprehensible to us. We only know the will of God in so far as it is His relationship to the world which is already created; it is the point of contact between the infinite and the finite, and in these senses the divine "willings", are the creative ideas of things, the *logoi*, the "words". [...] Every created thing has its point contacts with Godhead; and this point of contacts is its idea, reason or logos which is at the same time the end towards which it tends. The ideas of individual things are contained within the higher and more general ideas, as are the species within a genus. The whole is contained in the Logos, the second person of the Trinity who is the first principle and the last end of all created things. Here the Logos, God the Word, has the "economic" emphasis proper to antenicene theology: He is the manifestation of the divine will, for it is by Him the Father has created all things in the Holy Spirit. When we are examining the nature of created things, seeking the reason of their being, we are led final to the knowledge of the Word, casual principle and at the same time end of all beings. All things were created by the Logos who is as it were divine nexus, the threshold from which flow the creative outpourings, the particular *logoi* of creations, and the centre towards which in their turn all created beings tend, as to their final. For creations, from the moment of their first condition, are separate

<sup>48</sup> V. Lossky, *Dominion And Kingship: An Eschatological Study*, in: ILG, p. 215. Love constitutes, in Lossky's view, one of the attributes of God, "located" at the level of energy rather than essence: "To say "God is love", "divine persons are united by mutual love", is to think of a common manifestation, the "love energy" possessed by the three hypostases, for the union of the Three is higher even than love. [...] In fact, God is not determined by any of His attributes; all determinations are inferior to Him, logically posteriori to His being in itself, in its essence", MT, pp. 80-81.

<sup>49</sup> See M. Plóciennik, *Teopoietyczno-apofatyczny charakter teologii w ujęciu Włodzimierza N. Łosskiego*, "Collectanea Theologica" 2023, Vol. 93/1, pp. 115-161.



from God; and their end and final fulfillment lies in union with Him or deification. Thus the primitive beatitude was not a state of deification, but a condition of order, a perfection of the creation which was ordained and tending towards its end<sup>50</sup>.

The apophaticism of the mystery of creation, directed in its essence towards the attainment of divinatory fulfillment in the union of the Trinity in its energies, is at every stage of its existence a participation in the apophaticism of the mystery of Trinitatis, “in this sense all true theology is fundamentally apophatic”<sup>51</sup>. Perhaps this is particularly true of creatology, which is concerned precisely with the fundamentals, or rather the Fundamentals of the fundamentals, that is, with the God-Trinity Who, in His incomprehensibility, willed to call into existence from nothing “beside” Himself the non-God creations, so that in response to this gratuitous gift, embodied and mediated in Jesus and mediated in Jesus Christ, the God-One of the Trinity who became man/creation, became God by grace in the Holy Spirit and thus partakers of the Divine nature (cf. 2 Peter 1:4), i.e. of the Divine eternal uncreated energies.

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## “Respect Thy Father and Thy Mother in Old Age” – on the Social Determinants of the (in) Presence of Old Age in the Space of the Polish Family. Reminiscences of Representatives of the Baby Boomers Generation

Old age is a life stage that is very often analyzed in the context of losses and the many difficulties that an elderly person must face. Dependence or reliance inherent for many seniors make their successful daily functioning require third-party support. Socio-cultural or legal rationales allow us to expect that help for dependent seniors will be provided by the family. However, the reality around us verifies this belief often to the disadvantage of the family environment. Moreover, it turns out that the opinion on the (in)presence of old age in the space of the Polish family, significantly depends on the generational affiliation of those who make an assessment of the state of affairs. This is due, among other things, to the social conditions and the axionormative system in which the socialization process of the representatives of each generation took place.

The submitted article discusses the reminiscences of representatives of the generation of post-war Baby Boomers, i.e. people born between 1946 and 1964. Experiencing childhood and the years of early adolescence in the conditions of the Polish People's Republic, including attachment to the family and religious values of Polish society at the time, are circumstances that cannot be ignored, determining the views of people growing up at the time.

Based on qualitative research conducted in 2022, the text will discuss the recollections of women and men of the Baby Boomers generation regarding old age in the family space during their childhood, as well as opinions on contemporary trends. The author's intention is to convince the reader that religion's function of providing and sustaining a sense of meaning and purpose in existence, especially under the harsh reality of communist times, was not

without influence on the identity and attitudes of the Baby Boomers generation growing up at the time.

**Key words:** the elderly, Baby Boomers, the church history, family, aging population.

## Introduction

Old age is a natural phase of life that follows adulthood. It is an inevitable consequence of the aging process occurring biologically, psychologically and socially. The commonly accepted beginning of old age is 60 or 65 years of age, which is characterized by a gradual imbalance in the daily functioning of the human body due to changes occurring synergistically<sup>1</sup>. And while this is a mechanism of inevitable evolutionary progress, medical developments and a steadily improving quality of life have made it possible to delay the effects of progressive aging processes. Therefore, old age, which used to be the privilege of the few, is now shared by the majority. This becomes evident when, among other things, the statistical data showing the structure of our country's population is analyzed.

From the information included in reports prepared after the 2021 National Population and Housing Census, we learn that people in the post-working age group now account for 22.3% of Poland's population, an increase of 5.4% over data from a decade ago. Thus, today, more than every 5<sup>th</sup> Pole or Polish woman is a person aged 60 or older<sup>2</sup>. The deepening process of demographic aging of Poland's population entails piling up challenges observed at many macro and micro levels. A key issue is the liquidity of the Social Insurance Institution, which is responsible for paying pension benefits. Their amount is reflected in the quality of life of seniors, their health condition, access to medical services or other necessary benefits. The increasing longevity of the elderly is also not indifferent to the functioning of the family, and the widespread presence of grandmothers and grandfathers is transforming its structure. “Today, it is becoming typical to have a “pole-like structure”, which is marked by the proliferation of vertical relationships – between close relatives in successive generations, with

<sup>1</sup> A.A. Zych, *Leksykon gerontologii*, Kraków 2019, p. 165.

<sup>2</sup> *National Census of Population and Housing 2021. Report on preliminary results*, Warszawa 2022, p. 25.

a concomitant impoverishment of horizontal relationships (between peers) in the wake of declining fertility rates”<sup>3</sup>.

The increase in the number of aging and old people in relation to the young, heightens concerns about providing the dependent oldest family members with the necessary care and support. This concern is justified, especially if we take into account the overlapping processes weakening the condition of the family. These include, in addition to declining fertility rates, the economic crisis exacerbating the economic migration of the young, the atomization of family life, bonding and attachment crises, anomie of authority figures or a crisis of values. All of them cumulatively impact the traditional family model. In addition, the plural lifestyles of today’s young generations make it increasingly easy for them to decide to be single, to cohabit or to divorce, which is also not without its impact on the functionality of the family. While a certain percentage of seniors today struggles with a lack of funding for health care and social assistance benefits, the state’s helplessness and the increasing inefficiency of the family in its caregiving function, these difficulties are more likely to become more common in future highly individualized generations. Thus, seniors’ fear of being left alone seems justified, and the question resonates in the mind of many of them: Who will take care of me in the final period of life?<sup>4</sup> The dilemmas in question are in the category of those extremely difficult to solve, because they are rooted in social changes and the transformation of the axionormative order of our society.

The transformation of the Polish state initiated by the events of 1989, resulted, on the one hand, in the democratization of the political system, the introduction of the free market and a series of economic reforms, and, on the other hand, in a change of social mentality and the principles of social coexistence, which from the perspective of nearly 35 years of the new order is evident. The objective assessment of the consequences of the changing profile of Polish society is being carried out by sociologists or historians. However, the individual level is no less important. In this text, the perspective of those born between 1946 and 1964, who are referred to in the subject literature as the Baby Boomers generation, will be examined. The period of the boomers’ childhood and early adulthood took place under the conditions of the Polish People’s Republic (PRL), so the normative order in which their socialization process took place differed significantly from

<sup>3</sup> A. Błachnio, *Starość w rodzinie. Opieka nad seniorem wyzwaniem dla dorosłego dziecka czy państwa?*, “Wychowanie w Rodzinie” 2016, Vol. 13, p. 442.

<sup>4</sup> Ibidem, p. 443.

the current one. This is reflected in the way specific social issues are perceived, including the challenges generated by the progressive aging of the Polish population. It should be noted that since 2006 boomers have been gradually entering retirement age, therefore, firstly, it is reasonable to refer to them as seniors or people on the verge of old age<sup>5</sup>, and secondly, they are familiar with considerations of old age in the environment of the modern family.

The purpose of this paper is to discuss the theme of the (non)existence of old age in the family environment based on the results of a survey of people from the post-war Baby Boomer generation. The text will present the recollections of women and men from the Baby Boomers generation regarding old age in their childhood family environment and their opinions on the contemporary trends. The author's intention is to trace the reconstruction of the Polish family as a space in which the last stage of a person's life takes place. While conducting an in-depth analysis of the narratives of interviewees from the Baby Boomers generation, special attention will be given to the numerous social conditions of the interviewees' childhood period (the times of the Polish People's Republic) and contemporary times, which not only affect their attitudes and expressed views, but also constitute an important source of information about the direction and nature of changes, including those concerning the axionormative order, which are occurring within our society.

In order to properly understand the collected content, there is a need to initially sort out the key *differentia specifica* characterizing Polish Baby Boomers and the time of their childhood, so that the interpretation of the stance taken by them towards the subject of this study becomes transparent.

## Childhood and youth of the Polish generation of Baby Boomers

Barbara Szatur-Jarowska, having thoroughly analyzed the social biography of Polish boomers, explains that the Baby Boom generation was a compensatory boom occurring in various countries around the world which experienced population losses and/or slowed down population dynamics as a result of World War II<sup>6</sup>. The worldwide crisis

<sup>5</sup> The Baby Boomers generation includes people who are between 58 and 76 years old today.

<sup>6</sup> B. Szatur-Jaworska, *Polska polityka społeczna wobec starzenia się ludności w latach 1971-2013*, Warszawa 2016, p. 365.

forced the postponement of marriages and procreation decisions. Yet, the first post-war decade was already characterized by a growing share of children (0-14 years old) maintained in Poland roughly until 1955. The process of “rejuvenating” the population at the base of the age pyramid continued with its inherent dynamics and fluctuations caused by the cohort effect until 1969, when there was a change in the trend toward a sharp decline in the birth rate<sup>7</sup>. Then, what is characteristic of the generation born just after World War II?

B. Szatur-Jaworska's studies show that most of the children belonging to the Polish Baby Boom were born in the countryside, in families with many children, which is an exemplification of the then dominant model of the traditional family (often identified with rurality). Its popularization, *nota bene*, was influenced by the teaching of the Catholic Church, including the program of upbringing in the family contained in the decrees of the Second Vatican Council and postconciliar documents<sup>8</sup>. The qualities of the Catholic family (in opposition to the secular model of relationship) were repeatedly emphasized by Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński in his letters and homilies, who argued that the family is, on the one hand, a community called by God, and on the other hand, co-creates the nation which is a “community of families” because “What families will be like, such will the Nation be like”<sup>9</sup> – Wyszyński wrote. He also added, “When families are compact, faithful, indissoluble – the Nation will not be destroyed by anyone”<sup>10</sup>. John Paul II preached similarly in *Familiaris consortio* when he reminded that one of the tasks of the family is the affirmation of life, including the formation of attitudes of respect for life and its protection from the moment of conception until natural death, which, among other things, requires the adherence to the principles of the Ten Commandments<sup>11</sup>. The perception of the family as an ally of the church in the religious upbringing of the younger generation<sup>12</sup> and an environment that is friendly to each of its members resulted in the fact

<sup>7</sup> Z. Szweda-Lewandowska, *Pokolenie powojennego wyżu demograficznego i echa wyżu demograficznego (baby boomers i pokolenie Y) – perspektywa starości*, “Polityka Społeczna” 2014, No. 5-6, pp. 18-21.

<sup>8</sup> S. Smoleński, *Wychowanie w rodzinie jako przygotowanie do odpowiedzialnego podjęcia powołania chrześcijańskiego*, in: *Wychowanie w rodzinie chrześcijańskiej*, ed. Z. Tyszcza, Kraków 1982, p. 73.

<sup>9</sup> S. Wyszyński, *Listy pasterskie Prymasa Polski 1946-1974*, Paris 1975), pp. 185-186.

<sup>10</sup> S. Wyszyński, *Wielka Nowenna Tysiąclecia*, Paris 1962, p. 48.

<sup>11</sup> Jan Paweł II, *Encyklika Evangelium vitae*, 1981, 49.

<sup>12</sup> Z. Tyszcza, *Socjologia rodziny*, Warszawa 1979, p. 121.



that the family life in the Polish People's Republic was described in the subject literature as a safe space, protecting the individual from the external, not very friendly social reality<sup>13</sup>. It is no surprise then, that family values are of paramount importance for the representatives of the Baby Boomers generation<sup>14</sup>. Furthermore, families in which Polish boomers were raised often experienced poverty, poor housing conditions (overcrowding, low housing standards), as well as difficulties in buying basic goods. Another typical feature of the 1950s and 1960s was the rising wave of internal migration from the countryside to the city, following the country's intensive industrialization under the socialist development program<sup>15</sup>. This had consequences for the course of childhood and adolescence of the children of the post-war Baby Boom generation. Those included an increase in women's labor force participation (e.g., between 1961 and 1970, the number of women working in the socialized economy outside agriculture and forestry increased by about 50%), many of whom were the mothers of children from the Baby Boom generation<sup>16</sup>. Employment provided those women with an income, the opportunity to enjoy a whole package of social benefits, such as child care, the availability of housing, and trips to vacations organized by the workplace for families or children. Professional active mothers also contributed to the increased assignment of household duties to children as a form of support for working parents. Such an arrangement represented a significant challenge for both adults and children. However, its positive consequence was the formation in the young generation of a sense of responsibility, diligence and perseverance in achieving their goals<sup>17</sup>.

The identity formation and civic maturing of Polish Boomers fell during a period of social and political enslavement and stagnation. Struggling with a hostile system and a culture imposing ossified rules, while seeking asylum and an alternative culture, in the formation of which religious values and the activity of the Catholic Church played

<sup>13</sup> A. Giza-Poleszczuk, M. Sikorska, *Współczesne społeczeństwo polskie*, Warszawa 2012, pp. 201-202; B. Klich-Kuczevska, *Rodzina, tabu i komunizm w Polsce 1956-1989*, Kraków 2015, pp. 54-61.

<sup>14</sup> W. Wątroba, *Transgresje międzypokoleniowe późnego kapitalizmu*, Wrocław 2017, pp. 94-99.

<sup>15</sup> B. Szatur-Jaworska, *Socjalna biografia polskich baby boomersów, czyli jak polityka społeczna kształtowała bieg życia tego pokolenia*, "Polityka Społeczna" 2018, No. 9, p. 2-3.

<sup>16</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>17</sup> W. Wątroba, *Pokolenia w społeczeństwach postkapitalistycznych*, Wrocław 2022, pp. 58-60.



a significant role, are, in addition to other social conditions specific for the 1950s and 1960s, an important foundation for the attitudes and values internalized by people growing up during that time. Young boomers grew up in a society of well-established moral and patriotic values, which, among other things, was a consequence of the family's realization of the fundamental and dominant role in the process of transmitting values essential to the preservation of national identity, as well as the church's role as a moral authority in a state of communist lawlessness, including the clergy's upholding of Poles' hopes and resistance to totalitarian power. Thus, there is no doubt that the socio-political conditions in which the socialization process of the post-war Baby Boom generation occurred were not easy. Yet it should also be mentioned that the foundations of a person's identity, especially those built within the primary group, which is family, can be seen in the course of a person's entire life.

## Research Methodology

The content submitted in this paper is the empirical material obtained in the qualitative research conducted between January and April 2022. Representatives of four generations were invited to participate in the interviews, whose typology was adopted after Wiesław Wątroba who established the division into the Traditionalist generation (those born between 1918 and 1945)<sup>18</sup>, the Baby Boomers generation (those born between 1946 and 1964)<sup>19</sup>, Generation X (those born between 1965 and 1980)<sup>20</sup> and Generation Y (those born between 1981 and 1995)<sup>21</sup>. The selection of the sample was purposeful, and its criterion, in addition to belonging to the selected generation, was the gender and place of residence of the respondents (city/village). Sixteen representatives of each generation took part in the interviews, taking into account the assumption that each generation should be

<sup>18</sup> The Traditionalist Generation are narrators who were 77 and older at the time of the survey.

<sup>19</sup> This group of respondents included people who were (at the time of the survey) between the ages of 58 and 76.

<sup>20</sup> Generation X are narrators aged 42-57.

<sup>21</sup> This group of narrators included people who were 27-41 years old at the time of the survey.

represented by 8 women and 8 men, 8 city residents<sup>22</sup> and 8 village residents<sup>23</sup>. In total, 64 interviews were conducted. The study used an unstructured interview technique with a standardized list of information sought<sup>24</sup>. The research topics addressed the issue of old age and the elderly as remembered by the narrators from their childhood, as well as their views on modern old age and today’s senior citizen.

The content of the paper will only cover the answers of one of the studied generations, the Baby Boomers generation, regarding old age in the family environment in the past and now.

## The manifestations of the presence of old age in the family environment during the childhood of the Baby Boomers generation

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One of the first questions addressing the issue of old age in the family environment was: *Was there room/space for old age in the family when you were a child?* On hearing it, interviewees gave a positive answer without a moment’s hesitation, arguing that experiencing old age in a family environment was the natural and obvious course of things. This is how one woman described it,

It was very natural. Elderly people, we looked after them. I mean, in my opinion, I didn’t experience it, but I remember that the family was obliged to take care of such a person. And it was such an obligation. Absolutely there was no question of some kind of placement of the elderly in some institutions. There was no question of any other solution. Neighborhood ties were wonderful at that time. It was such a phenomenon of those times. In general, people used to be closer to each other. And this older person, the fact that they had lived through so much, experienced so much, that they were the oldest in the family. This respect for age was great (w, 71 y, CITY)<sup>25</sup>.

This is the recollection of another interviewee,

<sup>22</sup> The city from which the respondents came was Białystok, the capital of the Podlaskie Voivodeship.

<sup>23</sup> The villagers lived in suburban villages (Nowodworce, Porosły) – located no more than 10 km from Białystok, and the village of Trzcianne 60 km from Białystok, where the Author of the research grew up.

<sup>24</sup> K. Konecki, *Studia z metodologii badań jakościowych. Teoria ugruntowana*, Warszawa 2000, pp. 169-170.

<sup>25</sup> Designations used in brackets mean: W – woman, M – man, the next provided information is the age of the interviewee, followed by his place of residence.

Previously, families were multigenerational. There was a grandmother, there was a grandfather, there were parents, there were children. And this grandfather and grandmother lived until death in the family. That was then. And now it has completely changed and it's different (w, 74 Y, CITY).

The multigenerational nature of families was pointed out by another woman as well,

This old age, there were multigenerational families and everyone would take care of parents or an aunt or someone close to them, because there was place for that. And they were looked after until the end of their lives. There were no nursing homes, no social welfare, and, well, the elderly were respected. You came across elderly people every day, you lived with them, you grew up with them from generation to generation, well... People had time for the elderly and for themselves and it was possible to deal with everything. It was possible to arrange it (w, 76 Y, VILLAGE).

The times reported by the woman are probably the 1950s, as the interviewee was born in 1946. It was certainly a time in Polish history that was one of those uneasy moments, as rebuilding the country from the ruins of war posed an enormous challenge. And yet, "everything could be arranged," as the narrator said. It cannot be ruled out that the axionormative system specific to the time, which was reported in more than one scholarly study<sup>26</sup>, may have provided an important framework for the behavior of Poles and Polish women of the boomers' childhood. The nature of this condition was pointed out by two interviewees. One of them stated, "Of course there was room for old age. As I said, in my opinion it was also a matter of faith" (M, 70 Y, VILLAGE). A slightly younger narrator explained,

Well religiosity very much here had an impact on those people. In this village, everyone went to church. Really everyone! Unless someone was already bedridden or could not make it. I was an altar boy, so I could see where everyone was sitting. I emphasize the religious aspect strongly, because it, as far as the village was concerned, was of great importance. The religious aspect I strongly, strongly emphasize it, because it very much tied everyone together. And thanks to that, there was place for those grandfathers and grandmothers. It was very important back then! (M, 59 Y, CITY).

<sup>26</sup> F. Adamski, *Modele małżeństwa i rodziny a kultura masowa*, Warszawa 1970; L. Dyczewski, *Więź pokoleń w rodzinie*, Warszawa 1976; Z. Tyszką, *Rodziny współczesne w Polsce*, Warszawa 1982; J. Mariański, *Wychowanie moralne w rodzinie*, "Homo Dei. Przegląd Ascetyczno-Duszpasterski" 1982, No. 51(2), pp. 120-128.

Looking after the elderly by family members was also caused by the particular financial situation of seniors at the time. As we know from the aforementioned characteristics of Polish Boomers, most of them spent their childhood in the countryside. The key date for those living in this community was 1975 when farmers became beneficiaries of the Agricultural Social Insurance Fund, which allowed them to gain financial independence and improve their life. However, until the mid-1970s, the social and economic status of seniors was not so obvious. This was mentioned by the respondents.

Well, in any case, there was certainly a dependency – one man recounted – because if someone did not have a source of income at all, well, they were indeed dependent on the children. But families, so to speak, treated supporting the elderly the same way they treated raising children. To me it seems it was an obligation. This is the way it was (M, 75 Y, CITY).

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The issue of dependence was also pointed out by another interviewee,

This was not felt at all, this dependence. Children's duty was to look after their parents until their death, whoever was at home, it was a duty. This was not disputable. It was a natural thing, it was natural. Maybe it was when these agricultural pensions appeared and it was just these pensions in '75 that divided families. Because that already old grandfather or grandmother started to have money. And these grandchildren were already looking how to get some money from grandma or grandpa when they didn't give anything. And that's what started to divide families (M, 67 Y, CITY).

The issue of introducing agricultural pensions was viewed in various ways by the respondents. Several people, like the man quoted above, saw more downsides than upsides of this solution. However, the majority was those who mainly mentioned the benefits of it. The case is similar with looking after the elderly in the family. Besides the above-quoted positive opinions about the practice, there was also such a statement,

Yes, it was maintenance of sorts. And that, in my opinion, was not nice. It looked wrong. I don't know what these people felt, because I didn't talk to them. I didn't ask, because I was even too young for that. But it looked very bad, so sad, unnecessary. Those people seemed withdrawn and as if they were living without any purpose. They were just there, nothing more (W, 60 Y, CITY).

It is significant that only one person expressed such an opinion.

Talking about old age in the family environment, the interviewees also signaled the peculiarities of housing conditions specific to the time

of their childhood. War losses, migration or population resettlement, and, on top of that, the compulsory housing management regulated by the communist authorities, or the lack of independent housing and the distant prospects of obtaining it, posed quite a logistic challenge in the organization of daily life<sup>27</sup>. It appears, however, that according to representatives of the Baby Boomers generation, uncomfortable housing conditions were not considered an obstacle preventing them from taking care of the oldest member of the family. One man observed the old age of his grandparents living in a rural environment and recalled,

In the countryside it happened naturally. It cannot be said that these flats were bigger, because the house where my mother spent her childhood was a tiny hut, and there were 6 of them. But it was natural for an elderly person to be around the family. The elderly stayed at home, the children took care of them. And this used to be normal. Such were the housing conditions back then" (M, 70 Y, CITY).

However, among the respondents there were some who grew up in an urban environment, but still witnessed similar practices. One of the men said,

Using our stairwell as an example – there were, because now I don't know, I think there is only one, there were very many old women here. Who were they? They were either the wife's or husband's mother after whom the children in the city looked after. They brought them from the countryside and took care of them. There used to be these elderly people here, yes, brought in by the children (M, 67 Y, CITY).

Many representatives of the Baby Boomers generation also mentioned that old age in the family environment used to be a natural state, because old people had no alternatives in the form of, for example, the nursing homes that are popular today. Thus, the question of old age in the family resonated in the consciousness of the respondents, directing their thoughts to modern times as well. Consequently, there is a juxtaposition of the childhood years of the representatives of the surveyed generations and the present times. In fact, such a reference to the issues studied was a frequent practice of the interviewees, which can be taken as a natural consequence of the ongoing conversation. That being said, it is a good idea to investigate the interviewees' statements about modern times.

<sup>27</sup> A. Giza-Poleszczuk, M. Sikorska, *Współczesne społeczeństwo polskie...*, p. 201.

## Absence of old age in the contemporary family environment and its determinants

People belonging to the post-war Baby Boom generation took a critical stance on the question of the fate of modern old age. With little hesitation, the majority recognized that there is no place for old age in the family today. This is how the narrators argued these points,

There is no place. As long as there is a person who, so to speak, causes trouble in the family, then what is done is put such a person in the circle of older people, that is, in institutions. I know such cases (w, 71 y, CITY).

Another interviewee shared a similar observation, as they said that the family situation becomes more complicated when the illnesses and weakness typical for the final phase of a person's life occur.

This is such a difficult question. – explained a woman – It seems to me that it is much easier find a place in the family for an elderly person who is healthy and is able to help the family. Such a person devotes 100% of their time to the family. If a person is already ailing, however, they kind of mess up the family, this is my impression. I've seen this. And then the family usually tries to put such a senior citizen in some kind of nursing home, at least in most cases they want to. It's a burden and they want to get rid of it. I know such cases (w, 60 y, CITY).

There is a similar comment from a slightly older representative of the Baby Boomers' generation,

Now, well, whatever happens, they seek social care and a nursing home somewhere, because work, because they have their own children, because they have many responsibilities and then there's no time for the elderly. If the elderly are able to function on their own, then it's not so bad and children accept to look after them. But if an illness strikes and they need round-the-clock care, well, then there is no space for old age in the family. It used to be that in the West, in the States, they didn't keep the elderly at home, they just handed them over to social care and so on. In our country, when you were 20-30 years old, it was unacceptable. Well today it has already become the norm (M, 75 y, CITY).

The man's pertinent observations are an indication of the family model that was spreading in Western societies (in the 1960s and 1970s), which was characterized by the individualism of its members in which the welfare of the individual is placed above the common interest. This has obvious consequences especially for the situation of dependent people, including the elderly. Social changes initiated by the 1989 transformation contributed to the fact that the model of the Polish family is gradually shifting towards the individualism of its members.

Besides the growing popularity of nursing homes, the narrators also recognized other threats of modern times. One woman said,

In a busy world, where they both work and, the mother, the grandmother, stays home alone all day and is not taken care of in any way (...) because they are not able to secure care, nannies, nurses, and it doesn't at all necessarily flow from the fact that they don't want to. Sometimes it's just the way things are. On the other hand, if someone does this, and you hear, I've heard this situation many times, that it's Christmas time, Easter, or God forbid the vacations, and just like a pet is left in the woods, a parent is left in the hospital, at least for this period, well, I am outraged. Well I think it all depends on what is here, in the heart. Such a thing is unimaginable for me (w, 63 Y, VILLAGE).

The quoted woman's outrage was not an isolated incident. Another interlocutor, who works as an ambulance paramedic, recounted,

Today, old age in the family is that they will call an ambulance because they want to send either the father or the mother, not to mention the grandparents, to the hospital. And do you know why? Because they're flying on vacation. These situations happen. They really do. Often, really often (M, 56 Y, VILLAGE).

The placement of an elderly person in a nursing home or hospital seems to be a final and very tough solution. The respondents' narratives also named other insights suggesting that the list of evidence for the absence of old age in the modern family is longer than those aspects already mentioned. One woman said,

Old people's homes, I think that's mostly what old age looks like today. I can't imagine such old age, such an existence. (...) For now I don't think about it and I'm afraid, afraid. (...) Well I'm afraid, because today you know the youth, the younger generation, as well as my children, well I know they have to work and just, I don't know sacrifice like people used to? Is it possible? Well people used to be able to devote themselves more to that sick person at home, that elderly person. Today people have concerns whether they will be able to do that, because simply the work situation is changing and all that. There is no such certainty today that someone will take care of you. We don't know whether someone will do it with eagerness. But should we burden children so much again? Well, children, you know, would come and bring the groceries, maybe clean the apartment. And they would go to their own place. After all, they wouldn't be here with you 24 hours a day (w, 65 Y, CITY).

The woman's thoughts are, on the one hand, an indication of uncertainty about the possibility of experiencing today's old age with loved ones, and on the other hand, the final part of her statement mentions



elderly people living alone. This was pointed out by another respondent as well, who described the implications more broadly.

There is no, I think, there is no place – she said – I mean, I know that if we needed it, the children would help us. But, unfortunately, we don’t live together, so a little bit has changed. It seems as if there is a distance between the youth and their parents. What I mean by that is that in the past the young also had their own families, but the families were multigenerational, there were grandparents and they lived together with the young. I even now notice elderly people that are alone in our residential area. Sons and daughters come to visit, they even hired someone to take care of their parents, because they care, but still the seniors are alone. There is no one to be at home, only children come and go. There are a lot of seniors who are alone. This is somewhat the result of younger generation’s need of comfort. Unfortunately, there are no multigenerational families as there used to. Now if the parents need it, surely these young people will help, but the thing is that at home there are no grandchildren, no children. Now. We say now. It used to be different, living together was good (w, 74 y, CITY).

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Both interviewees mentioned different generations living together, which is one of the components of the old age in the family environment. An in-depth examination of this issue will be made, as it has been reported in different ways.

Living separately is a convenient solution, which allows people use the space as they desire and guarantees quiet. The living together of many generations, in turn, requires a reciprocal effort by the younger and older generations to develop rules of harmonious coexistence. Thus, as long as there is willingness to compromise between household members, it is a good practice. Nevertheless, this dependency element is a not insignificant condition in this regard. This is how one of the men described it,

In my opinion, living together is more beneficial provided that there is an understanding between the residents. Because if it was only to aggravate the situation, well... I think you would have to decide from an early age to live together because moving in together at an older age is rather pointless. Everyone wants to become independent, everyone wants to have their own way, and it simply creates more conflicts. That is why you need to think ahead. For example, at the time when a son or daughter start his or her own family, then they should already start to live together with their parents, so that they learn what it means to do that (m, 75 y, CITY).

The narrator’s deliberations provide an interesting contribution to the discussion expressing the desired state and/or the ideal state.

However, the reality is sometimes quite different. People from the Baby Boomers generation unanimously expressed the opinion that multigenerational households are rare today,

In the neighborhood, not counting us of course, because the children don't live with us, I don't see any families with many generations living together – one of the men explained – and we have practically no such acquaintances, we don't (M, 67 Y, CITY).

Another opinion:

These multigenerational homes have become, in my opinion, much rarer. I guess it still depends on the illnesses, too. Well, let's not hide the fact that if someone who is older than seventy or even nearing eighty, then these illnesses might mean, for example, Alzheimer's, which can be unpleasant and burdensome, especially if these earlier generation also continue to work. Probably many people, here I do not want to make excuses for anyone, do not have, let me put it this way, necessary conditions to offer to take care of an elderly person (M, 70 Y, VILLAGE).

Thus, in addition to the health ailments mentioned by the interviewee, the housing conditions of potential caregivers of the elderly are also important. The narrators from the post-war Baby Boomer generation also raised the issue of the younger generations becoming independent quickly, while one person mentioned the situation of joint intergenerational sharing of living space against the will of the oldest tenant. These are examples of statements illustrating both approaches.

Today, well it's different, people mostly want to live separately, because we want different things and they want different things. If they have the conditions to do so, of course, because it's necessary to have conditions to somehow secure this grandmother or grandfather who live separately. As long as the grandmother or grandfather are alive, they are still able to function on their own, then they decide to live separately, because they want to have their own life. And that's good in a way. Everyone has time to do the things need or want (W, 63 Y, VILLAGE).

Another opinion:

Today old age, I know, is associated with loneliness. Because everyone wants to be independent from a young age, and later this independence stays with them. Then, when they are elderly they start to complain that there is no one to talk to, as there no people close to you, because everyone is busy with their own affairs (M, 75 Y, CITY).

That man's statement makes one realize that people shape the look of their old age throughout their whole life. These are reflections of another representative of the Baby Boomers generation, in which

between the lines one can notice nostalgia for the disappearing model of multigenerational homes,

Now the young want to be independent. They cut themselves off from their family, well they don't do it literally, but they want to have their own apartment, they want to be alone with their wife, with their children. I, for one, believe that many elderly people are lonely and they need some warmth, some interest from loved ones. And they are far away. Some even had to go abroad to make a living, they're out there in the world somewhere. Then, this mother will only hear the voice of those grandchildren of hers, her daughter or son on the phone even if they are here in Poland too. The young are distancing from their parents (w, 74 y, CITY).

Although there are times when the opposite is true as well. One woman reported the following situation,

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Among my neighbors I have a friend who lives on the fourth floor. A person just like me, single. She has an educated daughter. Her son-in-law is also educated, he was a pilot. And so to speak, they moved in to her without her consent. And they rule her in such a way that when she comes to me, she says, *You don't say anything to me, I'll just sit at your place.* I say, *Dorothy, why do they treat you like this? The daughter for whom you would give your life.* Because really she washes, cooks, runs to get groceries, even though she has a serious heart disease. I say, *Why does she treat you like this?* She says, *I don't know.* And you can't help her. Because what do you tell her? Kick them out? Well, no, because it is clear you will not kick them out, and they won't leave. Sometimes I think to myself: *Dear God, it's good that I live alone.* I can lie down whenever I want, I can get up whenever I want, or I can eat whenever I want. The old age of such people is cruel (w, 77 y, CITY).

Therefore, multigenerational homes are a complex issue, which is not so frequent in modern families. An excellent summary of the circumstances of this state of affairs is the following comment from one of the interviewees,

Many generations living together in a house is rare today, and what is the reason for this? Firstly, it is due to changing customs. Children leave home quickly, they become independent fast. Even if there are housing conditions, there is a large house, it is often the case that the young quickly move out, they do not want to live together with their parents. They think that as long as there is no need to take care of an elderly person, an elderly parent, there is no point in living together. Today the world is completely different, because consumerism is everywhere. It is a completely different world. But the fact that parents and children live separately does not necessarily mean that the ties are

weak. Sometimes this house is the center of the family. Yet, there are also times when these elderly people, very often till the very end, try to be independent in order not to burden their loved ones with the need to care for them. Thus, the issues of upbringing and relationships in the family are important in this case. Thirdly, the housing conditions also play a role in determining whether many generations decide to live together or not (M, 70 Y, CITY).

The content presented raises a reflection as to the ambiguous position of the interviewees on the topic of generations living together. The presented responses lead to a reflection that the interviewees have an ambiguous attitude towards multigenerational living together. Although many seniors recognize the advantages of this phenomenon known in the subject literature as singularization of old age (elderly living alone)<sup>28</sup>, the tone of some seniors' statements expresses sadness at the decreasing prevalence of such a state of affairs.

## Conclusion

The image of dignified old age, established on the pages of scientific literature, customs, or in the memoirs of representatives of the Baby Boomers generation, manifested in the fact that the elderly naturally fit into the space of the daily functioning of the family, while being the transmitters of traditions, norms and values in the spirit of which the younger generations are socialized, teaching the prayer or telling about the war times, is gradually weakening in the space of Polish families<sup>29</sup>. However, it is also true that nowadays the profile of old age in the family environment is more a matter of choice than of fate, which was common in the childhood times reported by the interviewed Boomers. Society-wide changes cannot be stopped, but it is possible to make an effort to accommodate to them.

The opinions expressed by representatives of the Baby Boomers generation concerning the absence of old age in the modern family, with nursing homes becoming the main place for old age, are a manifestation of their fear or uncertainty about their future fate. The narrators are aware that the way of experiencing old age in the family environment, rooted in their memories, is increasingly unrealistic, and

<sup>28</sup> P. Błędowski, *Starzenie się jako problem społeczny. Perspektywy demograficznego starzenia się ludności Polski do roku 2035*, in: *Aspekty medyczne, psychologiczne, socjologiczne i ekonomiczne starzenia się ludzi w Polsce*, eds. M. Mossakowska, A. Więcek, P. Błędowski, Poznań 2012, p. 17.

<sup>29</sup> M. Marody et al., *Spółeczeństwo na zakręcie. Zmiany postaw i wartości Polaków w latach 1990-2018*, Warszawa 2019.

this can naturally raise concerns. However, seniors’ opinions about today’s multigenerational living together have not been unanimous. The solution has its supporters and opponents. Thus, what is needed is a wise direction of what old age in the family space can/should look like today. In fact, this is the very choice specific to our times, which is the subject of decisions by both young and older generations. This is because a separate apartment does not at all exclude showing respect to an elderly father or mother, giving them support, necessary assistance, creating space for the presence of grandmothers and grandfathers in the lives of grandchildren, for example, in the role of transmitters of values. However, consensual coexistence requires that seniors also allow younger generations to make choices about the shape of old age in the space of today’s family, and this includes allowing them to implement the “together but apart” model. After all, such a model also fits in with the recommendation that John Paul II made in his letter *To the Elderly*, “The natural environment for experiencing old age remains that in which an elderly person feels «at home», among relatives, acquaintances and friends”<sup>30</sup>. Moreover, accommodating to today’s reality also requires seniors to decide the “fate” of the image of old age in the family space which is deeply rooted in their memory. It is because one can lament the absence of the vision of old age characteristic to the times of their childhood. However, one can also update this vision, reinterpret it taking into account today’s circumstances.


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<sup>30</sup> Jan Paweł II, *List do osób w podeszłym wieku*, 1999, 13.

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## Cooperation of the Family, Parish and School in the Eucharistic Formation of the Child on the Example of the Church in Poland

The article discusses preparation for First Holy Communion as a joint work of all three catechetical environments – family, parish and school, highlighting the diverse tasks current on each of them. The necessity of a coherent effort for children who are preparing for full participation in the Eucharist is presented as a prerequisite for effective religious formation, which will not end with the day of the celebration of receiving Jesus the Eucharist for the first time, but will usher in a new quality of life for the child and his loved ones and enable the formation of the Eucharistic attitudes lived out in everyday life. After showing the program assumptions of initiation catechesis in Poland and outlining the tasks of the family, parish and school in preparing children for the First Holy Communion, he points out the practical possibilities of their implementation. The sources for the reflection will be the documents of the universal Church and in Poland, with particular emphasis on the teaching relating to Eucharistic formation and the program assumptions of parish catechesis and school teaching of Roman Catholic religion. After presenting the issue, conclusions will also be offered for the effective implementation of the theoretical assumptions.

**Key words:** preparation for First Holy Communion, cooperation of catechetical communities, catechetical communities, catechesis in the family, catechesis in the parish.

“Preparing children for the sacrament of penance and reconciliation and the Eucharist should take place in close cooperation between pastors and catechists with parents”<sup>1</sup>. The position expressed three years

<sup>1</sup> Konferencja Episkopatu Polski, *Wskazania dotyczące przygotowania dzieci do przyjęcia i przeżywania sakramentu pokuty i pojednania oraz Pierwszej Komunii*



ago in the instructions of the Polish Episcopal Conference regarding the preparation of children to receive and experience the sacrament of penance and reconciliation and First Holy Communion does not differ from the previous assumptions of Eucharistic formation. Parents, as the first catechists and educators in the faith, play a leading role in this matter. In turn, the parish, as an inspirer and propagator of catechesis<sup>2</sup>, remains the environment of this formation and the community in which families experience their faith together. Since religion classes returned to schools in Poland in 1990, this institution has also had its tasks in preparing children for full participation in the Eucharist.

This article will attempt to demonstrate the need for coherent actions by the family, parish and school for children who are preparing for full participation in the Eucharist. The sources for the reflection will be documents of the universal Church and churches in Poland, with particular emphasis on teaching relating to Eucharistic formation. First, the family as an environment of Christian initiation will be presented, followed by the role of the parish in Eucharistic formation. The school and its program assumptions relating to the Eucharistic life will be presented as the third preparation environment. After presenting these issues, the optimal model of cooperation between communities and conclusions for the effective implementation of theoretical assumptions will be presented.

## Family as the environment of Christian initiation

Pope John Paul II, writing about the educational role of parents, described them as the first preachers of the Gospel to children. He emphasized that this activity is two-way, because it also addresses themselves, strengthening them as parents. As he claimed, “by praying with children and reading the Word of God with them, by including children through gradual Christian initiation into the Body – Eucharistic and ecclesial – of Christ, they become parents in full, not only parents of physical life, but also of that which through the rebirth of the Spirit The Holy Spirit flows from the Cross and the Resurrection

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*Świętej* (29.08.2020), <https://opoka.org.pl/News/Polska/2020/przygotowanie-dzieci-do-sakramentu-pokuty-i-pierwszej-komunii-swietej>, [henceforth: *Indications of the Polish Episcopal Conference...*].

<sup>2</sup> See See John Paul II, Apostolic exhortation *Catechesi tradendae*, Rome 1979, ed. Polish: Warsaw 1980 (henceforth: CT), 67.

of Christ<sup>3</sup>. To become catechists for their own children, parents must first be witnesses of the faith themselves. The way faith is experienced in the family is crucial for the religious formation of children – where parents fulfill their obligations to accept and raise their children as Catholics, children's baptism is something natural. There are also manifestations of religiosity between the sacrament of baptism and further initiation – preparation for full participation in the Eucharist.

Among the various terms assigned to the family, the well-known one refers to it as a domestic Church. The family becomes a domestic church when it fulfills its specific tasks, allowing it to be seen not only as the smallest and basic social group, but also as a community of faith. These tasks include creating a community of people, serving life, participating in the development of society and participating in the life and mission of the Church<sup>4</sup>. There are also some talks about a family catechumenate, which is important for religious formation in the family. The catechetical influence of the family is not a didactic process in the same sense as school religion classes. It has the character of mystagogy, Christian initiation, which first involves shaping the appropriate atmosphere and appropriate attitudes<sup>5</sup>. The child's ability to turn to God in prayer and participate in the liturgy will largely depend on the experiences the child gains in the family. "Therefore, an important goal of the prayer of the domestic Church is to create conditions for children to be naturally introduced to liturgical prayer, appropriate for the entire Church, both by preparing for it and by extending it to personal, family and social life. Hence the need for the gradual participation of all family members in the Eucharist, especially on Sundays and church holidays, and in other sacraments, especially in the sacraments of Christian initiation of children<sup>6</sup>.

In many respects, the family has opportunities that no other community has. The same is true in the case of religious education. "An important task of Christian parents is to explain to their children that each Eucharist is at the same time a school of love for God and for man (...) Family preparation for the Eucharistic life should include at least

<sup>3</sup> John Paul II, Apostolic exhortation *Familiaris consortio*, Rome 1981, ed. Polish, [https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/pl/apost\\_exhortations/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_exh\\_19811122\\_familiaris-consortio.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/pl/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_19811122_familiaris-consortio.html) (henceforth: FC), 39.

<sup>4</sup> See A. Skreczko, *Zadania rodziny jako domowego Kościoła*, "Rocznik Teologii Katolickiej" 2009, Vol. 8, pp. 112-121.

<sup>5</sup> See R. Buchta, *Mistagogia w polskiej refleksji i praktyce katechetyczno-duszpasterskiej po II Soborze Watykańskim*, Katowice 2017, p. 449.

<sup>6</sup> FC 61.

three important elements: introducing – especially small children – to participate in the Holy Mass, fruitful preparation for First Holy Communion, as well as preparation for mature use of the Eucharist<sup>7</sup>. The Polish catechetical directory, following the Code of Canon Law and other documents, even states that the work of parents to raise children (including religious education) is an obligation, and its implementation should take place at the dawn of childhood. Specific obligations owed to parents include: caring for the preparation of children for First Holy Communion and the sacrament of penance and reconciliation, attending religious classes and participating in catechetical ministry in the parish, as well as participating in religious practices and the liturgical and sacramental life of the Church<sup>8</sup>.

The educational tasks of the family, also understood in the religious aspect, were even more pronounced in the latest *Directory on catechesis*. The narrative style has been slightly changed and instead of family catechesis, the document talks about various scopes of family catechesis – catechesis in the family, with the family, and family catechesis<sup>9</sup>. Catechesis in the family takes place when the family experiences faith and shows love and care for each other in a selfless way. Catechesis with the family is a task for the Church, which, aware of the fact that the parish community is based on these basic communities, should ensure that the catechetical message is addressed to families and strictly relates to the real problems that families face. In turn, family catechesis is understood as any activity serving to deepen faith – both within a given family, but also outside the family's environment. In this way, the family becomes the subject of catechesis and an instrument of evangelization. Apart from the parents, other family members were also appreciated – especially grandparents and godparents. They also became known as catechists. Grandparents emphasize greater time opportunities in shaping their grandchildren's faith and emotional involvement. In turn, godparents are to remain co-workers of parents and witnesses of faith, which obliges them to responsibly choose people to perform this function<sup>10</sup>.

<sup>7</sup> M. Kobiółka, *Wychowanie dziecka do życia eucharystycznego obowiązkiem rodziców*, in: *Siedem sakramentów świętych w nauczaniu katechetycznym*, ed. H. Słotwińska, Lublin 2007, pp. 309-310 [307-315].

<sup>8</sup> See Polish Episcopal Conference, *Dyrektorium katechetyczne Kościoła katolickiego w Polsce*, Kraków 2001 (henceforth: PDC), 127-128.

<sup>9</sup> See Pontifical Council for the Promotion of the New Evangelization, *Directory for Catechesis*, Rome 2020, ed. Polish: Kielce 2020 (henceforth: DC), 227-231.

<sup>10</sup> See DC 125-126.

It is worth noticing, that catechetical activity cannot be reduced only to what takes place within the family. As E. Osewska notes, “family catechesis is a general concept referring to catechesis and its relationship with the family. It includes catechetical interactions carried out in the family environment, family cooperation with institutional catechesis, catechetical and pastoral activities undertaken for the family and catechesis for parents, godparents, fiancées and grandparents<sup>11</sup>. Such a view allows us to see, for example, the need for family support from the parish and people with professional training in catechism. Sometimes, when holding families accountable for fulfilling their obligation to raise children in the faith, they do not take into account the fact that not all parents feel competent in undertaking this task. That’s why it’s so important for them to get the right help first. For this reason, meetings with parents organized in the course of preparation for full participation in the Eucharist cannot be limited in terms of content to organizational issues. It would seem that today – in the age of the Internet and a rich offer also addressed to families, catechetical meetings for parents will no longer be so necessary. Nothing could be further from the truth – regardless of any other forms of support, the parish is obliged to care for those who belong to it.

## The role of the parish in Eucharistic formation

The parish’s participation in preparing families for children’s First Holy Communion and the responsibility for this preparation result from the fact that the parish is a Eucharistic congregation. As noted by Fr. R. Zielasko, on the one hand, the parish is the most appropriate entity for the celebration of the Eucharist, on the other hand, “the parish lives and grows primarily through the celebration of the Eucharist”<sup>12</sup>. He even added that the Eucharist *makes* and actualizes the parish, and if so, all participants should be properly prepared to participate in it in accordance with their assigned tasks – priests, liturgical service and all the faithful people, including families.

A consistent translation of the Holy Mass and participation in it in both directions – to God and to man – will reveal each time (...) that the celebration of the Eucharist has serious consequences in the everyday life of the faithful, that the Holy Mass The Church demands the Mass of

<sup>11</sup> E. Osewska, *Katecheza rodzinna w polskich dokumentach katechetycznych*, “Studia nad Rodziną” 2003, Vol. 7, pp. 36 [35-38].

<sup>12</sup> R. Zielasko, *Parafia jako zgromadzenie eucharystyczne*, “Studia Theologica Varsaviensia” 1968, Vol. 6, pp. 75-76 [75-105].

life, a life shaped in the spirit of obedience to the Father and a sincere effort to love other people<sup>13</sup>.

This connection of the Eucharist with everyday life is one of the arguments in favor of experiencing faith in one's own parish – then important days and family celebrations are celebrated in this specific community, and other parishioners participate in them with prayer. On the other hand, participation in the Eucharist – the sign of peace given to members of the same community standing nearby or the prayer of the intention given by the priest – are concrete ways of helping the faithful who may live next door or work in the same place or – in the case of children and young people – study in the same class.

Since the evangelization and catechetical service of the “domestic church” grows and comes from the unique mission of the Church and is subordinated to the building of the one Body of Christ, it should remain in internal communion and responsible harmony with all other ministries of evangelization and catechesis, present and active in the ecclesial community, both diocesan and as well as parish<sup>14</sup>.

Therefore, the fundamental requirement to prepare for and receive the sacraments in one's own parish is not accidental. It can even be said that the responsibility of the parish for the family and the responsibility of the family for the parish must go hand in hand – by deepening the religious awareness of its faithful and supporting them in fulfilling the tasks of the first educators in the faith, the parish community strengthens itself. The catechetical offer of the parish should

<sup>13</sup> There. As the author further notes, “This purpose will be served by various meetings of individual groups of the parish family (young people, children, parents, people living alone, etc.), as well as social and entertainment meetings. The spirit of the parish community will manifest itself and at the same time strengthen and deepen in various social and charitable actions, e.g. towards the sick, the elderly, large families, etc. However, all this will have its source in the parish celebration of the Eucharist and will in turn lead to it.

<sup>14</sup> FC 53. A similar position was expressed, among others, in the Polish catechetical directory, see PDK 107. It happens that parents, e.g. of children attending private schools, prefer Eucharistic formation in the school parish. Apart from special schools, which sometimes decide on such a solution due to the preparation of the pastor, this solution is not only unjustified, but also will not bring the expected results. D. Dudoit expressed her opinion on this matter quite fundamentally Raiche: “Some opt for a liturgical celebration with classmates or family for reasons of social comfort. However well-intentioned this practice may be, in fact, it works the child and the family of an authentic ecclesial experience that is bigger than one small group. D. Dudoit Raiche, *Liturgical Catechesis: A Method with Constitutive Elements*, “International Journal of Evangelization and Catechetics” 2020, Vol. 1, pp. 37-38 [19-43].

not be limited to preparation for the sacraments, although for obvious reasons it cannot be missing then.

The parish should organize meetings of groups of parents who would like to find answers to their educational problems. This is the so-called parish pedagogy of parents. Topics discussed with parents may concern problems encountered in family upbringing, as well as important issues regarding faith life. Parents should be made aware of the importance of meditating on the Word of God, which is an important element of upbringing, and the systematic use of the sacraments<sup>15</sup>.

The key role of the parish in Eucharistic formation should be considered in a slightly broader context – its catechetical tasks in general. It is never enough to remind Pope John Paul II who indicated that parish “should become a propagator and inspirer of catechesis (...) it is still a place where Christians, even non-practicing ones, are united in close bonds”<sup>16</sup>. The role of the parish community increases even more in the context of Eucharistic formation. As the Polish Pope emphasized, “a parish is a community of the baptized who express and confirm their identity primarily through the celebration of the Eucharistic Sacrifice”<sup>17</sup>. This requires the presence of a priest, so the family as a domestic church cannot do without the parish in this respect.

Preparation for the sacraments of penance and the Eucharist takes place indirectly during religious education at school, while direct introduction to the mystery of these sacraments should generally take place in the parish of the student’s place of residence<sup>18</sup>.

This statement is obvious to people who consciously live their faith in the parish community and identify with this community. Those who only come to the parish as guests or even choose any church on the occasion of holidays and celebrations will not see the point in the above-mentioned regulations, and will also be critical of the need to obtain the consent of their own parish priest to receive the sacrament outside the parish. However, if the time of preparation for full participation in the Eucharist is not the only time when the family comes to

<sup>15</sup> A. Skreczko, *Parafia jako środowisko wychowawczego wsparcia rodziców*, “Studia nad Rodziną” 2013, Vol. 17, pp. 285 [277-289].

<sup>16</sup> CT 67.

<sup>17</sup> John Paul II, Encyclical *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, Rome 2003, ed. Polish, [https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/pl/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_enc\\_20030417\\_eccle-de-euch.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/pl/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_20030417_eccle-de-euch.html), 32.

<sup>18</sup> Polish Episcopal Conference, *Podstawa programowa katechezy Kościoła katolickiego w Polsce*, Częstochowa 2018 (henceforth: CCP), p. 49.

church, it is known that it is in this particular community that further Eucharistic life will be practiced (at least in the near future).

Parish catechesis preparing for the sacrament of penance and reconciliation and the Eucharist should be spiritual in nature. The child should systematically participate in Sunday Mass and services related to the liturgical year (rosary, Stations of the Cross, May services, etc.) and in thematic meetings<sup>19</sup>.

Since the preparation concerns a student of the third grade of primary school, i.e. at the age of eight or nine, in many cases he will not come to church on his own, which, from the very beginning, indicates the need to involve someone close to him, and therefore assumes cooperation between the groups. The attitude with which the child will participate in the liturgy and services is also important. If going to church is constantly accompanied by comments from parents who are tired of having to do so or who disregard participation in prayer, the child may easily be influenced by the parents' mood. It is worth noting how uneducational such behavior is, since from an early age the child witnesses discrepancies between declarations and actions, or even adults forcing themselves to follow the rules, which are at the same time ridiculed or disregarded.

## School religion lessons and Eucharistic formation

Since religious classes returned to Polish schools in 1990, families have received additional help in the religious formation of children and youth. The family was still the first catechetical environment, parishes still had their tasks to fulfill, especially as part of Christian initiation, and schools offered age-appropriate content that deepened the understanding of faith and showed the possibility of living it every day. From the very beginning, school religion classes had their own role to play, without denying the need to continue parish catechesis and without depriving parents of their tasks as the first catechists. The relationship between religious lessons and catechesis in the parish is aptly described in the General Directory on Catechesis as a relationship of “complementarity and differentiation”<sup>20</sup>. This relationship is similarly expressed in the latest catechetical document of the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of the New Evangelization:

<sup>19</sup> *Indications of the Polish Episcopal Conference...*, 26.

<sup>20</sup> Congregation for the Clergy, *General Directory for Catechesis*, Rome 1997, ed. Polish: Poznań 1998, no. 73.



teaching the Catholic religion at school (...) is distinguished from catechesis and at the same time complementary to it. Where the distinction is not clear, there is a risk that they will lose their identity<sup>21</sup>.

The need to both participate in religious classes and participate in parish catechesis has been repeatedly expressed in the Episcopate's statements. The latest guidelines also emphasize that preparation for full participation in the Eucharist at every stage – further, closer and direct – is achieved both through school religious education and parish catechesis<sup>22</sup>. This is consistent with the assumptions of the *Core Curriculum for Catechesis of the Catholic Church in Poland*, according to which "Preparation for the sacraments of penance and the Eucharist takes place indirectly during religious education at school, while direct introduction to the mystery of these sacraments should generally take place in the parish of the student's place of residence. There should also be concern for sanctification, for deepening the Eucharistic life after receiving the First Holy Communion<sup>23</sup>. It is emphasized that catechetical meetings in parishes cannot duplicate religion classes in formal and methodological terms.

School religion lessons in grades 1-4 of primary school, in terms of curriculum assumptions, are part of the catechesis of initiation into the sacrament of penance and reconciliation and the Eucharist. It is

an introduction to the basic content of faith and an awakening of trust in God. The sources of knowledge are in particular: the Bible, liturgy and students' experiences. Catechesis focused on the Person and teaching of Jesus Christ is intended to support students in building a system of values, shaping attitudes consistent with their faith and celebrating saving events in the liturgical year<sup>24</sup>.

The catechetical goals, equivalent to the general goals in the first four grades of primary school, are preparation for the sacraments of penance and reconciliation and the Eucharist, showing God's love in the gifts of life, baptism and faith, introducing the mysteries of the liturgical year, shaping conscience, leading to an encounter with God in prayer, education for community life in the family, school and parish, as well as shaping Eucharistic attitudes and attitudes of witness<sup>25</sup>.

<sup>21</sup> DC 313.

<sup>22</sup> *Indications of the Polish Episcopal Conference...*, no. 13.

<sup>23</sup> CCP, p. 49.

<sup>24</sup> CCP, p. 31.

<sup>25</sup> See CCP, pp. 31-32.

Although in the light of the latest core curriculum, the first Holy Communion is administered at the end of the third grade of primary school, the first educational stage has been extended by an additional year. After the modification of a similar document in 2010, the program clearly lacked time to discuss the Holy Mass with students from a new perspective – after they began their Eucharistic life. The concept of such an approach becomes better understood after analyzing the slogans for the individual classes of this stage, the title of which is *Invited to a Feast with Jesus*<sup>26</sup>. The first three classes of the stage are used to prepare for the sacraments of penance and reconciliation and the Eucharist and have the following titles: class I – *God our Father*; class II – *God gives us his Son – Jesus*; class III – *Jesus comes to us*. Jesus, who comes in the Eucharist, helps children every day – it is important that they learn to notice this truth in their lives and seek the presence of Jesus and friendship with Him. The motto of the fourth year is *I want to live with Jesus*, and the task of religious education is to lead students to such a declaration.

The special role of the current core curriculum for catechesis of the Catholic Church in Poland, and, following it, the religious education program prepared by the Commission for Catholic Education, is to restore Eucharistic attitudes as important for the religious formation of children who begin full participation in the Holy Mass. Eucharistic education based on such attitudes was postulated by, among others, priest Jan Charytański, noting that it is a multi-faceted task.

It includes correct information about the entire theology of the Eucharist, takes into account the development of awareness of the encounter, the relationship of the Eucharist with the Church and human life, and finally takes seriously the education of Eucharistic attitudes<sup>27</sup>.

In his publications, he discussed several of them in more detail – the attitude of co-offering, the attitude towards the Word of God, the attitude of unity and love, and the attitude of gratitude<sup>28</sup>. In the context of these attitudes, it is difficult to ignore school religion classes, because this is where the content is taught, including content related

<sup>26</sup> See Catholic Education Commission of the Polish Episcopal Conference, *Program nauczania religii rzymskokatolickiej w przedszkolach i szkołach*, Częstochowa 2018, p. 39 ff. (henceforth: RCP).

<sup>27</sup> J. Charytański, *Wychowanie eucharystyczne po I Komunii św.*, “Katecheta” 1988 Vol. 1, pp. 28 [23-28].

<sup>28</sup> See A. Rayzacher-Majewska, *Aktualność refleksji katechetycznej ks. prof. Jana Charytańskiego*, “Studia Katechetyczne” 2022, Vol. 18, p. 32.

to Eucharistic attitudes – students get to know them and learn from examples how to shape these attitudes in their own lives.

Because attitude is something permanent, its development requires regularity and systematic work. It cannot also take place only in a purely theoretical way, hence the demand to continue religious formation after receiving the First Holy Communion, when the child already experiences what he has learned over the past three years. For this reason, there is a disturbing tendency observed in Poland, according to which parents withdraw their children from religion classes in the fourth grade of primary school, i.e. right after they are able to fully participate in the Holy Mass. The motives for this behavior are very different – sometimes withdrawal from religion is a confirmation of insufficient religious formation and immaturity of parents who, wanting their child to receive further holy sacraments, met the formal requirement of the child's participation in religious classes. Other times, parents succumb to the persuasion of a child who, like their peers who do not attend religious classes, wants to have more free time. Finally, it happens – and these are particularly painful cases – that practicing parents, involved in movements or communities, resign from their child's participation in religious classes, claiming that this subject does not translate into deepening the student's faith. This last approach proves how poorly understood religion lessons, which are an important form of catechetical influence. It is often unjustifiably identified with full catechesis. This contradicts the optics of the catechetical documents of the universal Church and Church in Poland, which clearly demarcates two areas of activity and two different forms of the ministry of the Word. Catechesis is traditionally defined, following Pope John Paul II, as the education of children, youth and adults in the faith<sup>29</sup>. As the Pope further specifies, it includes primarily the teaching of Christian doctrine, generally transmitted in a systematic and comprehensive manner, in order to introduce believers to the fullness of Christian life. The differences between religious lessons and catechesis are most visible in the context of the recipients and the functions of catechesis extracted from the above definition – upbringing, teaching and initiation. Since catechesis is to be an education in faith, it is assumed that its addressees will be believers. In the case of school religion classes, there is no such reservation, and it is even emphasized that every student has the right to participate in them, regardless of their declaration of faith or level of religiosity. For this reason, religious practices and involvement in parish life are not

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<sup>29</sup> CT 18.

subject to assessment if they are not related to the teaching content and verification of knowledge or skills.

Of the three functions of catechesis at school, it is fully possible to implement the didactic function as part of religion classes. To some extent, the school also creates the opportunity to perform an educational function, as evidenced by the attitudes that are new in the latest curriculum documents. Although attitudes are not subject to school assessment, when conducting classes, a religion teacher should strive to develop such attitudes in students, closely related to the topic of a given lesson. This is an analogous situation to shaping patriotic attitudes in other lessons. Finally, the initiatory – initiating – function of catechesis requires, in order to be fully achieved, a community of faith and involvement in experiencing the saving mysteries through the liturgy and sacraments. Therefore, its implementation can only take place in a parish community that has resources for Christian initiation. It is worth noting that whether school and religious classes will serve an initiatory function, even to the slightest extent, depends on many factors. First of all, it depends on the catechist. If he teaches as a witness and shares his faith with students, encouraging them to follow him and leading them into the parish community, we can talk about a certain fulfillment of the initiatory function.

Such assumptions underlying the organization of religious classes are not widely known, and therefore parents have different attitudes towards these classes. Meanwhile, knowledge about the complementarity and differentiation between catechesis and religion lessons, as well as awareness of the possibilities of implementing individual functions of catechesis within various forms of the ministry of the Word, could contribute to a different perception of the classes discussed. Meanwhile, there are parents whose greater catechetical involvement takes place only during the school year in which their children are directly preparing for the First Holy Communion and ends in the same year.

As Pope John Paul II noted, “alongside the family and in connection with it, the school offers opportunities for catechesis that are not to be despised”<sup>30</sup>. Both in relation to the family and the parish, in catechetical program documents regarding school religious lessons there is an expectation of cooperation between communities, because only such action can bring lasting effects. The family should be involved in the cycle of Eucharistic formation at every stage.

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<sup>30</sup> CT 69.

During regular meetings with parents of children in grades I-III, we should strive to deepen our faith through appropriately selected topics (signs of faith, sin and conversion, the Eucharistic gathering and participation in it, everyday life of faith) and experiencing Holy Mass. and participation in the celebration of the word of God<sup>31</sup>.

It is important that the time spent with parents is not limited to discussing organizational issues. Parents have the right to receive appropriate assistance in fulfilling their duties, and this undoubtedly includes the religious upbringing of their children. Sometimes they are held accountable for failing to complete tasks, but sometimes it is difficult for them to be held accountable for their lack of skills or knowledge since they have not been previously prepared for their roles. Therefore, it will be much better to treat the time of preparing their children for full participation in the Eucharist as an opportunity for adult catechesis.

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## The optimal model of cooperation between catechetical communities

Although for nearly 25 years catechetical documents have indicated the need for multi-stage preparation of families for children's First Holy Communion, including both religious teaching in kindergarten and primary school, as well as catechetical meetings in the parish, it is only recently that a more widespread implementation of these assumptions has been observed in practice. The instructions regarding the stages of this preparation clearly indicate the need to involve all three catechetical communities – the family, the parish and the school. According to the guidelines of the Episcopate, these stages are as follows:

- a) further preparation, which begins in early childhood and involves religious upbringing in the family, regular participation in Sunday and holiday Masses, and then attending religion classes at school;
- b) closer preparation consisting in the child's participation in religious education and in parish catechesis planned for the first and second grades of primary school, which is an introduction to sacramental catechesis;
- c) Direct preparation takes place in grade III and still involves participation in religious education and parish sacramental catechesis. This preparation should be primarily of a spiritual nature, aimed at gaining personal religious experience and joining the

<sup>31</sup> CCP, p. 49.

community of believers. The essence of this preparation is to deepen faith in the real presence of Jesus in Holy Communion and to arouse the desire to receive it<sup>32</sup>.

Although for a long time preparation for First Holy Communion was limited to direct preparation, the insufficiency of this model is increasingly observed. It is true that there are families for whom even participating in monthly meetings in the year preceding the reception of the First Holy Communion is a great burden and is met with reluctance by those interested, especially in connection with the requirement to attend Holy Mass every week. Experience to date encourages us to renew the model of preparation for full participation in the Eucharist as soon as possible, but the activities cannot be limited only to children or even their parents. Sometimes people talk about the need to develop Eucharistic culture in the parish. It involves taking the following steps: helping people understand the essential connection between catechesis and sacramental life; enabling children, youth and adults to adore the Blessed Sacrament as often as possible; linking other topics with the liturgy (an important recommendation for the school); bringing people to church when the liturgical year is discussed; teaching about the Holy Mass as an encounter with God and teaching the Lord's Prayer<sup>33</sup>.

Probably extending the time of preparation for full participation in the Eucharist, and in principle – implementation in accordance with the guidelines, and therefore lasting from the first grade of primary school, would meet with resistance from some parents, but there would certainly be some who would be happy to use it, and over time perhaps they would join in conducting the meetings. It must be admitted that the time spent on preparations is closely related to their fruitfulness. Therefore, if families become active once a month during the school year in which the child receives the First Holy Communion, it is understandable that sometimes the first Communion almost becomes the last. The ceremony of receiving Jesus in the Eucharist is sometimes treated as the finish line, the end of a certain stage. Meanwhile, the perception of Eucharistic formation should be changed – both by those responsible for it and by the parents themselves. At the same time, an opposite tendency is visible – involvement in this formation and its responsible tact translates into further religious practices of entire families.

<sup>32</sup> *Indications of the Polish Episcopal Conference...*, no. 13.

<sup>33</sup> W. O'Leary, *Creating a Eucharistic Culture*, <https://www.catechist.com/creating-eucharistic-culture>.

Proposals of several years of preparation for the Eucharistic life have appeared at least since 2001, when the then religious education curriculum proposed topics for meetings with parents and children for all years of primary school education, but pastoral and catechetical practice did not follow suit. An important attempt to change this situation was the introduction of obligatory parish catechesis in the Archdiocese of Warmia from September 1, 2015<sup>34</sup>. It can be said that the following years, in which greater distancing was observed from involvement in Eucharistic formation, together with new catechesis program documents, contributed to the intensification of activities in this field. Educational packages for learning religion included the so-called “household materials” or other materials addressed to parents, with suggestions for including them in the religious upbringing of their children. Recently, materials for parish catechesis have become groundbreaking, according to current Polish catechetical documents intended for the first four years of primary school education.

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Materials for parish catechesis should provide for a two-pronged impact – both on children and parents, while offering them the opportunity to meet together in the temple so that they can participate in the liturgy or services together. Due to the widespread access to various auxiliary materials, magazines and religious publications, these materials must be of a high editorial standard and contain interesting methodological proposals. This is a challenge since students receive so many interesting methodological proposals at school in religious education textbooks. Materials for parish catechesis should be different from them, and at the same time arouse the interest and sympathy of the recipients. Parents deserve their own help, in which they will receive answers or hints on issues related to religious upbringing and living faith on a daily basis. According to the Church’s recommendations, parish catechesis for parents should take place in smaller groups to enable establishing relationships and encourage participants to share their testimony. Even if not all parents decide to participate in such catechesis from the first year of its duration, those who take advantage of it will, with each subsequent year, become more and more confident in themselves and more and more confident of their competences as the first catechists.

The Eucharistic formation of a child carried out through cooperation between catechetical communities has another important value

<sup>34</sup> Bielinowicz wrote more on this topic, *Systematyczna katecheza parafialna dzieci i młodzieży w Archidiecezji Warmińskiej w świetle dekretu metropolity warmińskiego z 2015 roku*, “Studia Katechetyczne” 2016, Vol. 12, pp. 139-152.



that cannot be omitted in the light of the Directory on Catechesis. The involvement of the family, parish and school in education in the faith is a real opportunity to conduct permanent catechesis, going well beyond preparation for the sacraments. Deepening baptismal awareness and developing Eucharistic attitudes will become a natural consequence of the sacraments experienced in the Church community – also in the family as the domestic Church. Thus, it will fulfill the mystagogical postulate, which in the assumptions of the program is intended for the period of learning in grades 5-8 of primary school, while at the same time enriching the content provided for in the program with inclusion in the life of the community and experiencing the mysteries of faith in it. Such action will correspond to the pedagogy of initiation inspired by the catechumenal path, as called for by the new catechetical directory<sup>35</sup>.

The optimal model of cooperation between catechetical communities for the Eucharistic formation of children assumes the involvement of representatives of the family, parish and school. Each of them should join in with the awareness of creating a catechizing and catechized community. There may be significant differences in the level of faith and religious awareness among meeting participants.

The community should support parents' involvement in their children's journey of initiation; For some parents it is an opportunity to deepen their faith, and for others it is a real space for the first proclamation<sup>36</sup>.

At the same time, expanding the parish's offer and extending preparation for First Holy Communion for several years may actually translate into greater effectiveness of these preparations. An expanded group of people involved in the meetings will create the opportunity for dialogue and sharing faith, as well as establishing relationships based on Gospel values, which is of great importance in today's reality. The cooperation of the three catechetical circles organized in this way will be a response to the demands of the current catechetical documents and the invitation of Pope John Paul II, who called on all those responsible for catechesis:

Truly, I want to pour courage, hope and enthusiasm into the hearts of all these – and there are so many of them and so various – who devote themselves to religious teaching and preparing souls to live according to the Gospel<sup>37</sup>.

<sup>35</sup> More on this topic can be found in DC 64-65. Due to its importance, this issue deserves more extensive treatment in a separate article.

<sup>36</sup> DC 232.

<sup>37</sup> CT 62.

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## Prayer in the Life and Pastoral Work of the Blessed Primate of the Millennium – Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński (1901-1981)

The purpose of this publication is to present the role of prayer in the life and pastoral work of Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński. We used elements of the biographical method to discuss the main features of his personality and show that he constantly strove for holiness as he believed that the future of the world depends on saints. He respected the past and attributed great value to culture, tradition and liturgy. Being an unyielding defender of Poland and the Church in the times of the communist regime, he was a man of heroic prayer. In his view, the ideals of life are based on harmony between God and the people. Therefore, this paper recalls the figure of the Primate who, through his life witness, believed, dreamed, longed and worked to restore balance in Polish society shattered by opposing political or ideological trends.

In discussing prayer, we recall the Cardinal's attitude toward acts of personal devotion, the rosary, breviary prayer and the daily Eucharist. We also point out his devotion to the liturgical year, the Sunday Eucharistic celebration and his service to Mary, mother of God. Characterising the main fields of the Primate's pastoral activities, we distinguish individual periods associated with his ministry. We discuss in detail the period of his three-year imprisonment during which he sketched national pastoral programs.

**Key words:** Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński, life, work, prayer.

## Introduction

A lot has already been written about Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński. Even after his beatification, people are still writing about him, although they write differently, taking up issues that have so far been little discussed. For many reasons, he is a unique figure worth the continued interest of researchers in various scientific fields. His life and work can inspire us with the richness of his thoughts, as well as the ethical, moral and social messages. The Primate impressed his contemporaries with his consistency in action, broad intellectual horizons, excellent knowledge of social issues, personal charisma and his skilful coping with the numerous persecutions he experienced from the opponents.<sup>1</sup> This publication is therefore neither the first nor the last, and does not crown what has already been written about him either by me or by others. This paper aims to provide an insight into the Primate's inner man and attempts to capture his spiritual beauty seen through the prism of his prayer life. Prayer allowed him to discern his vocation in life and was not only a form of effective work on many fronts, but freed him from loneliness and gave birth to a new man. Its source and motive was steadfast faith in God, who sent His Son Jesus Christ for the salvation of man, guaranteeing the effectiveness of Primate Wyszyński's work. To understand the role of prayer in the life of the blessed and to look at its genesis, functions and forms, we will first draw attention to who Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński was and what he taught; it is not without reason that he is called the Primate of the Millennium. Next, we will present the main fields of his multiple pastoral work.

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## Who the Blessed Primate of the Millennium Was and What He Taught

Being an indomitable defender of Poland and the Church, he was a man of great work and heroic prayer. His ideal was life in harmony between God and man. "Throughout his life, he believed, dreamed, longed and at the same time did a lot to restore or create harmony in Polish society, broken by opposing political or ideological trends."<sup>2</sup> The Primate realised this ideal on many levels: human (unity between soul and body), educational (unity of spiritual and material values) and social (unity among citizens of different states and party affiliations). A deep unity between the Church and the nation was part of

<sup>1</sup> R. Łatka, *Prymas Stefan Wyszyński w realiach PRL*, Warszawa 2022.

<sup>2</sup> Z.J. Kijas, *Wyszyński. Narodziny nowego człowieka*, Warszawa 2021, p. 137.

this ideal. At the same time, he wanted to be a witness to Christ and a father to the faithful. Knowing the genesis of a person's dignity, he loved every person and the Church. He was unfamiliar with anxiety, which he bravely fought. He considered God his father and Mary his beloved mother, his helper and teacher of true love and freedom. He knew from experience that a high price is paid for valuable things. Being free himself, he was a voluntary slave of Mary and a teacher of true freedom. He delighted in the beauty of creation and considered patriotism to be part of the Christian life and a moral obligation.

Wyszyński believed in friendship and valued it greatly. He liked people and enjoyed meeting them. The Primate noticed the beauty of life and the value of the family. He respected women and they respected him and played an important role in his life and ministry.

At the same time, he was a man of great faith, hope and love who knew how to serve God, man, the Church and his homeland faithfully. His life bore numerous and tangible fruits. Despite the difficulties, he believed in Divine Providence and persisted in constant and trusting prayer. He believed that "there is no wrong that cannot be forgiven."<sup>3</sup> Heroically overcoming evil with good, following the example of St. Maximilian, he considered it a grace that, as a political prisoner, he saved himself, through his three-year imprisonment, from the hatred of his compatriots who exercised power in the State. Aware of the wrongs done to him, he forgave them in his heart for all the slanders "with which they graced him."

Throughout his life, Primate Wyszyński longed for heaven and lived thanks to the strength flowing from the Eucharist "uniting heaven and earth." He used the time given to him wisely, loved nature and was very curious about life. He respected the past and attributed great value to culture, tradition and liturgy. In his ministry as a good shepherd, he realised that the future of the world depends on saints, and therefore, he constantly strove for holiness. He was a man of "extraordinary measure" who exceeded the limitations of his times, and it was not without reason that he was called "the keystone of the Church and the Primate of the Millennium."<sup>4</sup>

Without a doubt, Reverend Stefan Wyszyński, beatified on September 12, 2021, already had rich religious and pastoral experience in his

<sup>3</sup> A. Rastawicka, *Maryjne drogi wolności Prymasa Tysiąclecia. Czytania majowe*, Warszawa 2018.

<sup>4</sup> Jan Paweł II o Kardynale Stefanie Wyszyńskim, in: *Człowiek niezwyklej miary. Ojciec Święty Jan Paweł II o kardynale Stefanie Wyszyńskim, Kardynał Stefan Wyszyński o sobie, Kardynał Józef Glemp o kardynale Stefanie Wyszyńskim*, ed. M. Plaskacz, A. Rastawicka, W. Wojdecki, Warszawa 1984, pp. 127-144.

pre-primate period. Thanks to his excellent and in-depth philosophical and theological formation, he was a clear witness to Christ, loving God, the Church, the nation and every human being. Throughout his life, he was guided by the motto “Homeland-Education-Virtue,” which he took from his family home. He excelled in the love of God, other people and the homeland. This was particularly visible when, during the Warsaw Uprising as a chaplain of the Home Army under the pseudonym “Radwan III,” he served in the insurgent hospital in Laski near Warsaw.<sup>5</sup> From the beginning of his priestly ministry, first in Włocławek, then Wrocław, Licheń, Przedecz, Kozłówka, Żułów and Laski, he performed many responsible functions, leaving behind a trace of his exceptional steadfastness and presence. He started his episcopal ministry in the Lublin Cathedral. It was there that, on May 26, 1946, Rev. Stefan Wyszyński, PhD, made his first public appearance as the Bishop of Lublin, addressing his diocese as “my beloved children.” Wyszyński was only 45 years old at the time and already a well-known figure in Lublin. This was due to the fact that here in the years 1925-1929 he studied at the Faculty of Law of the Catholic University of Lublin, graduating with a PhD thesis on “Prawa rodziny, Kościoła i państwa do szkoły” [“The Rights of the Family, Church and State to School”]. During his studies, he was active in the Catholic Academic Youth Association “Odrodzenie” [“Rebirth”] and “Bratnia Pomoc” [“Brotherly Help”]. He also hid in the Lublin region during the German occupation in the Second World War. Wyszyński’s pastoral ministry as the Bishop of Lublin lasted only two years and eight months. Recalling this fact, although it is not widely known in Poland and even in Lublin itself, as a side note, I believe it should be a source of pride for the residents of Lublin and a great inspiration.<sup>6</sup>

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Taking up the aspect of a life of prayer, which this exceptional and providential priest had at his disposal at the moment when he was condemned to confinement and loneliness, I put forward the thesis that Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński, in his own way, from the very beginning of his pastoral, theological, social and journalistic work, highly valued his everyday prayer life with its subjectivity in man and reference to God. The value of prayer as an ordinary way of living the Christian

<sup>5</sup> J. Baszkiewicz, *Powstańczy kapelan Armii Krajowej*, in: *Czas nigdy go nie oddali. Wspomnienia o Stefanie kardynale Wyszyńskim*, eds. A. Rastawicka, B. Piasecki, Kraków 2011, pp. 74-76.

<sup>6</sup> A. Rynio, *Biskup Stefan Wyszyński jako ordynariusz diecezji lubelskiej i Wielki Wancierz Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego*, in: *Kardynał Stefan Wyszyński. Droga życia i postęgi pasterskiej*, ed. R. Czekalski, Warszawa 2021, pp. 157-186.



life was passed on to him by his closest family and the eminent priests he met along his life path.

From the beginning of his priestly ministry, he defended the Church, Poland's traditions and its national identity. In doing so, he set new horizons for their development and was a reliable guide. He already had a well-established priestly, ecclesial and social formation, which was revealed in his profound vision of the Church, nation and state. By his attitude, Rev. Wyszyński taught how to take responsibility for one's social, family and professional life thanks to his experience of personal prayer and ministry among workers in Włocławek or Lublin. He encouraged verifying the present intellectual and economic trends and evaluating them morally using the Christian system of values.

Always, even before his arrest on September 25, 1953, or after his unjust imprisonment in Rywałd, Stoczek Warmiński, Prudnik and Komańcza – his fourth place of confinement, where he remained until October 28, 1956 – it was his aim that people should change and love each other socially. He taught that those who do not love lose in life, and that “only eagles glide over the crests.” Wyszyński showed, especially to the young, how to gain a moral takeoff, to love one's enemies, to learn to overcome oneself, to gain fortitude in faith and the Christian life. At every stage of his ministry, whether as an editor and professor, and later as the Bishop of Lublin or the Primate of Poland, without bowing to circumstances and boldly calling things by their true name, he warned against godless atheism, individualism, collectivism and abuses by civil authorities. He sought the moral renewal of the entire nation through the proper education of young people and the renewal of human consciences.<sup>7</sup> He emphasised religious and moral order in the family, social and national life. A visible sign of respecting this order was freedom, despite the growing enslavement, and responsibility in the personal and social dimensions that required courage.

## Main Fields of His Pastoral Work

The life of Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński, Primate of Poland, allows us to see him not only as a priest, but also as a theologian, social activist, publicist, pastor and teacher of the Church, the Great Chancellor of the Catholic University of Lublin and the Academy of Catholic Theology in Warsaw, educator of the nation, guardian of justice, defender

<sup>7</sup> A. Rynio, *Wychowanie młodzieży w nauczaniu Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego*, Lublin 2001; *ibid.*, *Idea narodu i odpowiedzialności za naród w kazaniach milenijnych Czcigodnego Sługi Bożego Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego*, Lublin 2020.



of man, marriage and the family, promoter of patriotism and Christian tradition, a person enjoying authority and, finally, a blessed and even saint. Considering the pastoral work of Rev. Stefan Wyszyński, we can distinguish several periods: the Włocławek period, the Lublin period, the Gniezno–Warsaw period, the period of imprisonment, the period of the Second Vatican Council and the conciliar liturgical renewal in Poland, and the period of pastoral ministry to the Western Territories and the Latin Rite Catholic Church in Lithuania, Belarus and Ukraine between 1949 and 1981.

Keeping in mind the subject and nature of this publication, this part of the paper is limited to a brief approximation of the fruits of the Primate's planning of pastoral work from the very difficult and painful time of his confinement.<sup>8</sup>

On May 16, 1956, at the request of the General of the Pauline Fathers, Fr. Alojzy Wrzałik and the Prior of Jasna Góra, Fr. Jerzy Tomziński, supported by the insistence of Maria Okońska, he edited the text of the Jasna Góra Vows of the Nation in Komańcza. They were arranged according to the model of the (unfulfilled) vows taken by King John Casimir in the Lviv Cathedral on April 1, 1656. The Primate wanted Poles to “incorporate in their minds, wills and hearts the content of the vows and that they become a programme of their personal, family and social life.” The vows reached Jasna Góra on May 22 thanks to Janina Michalska. Invitations to the Feast of Our Lady of Częstochowa were sent out from the Jasna Góra Monastery to all parishes in Poland. The Primate's vows were read aloud on August 26, 1956, at Jasna Góra, in front of the miraculous image of Our Lady of Częstochowa, which had been raised high by the President of the Polish Episcopal Conference, Bishop Michał Klepacz, in the presence of about a million faithful and more than a thousand priests. An armchair was prepared for the Primate, which was left vacant, and a bouquet of red and white roses was placed on it. Meanwhile, Cardinal Wyszyński, in Komańcza, after celebrating Holy Mass in front of the image of Our Lady of Jasna Góra, aware that a great event was taking place, read out the act of vows. Based on what happened at Jasna Góra, the idea of the Great Novena of the Millennium and the programme of the Millennium of the Baptism of Poland were born in the heart of the Primate. From

<sup>8</sup> *Zapiski więzienne* [Notes written in prison], which are a testimony to his struggles, are evidence of how difficult this period was for him. In addition to his daily chronicle, they also contain such texts as a spiritual notebook, letters, memorials to the authorities and extensive statements that are a personal reflection on his experience of imprisonment and the situation of the Church in Poland.

August 15-29, 1956, while still in Komańcza, he drew up a plan for the nation's spiritual preparation for the Jubilee of the Millennium of the Baptism of Poland, known as the Great Novena.

The text of the Jasna Góra Vows set out the main programme of the Great Novena before the Millennium of the Baptism of Poland, whose fruits were to be "a new man [...] born of God by the grace of Holy Baptism."<sup>9</sup> The content of the Jasna Góra Vows was meditated on during the nine years of the Great Novena (1957-1966) and prepared the faithful for the celebrations of the Millennium of the Baptism of Poland in 1966.<sup>10</sup>

The motto of the first year of the Great Novena (1957) referred to the first invocation of the vows: "Fidelity to God, the Cross, the Gospel, the Church and its Pastors." The second year of the Great Novena (1958), referring to the content of the first year, focused on sanctifying grace, thus encouraging the nation – following the precepts of faith – to regain a new life in Christ. The following third year of the Great Novena (1959) referred to the value of life of soul and body, which is a gift of God and the light of people. The motto of the fourth year of the Great Novena (1960) was "Marriage – a Great Sacrament in the Church." When outlining the foundations of the theology of marriage and family, the Primate emphasised the importance of sacramental grace. The fifth year of the Great Novena (1961), celebrated under the motto "The Family is Strong with God," remained in the same vein. The Primate called for the formation of the Catholic family on the example of the Holy Family of Nazareth.

The sixth year of the Great Novena (1962) was celebrated under the motto "Youth Faithful to Christ." It was a year of Christian education under the patronage of the Mother of Christ, with the patron saint of young people St. Stanislaus Kostka as a model of fidelity. The next year (1963) focused on social justice, love, and deepening responsibility for the Church and the homeland by caring for the common good through honest work, which, according to the Primate, could become a mystical experience.

In the eighth year of the Great Novena (1964), celebrated under the motto "New Man in Christ," the centre of the Church's efforts was the fight against national defects and cultivating the Christian

<sup>9</sup> S. Wyszyński, *Jasnogórskie Śluby Narodu Polskiego*, Komańcza 1956, in: *Wielka Nowenna Tysiąclecia*, Paryż 1962, pp. 17-20.

<sup>10</sup> M. Kowalczyk, *Prymasa Tysiąclecia program Wielkiej Nowenny (1957-1966) w perspektywie teologicznej po odzyskaniu wolności* (1989), in: *Kardynał Stefan Wyszyński. Droga życia i posługi pasterskiej*, ed. R. Czekalski, Warszawa 2021, pp. 87-102.

virtues. That year's patron was St. John Cantius – a professor at the Jagiellonian University.

The last year of the Great Novena (1965), celebrated under the protection of the Mother of God, the Mother of the Universal Church and the Queen of Poland, was associated with the crowning of the first millennium of Catholic Poland as Christ's and Marian. The motto "Through Mary to Jesus, desiring to cross the second millennium of Christianity with Her and expecting to reach the fullness of Christ through this path" (Pastoral epistles) was invoked at that time.<sup>11</sup>

An analysis of the genesis of the renewed Jasna Góra Vows and the elaboration of the programme of the Great Novena, which was in fact the first integral all-Polish programme aimed at reviving all areas of pastoral ministry on a national scale, shows how intensely and creatively the Primate was experiencing his time of forced confinement. At this point, in the context of the subject of the paper, it is also worth noting what happened at the beginning of his confinement. Indeed, while still in Rywałd, the Primate of Poland set a daily schedule, which he did not change until the end of his stay in confinement.<sup>12</sup> This schedule shows how much time each day he devoted to various forms of prayer.

Undoubtedly, the fruit of the confinement and persecution that accompanied the Primate throughout all the stages of his priestly path and pastoral ministry is that Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński became an outstanding leader of the Church and, at the same time, a great Pole and statesman who went down in history as one of the most eminent personalities of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>13</sup> Had he not been there, who knows what the fate of the Diocese of Lublin and the whole Church in Poland would have turned out to be. Who knows what would have been the fate of the Catholic University of Lublin, the Academy of Catholic Theology, the Church in the Western and Northern Territories and the fate of the Eastern Church.

Were it not for the Primate and his heroic faith and persistent prayer, there would most likely have been no renewal of the Jasna Góra Vows of the Nation, nor would there have been the nine-year-long pastoral programme of moral renewal in the form of the Great Novena of the Millennium, the Visitation of dioceses and parishes by a copy of the Jasna Góra painting. There would not have been the Millennium

<sup>11</sup> *Listy pasterskie Episkopatu Polski 1945-1974*, Paryż 1975.

<sup>12</sup> S. Wyszyński. *Pro memoria*, Vol. 3: 1953-1956, eds. I. Czarcińska, A. Gałka, Warszawa 2018, pp. 147-148.

<sup>13</sup> Z.J. Kijas, *Wyszyński. 40 spojrzeń*, Kraków 2021, pp. 88-89.

celebrations of the Baptism of Poland so important for our national identity, the Social Crusade of Love, the Movement of the Helpers of the Mother of the Church, the preparation for the 600<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Jasna Góra, the care for pastoral ministry in Marian sanctuaries and the support for the pilgrimage movement. No efforts would have been undertaken to proclaim Mary as the Mother of the Church and to offer her the world during the Second Vatican Council or to give a full answer to the Message of Fatima. It is also difficult to foresee the course of the social changes in Poland that led to the fall of atheistic totalitarianism and Cardinal Karol Wojtyła would quite possibly have not become the See of Peter.

## Prayer in the Life of the Blessed Primate. Its Genesis, Functions and Forms

### Theology of Spirituality

By analysing biographical data in the context of the role of prayer in the life of Stefan Wyszyński, understood as a conversation with God in which a man discovers his authentic dignity, vocation, tasks and obligations, one's sense of suffering, illness or adversity, it can be concluded that he treated prayer as an essential element of everyday life, without which it would be difficult to live a good day, not to mention life with all its drama.

Prayer seen through the prism of Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński's life and pastoral activity can be considered in the context of man's vocation to holiness and his dialogue and union with God, which are both its means and manifestation. It follows from his teaching that man can establish prayerful contact with God because he has been enabled to do so by the gift of grace. Therefore, prayer appears to be a natural need in the normal life of the baptised. It is related to the actual situation a person experiences. On the one hand, the state of grace allows man to find himself before God in closeness, friendship, and family intimacy; on the other hand, the practice of prayer allows one to grow in grace.

The essence of prayer in this case is dialogue with God the Father through Christ's mediation by the power of the Holy Spirit. This is a consequence of the Trinitarian nature of divine childhood made real through Christ's mediation and the Holy Spirit's active presence in people's hearts. The Triune God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – is mainly the addressee of prayer, but Mary, the saints, angels or the souls of those suffering in purgatory are also frequent addressees. The subjects of prayer are both individual believers and communities (family, parish, professional, religious, priestly, seminary, institutional

and other) to whom the Primate addresses his message expressed in various forms. These include Pastoral Letters, appeals, conferences, incentives, exhortations, messages, speeches, occasional lectures and sermons.

Primate Wyszyński derives the qualities of prayer from the nature of man's relationship with God. These include, among others, divine childhood, friendship, openness to God's will, humility (understood as walking in truth), trust and perseverance. Concerning forms of prayer, in the teaching of Cardinal Wyszyński, especially in his Pastoral Letters, we can readily find the recommended forms of adoration, petition, propitiation and thanksgiving. Concerning types of prayer, it is worth noting that prayer in its essence is one, yet its division into forms, types and degrees does not result from theological motives, but from formative ones and the pursuit of a certain methodological system. Analysing in detail the texts of the Primate's Letters, speeches or conferences of a formative character, we can distinguish liturgical prayer (e.g., the Eucharist or the Liturgy of the Hours), personal prayer, a life of prayer, mental prayer, oral prayer or contemplative prayer. Keeping practical aspects in mind, the Primate's teaching does not lack reflections on the conditions, attitudes, methods, difficulties or effectiveness of prayer.

The limited framework of this publication does not allow for a more detailed analysis of the indicated issues; therefore, we will take up in more detail some issues related to the analysed topic. One such issue will be the apostolate of prayer.

Wyszyński taught that "there is a duty to apostolate with prayer for all the beaten and tormented children of the Church. There is also a need to be sensitive to the 'tares,' meaning human moral misery, human anguish, the anguish of the Church in her poorest, most unhappy children."<sup>14</sup> The Primate extended this duty to all those rejected and in need, not excluding the enemies of the Church and those who were personally its abusers. He, following the example of St. Paul the Apostle, repeatedly set an example of supplicatory prayer for those who are going to perdition and need to be saved. Wyszyński was convinced that "one must finally open to others the granaries of one's soul and the wardrobes full of the garments of grace, eaten up by moths."<sup>15</sup>

Kardynał Stefan Wyszyński, through his practice of continual prayer, believed in its power and encouraged others to persevere in a prayerful state (meaning to be in a state of grace and internally uphold God's

<sup>14</sup> S. Wyszyński, *Dzieła zebrane*, vol. V: 1959, Warszawa 2006, p. 38.

<sup>15</sup> Ibidem.

sovereignty). He was a man of great works, and, one can say, as he breathed working, so he breathed prayers, regardless of what was happening around him. Arguing that prayer was also work for the Primate, the above cited Fr. Zdzisław J. Kijas writes:

Live, constant, sometimes very ordinary prayer, often a traditional rosary prayer, was very important and in fact most important for Wyszyński. Prayer for him was the source of his spiritual life, but also an inexhaustible source of hope and trust, which he needed very much, considering the office he held and the times in which he was given to live. Prayer was also a source of his joy, a strength for friendship, a source of grace for forgiveness.<sup>16</sup>

An example of such a prayer can be the one composed by Wyszyński during his internment in Stoczek Warmiński (his second place of forced confinement). It was recorded in “Zapiski więzienne” [Notes Written in Prison] and dated January 18, 1954. This is a short but very moving example of agreeing with God’s will, even if it involves suffering and imprisonment, and in the difficult situation the Primate found himself, he saw a manifestation of God’s goodness and love.

All Your ways are mercy and truth! Suffering is diluted in the experience of love. Punishment ceases to be retaliation, because it is a medicine administered with fatherly gentleness. Sadness that torments the soul becomes the ploughing of fallow ground for new seed. Loneliness becomes the act of gazing at You more closely. The malice of men is an education in silence and humility. Separation from one’s work brings an increase in one’s diligence and dedication. The prison cell reveals the truth: we have no permanent dwelling here. Let no one, then, think ill of You, Father; let no one assault You with accusations of severity – for You are good, for Your mercy is everlasting.<sup>17</sup>

Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński had a great devotion to God the Father, exemplified by his meditations on the Lord’s Prayer in the publication “The Our Father.”<sup>18</sup> He was devoted to the Mother of God, who never failed him, and to the saints and blessed of the Church in Poland and the Universal Church. The numerous *Pastoral Letters of the Primate of Poland* bear clear testimony to this.<sup>19</sup> Many prayers, testimonies and acts of personal devotion to Our Lady, in whom he

<sup>16</sup> Z.J. Kijas, *Wyszyński. Narodziny nowego człowieka*, Warszawa 2021, p. 135.

<sup>17</sup> S. Wyszyński, *Zapiski więzienne*, Warszawa 1995, p. 48.

<sup>18</sup> S. Wyszyński, *Ojciec nasz*, Poznań 2020.

<sup>19</sup> *Listy Pastorskie Prymasa Polski 1946-1974*, Paris 1975, pp. 20-29, 68-70, 123-124, 133-135, 183-184, 185-186, 202-206, 215-216, 311, 349-351, 375, 382-388, 412-413, 442-443, 491-492, 527-528, 535- 536, 553-557, 599, 630-631, 661-662.



trusted unconditionally, desiring to be Her voluntary slave, have also been preserved.

An eloquent example of individual prayer is the Act of Personal Devotion to the Mother of God composed at Stoczek Warmiński on December 8, 1953, for which the Primate prepared himself by reading the *Treatise on True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary* by Louis-Marie Grignon De Montfort.<sup>20</sup>

With this act, Cardinal Wyszyński gave himself unconditionally as a slave of Mary's love in order to become through Her a servant and slave of Christ.

His relationship with Mary is that of a child to his Mother and a servant to his Lady. At the same time, the ultimate goal of this devotion is the glory of the Holy Trinity. This act in a special way shows the content of the main maxim of the Primate of the Millennium: *Soli Deo – per Mariam!* He lived this maxim himself and wanted the sheep entrusted to his pastoral care, i.e., the entire Polish nation, to follow it.<sup>21</sup>

In the Primate's teaching, we find elements of a correct understanding of Mary's role in the history of salvation and spirituality. By God's decree, Mary is the Mother of God, the Mother of the Redeemer, the noble companion and humble servant of the Lord. She cooperates in a special way with the work of the Saviour by becoming Mother in the order of grace from the moment of consent to the incarnation to the fulfilment of the salvation of all the elect. Interceding for people, She intercedes for them with the gift of eternal salvation by caring for them as brothers of Her Son. The Primate calls Her the Mother of the Son of God, the Advocate, the Helper, the Mediatrix of all graces, the Immaculate, the Mother of God of Częstochowa, Our Lady of Jasna Góra and the Queen of Poland, the Royal Daughter, the Bride of the Holy Spirit, the Mother of the Church and the Virgin seeking God's will in everything. Yet, these are by no means all the titles, names and designations given by him to the Blessed Virgin Mary.<sup>22</sup>

However, the privileged prayer of the Primate of the Millennium was the rosary. This is clearly confirmed in his Pastoral Letter *On the Daily Recitation of the Holy Rosary*, written in Lublin on August 15, 1947. In this Letter, the Bishop of Lublin, following the instructions of the late Primate August Hlond, encouraged "Every Pole [to] ... recite

<sup>20</sup> S. Wyszyński, *Wszystko postawiłem na Maryję*, Paryż 1980, p. 74.

<sup>21</sup> G. Bartosik, *Maryjność kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego*, in: *Kardynał Stefan Wyszyński. Droga życia i posługi pasterskiej*, ed. R. Czekalski, Warszawa 2021, p. 589-590.

<sup>22</sup> S. Wyszyński, *Wszystko postawiłem na Maryję*.



the rosary daily,”<sup>23</sup> explaining why in difficult post-war times special trust should be placed in the Holy Rosary. By calling it “a humble and effective remedy for the most dangerous times,” he refers to the long tradition of praying the rosary in the Church, which was encouraged by such popes as Leo XIII and Pius XI.<sup>24</sup> Calling the rosary “the summit of simple prayer and at the same time the summit of theological depth,”<sup>25</sup> out of the needs of his heart and to adore the Blessed Virgin Mary, Wyszyński prayed the rosary daily, and during his imprisonment even more often.

He wrote and spoke extensively and beautifully about this form of conversation with God and contemplation of the extraordinary mysteries of Christianity that rosary prayer brings about. He constantly encouraged it to become the property of all the faithful.<sup>26</sup>

Encouraging the systematic recitation of the Rosary, he taught:

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The Rosary is the prayer of the little ones and the humble but also the prayer of the loftiest spirits in the Church; it is the prayer of theologians, doctors, thinkers and saints. It is undoubtedly a Marian prayer, but at the same time it is a most Christ-like, Christocentric prayer centred on Christ. Every Hail Mary reminds us of Mary's presence in the mystery of Christ and the Church, just as each penetrates into the wonderful mystery of the presence of the Child of God under Mary's heart. While our thoughts, feelings and words greet Mary, they nevertheless turn towards her Son, rejoicing in Jesus and reflecting on his life. (...) All of us together constitute a “communion of saints” in which Christ is always present and acting, and the Mother co-present and cooperating with Him. Mary always leads us to her Son.<sup>27</sup>

He argued that the rosary is also a summary of the history of every Christian family:

Every family – like the life of Jesus and Mary – also has its sorrowful mysteries. Christ lived them, Mary lived them, and so do we. They are the inseparable fate of every human being. We have more and more sorrowful events. They may worry us at times, but when we meditate on the sorrowful experiences of Jesus and Mary, we acquire a special peace of mind and learn how to live through difficult moments with the calmness of the task at hand. Yet, it is not only sorrows that are

<sup>23</sup> *Listy Pastorskie Prymasa Polski*, p. 68.

<sup>24</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>25</sup> Ibidem, p. 69.

<sup>26</sup> E. Boniewicz, *Weźmy do ręki różaniec*, <https://opoka.org.pl/biblioteka/P/PR/rozaniec.html> (accessed: 20.07.2023).

<sup>27</sup> Ibidem.

the fate of every family's life. Glory, great hopes and expectations are also ours. Even though we live through the sorrowful mysteries, we know that the resurrection will come, the way to heaven will come, the Comforter Spirit, the Spirit of wisdom, understanding, counsel, knowledge, fortitude, piety and fear of God will come. The moment will come when, following Jesus and His Mother, we will find ourselves before the throne of God and the joy of God's friends will be our joy.<sup>28</sup>

He encouraged others to persistently recite the Rosary with the following words:

When today we find ourselves unable to cope with various adversities, one thing remains: to have the rosary beads in our pocket and to pray for those who cause us so much anguish in our Homeland. Let us pray for these people. Cursing will not help. Repeating various rumours or political jokes to ourselves will not help either. Yet, prayer can help. It can enlighten minds and improve the human will. In your difficult life, the rosary will support you. Let us grow accustomed to the rosary so that we recite it constantly, return to it easily, and devote all our free moments to it. (...) Home bustle with many activities, the journey to work, the field, school or the office, patiently walking behind the plough or the harrow, the waiting at bus stops, in waiting rooms at public offices, the long hours in the car, in the railway wagon, the sleepless nights. All this can be sanctified, enriched, and made more pleasant by praying the rosary. Many voluntary mortifications and sacrifices should be combined with it in the spirit of shrift and expiation.<sup>29</sup>

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In arguing in favour of praying the rosary, Cardinal S. Wyszyński also gave an example from his childhood:

I will never forget my childhood years, when, in the family home, every evening ended with the common recitation of a part of the Holy Rosary. This was done not only in October, but all year round. Perhaps for us, children, it was sometimes difficult, perhaps we wanted to go to sleep, but our parents made sure that the day ended with the rosary.<sup>30</sup>

In addition to these mentioned forms of prayer, the daily prayer of the breviary (Liturgy of the Hours), which is so rich in content, mental prayer, meditation and careful celebration of the Eucharist are also worth mentioning in one's person prayer life. Among the community prayers, noteworthy are the celebrations during the liturgical year,

<sup>28</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>29</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>30</sup> S. Wyszyński, *Mówcie Różaniec!... Instytut Prymasowski. Podczas Nabożeństwa różańcowego w parafii św. Teresy, Włochy 1 października*, <http://wyszynskiprymas.pl/mowcie-rozaniec> (accessed: 24.07.2023).

presenting the history of salvation taking place here and now, the Sunday celebration of the Eucharist prepared under the applicable pastoral programme and the celebration of important Church and national anniversaries or various types of uniquely Polish Church services. This includes the Hours of the Blessed Virgin, Stations of the Cross, May Marian devotions, June devotions to the Heart of Jesus, Rosary, First Saturday of the Month for Mary, Rorate Mass, the Bright Mount Appeal, the Angelus, vespers and the Bitter Lamentations. The Primate of Poland desired to win all people so that they support the Church through the Mother of Christ. He appealed to all the baptised to take responsibility for the holy Church, its future growth, to protect the Homeland and pray for the faith of our brothers.<sup>31</sup>

## Conclusions

### Theology of Spirituality

The mentioned forms and functions of prayer, which can be considered in the individual and community dimensions, in no way exhaust all the richness that we find in the life and pastoral work of the Blessed Rev. Cardinal S. Wyszyński. After all, not all types, forms, and even more so functions of prayers resulting from Marian theology and theology of earthly realities practised by the Primate of the Millennium have been properly articulated. However, a detailed discussion exceeds the accepted framework of this publication, which is intended to be introductory.

Finally, it is worth noting that the genesis of this attitude to prayer is to be found in the experiences of the family home, in seminary and non-seminary religious formation, in the possessed image of God and in such and not another understanding of man and his nature. The way he understood and lived his vocation and mission, the people he met and the experiences he had, were also not without influence. Worth pointing out here is the prayerful attitude of his family, the liturgical attitude of Rev. Władysław Korniłowicz, the attitudes of the saints and the blessed, or the prayerful attitudes of the women who formed him and whom he formed. The works of the great masters of spirituality, the daily liturgy of the breviary, the manner in which the daily Eucharist was celebrated and the valuable literature he systematically read throughout his life were also important. However, he read the most in prison. There, as he confesses, he read, among other things, six volumes of the collected works by Cyprian Kamil Norwid, *Story of a Soul* by St. Thérèse of Lisieux, the *Summa Theologica* by St. Thomas

<sup>31</sup> *Listy Pasterskie Prymasa Polski oraz Episkopatu 1975-1981*, Paris 1988, p. 17.

Aquinas, the works by St. John of the Cross, the writings of the Fathers of the Church, books by Henri Daniel-Rops, several books by Henryk Sienkiewicz, *War and Peace* by Leo Tolstoy, *Dzieje Pawła z Tarsu* [Acts of Paul of Tarsus] by Eugeniusz Dąbrowski, and many others.<sup>32</sup> Good reading, both in prison and after leaving it, was a great comfort to him and allowed him to overcome his painful solitude and discover the value of true loneliness.<sup>33</sup> However, for such celebrated prayer, both in the individual and community dimensions, proper preparation is needed, involving various formation and educating environments, as well as personal participation and significant persons. What is needed is knowledge of the truth about the nature and destiny of man, faith in God, which is faith in Christ, following Him, belonging to the Chosen People and a readiness to give one's life for the work of someone else, as we saw in the life and work of Primate Wyszyński.

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<sup>32</sup> Z. Kijas, *Wyszyński. Narodziny nowego człowieka*, 41, p. 111.

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# God's Omnipotence Versus the Pauli Principle. Philosophical and Scientific Inquiry into the Limits of Divine Power and the Fundamental Nature of Reality. Part 1

This interdisciplinary research delves into the intriguing juxtaposition of God's omnipotence and the Pauli exclusion principle. Combining theological contemplation with the principles of quantum mechanics, the paper navigates the complexities of divine power and the physical constraints observed at the subatomic level. In the quest for common ground between theology and science, we explore historical perspectives on God's omnipotence, the origin and significance of the Pauli exclusion principle, and the interplay between quantum mechanics and classical physics. The paper examines logical paradoxes that arise when contemplating God's omnipotence and explores alternative theological views on divine power. Embracing the significance of interdisciplinary dialogue, we identify shared principles between theology and science, emphasizing epistemic humility, rational inquiry, and the unity of knowledge. The paper concludes with reflections on the ethical considerations and the potential avenues for future research into the intricate interplay between God's omnipotence and the Pauli exclusion principle. This exploration celebrates the beauty of intellectual integration and inspires an

ongoing quest for truth, wisdom, and unity of thought in understanding the cosmos and the divine.

**Key words:** divine omnipotence, quantum mechanics, Pauli exclusion principle, philosophical paradoxes, interplay of faith and science.

## Introduction

The concept of God's omnipotence has been a subject of profound philosophical and theological inquiry for centuries. Ascribed with unlimited power and authority, the notion of an all-powerful deity lies at the core of many religious beliefs, shaping the understanding of the divine and its role in the universe. Yet, the very idea of an omnipotent being raises intriguing questions about the limits and nature of divine power.

In parallel, the realm of physics has revealed a fundamental principle that governs the behavior of matter at the quantum level – the Pauli exclusion principle. This principle, formulated by Wolfgang Pauli in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, dictates that no two identical fermions, such as electrons, can occupy the same quantum state simultaneously. It is a cornerstone of quantum mechanics and has far-reaching implications for our understanding of matter and the structure of the universe.

The juxtaposition of God's omnipotence with the Pauli exclusion principle brings forth a fascinating intersection between theology and science. On one hand, traditional interpretations of omnipotence suggest an all-encompassing power that transcends all laws, including those governing the physical world. On the other hand, the Pauli exclusion principle represents a fundamental physical constraint that governs the behavior of particles, shaping the very fabric of reality.

This research paper delves into the intriguing interplay between God's omnipotence and the Pauli principle, seeking to explore the boundaries of divine power and the inherent limitations imposed by the physical laws of the universe. Through a comprehensive examination of theological, philosophical, and scientific perspectives, we aim to shed light on the compatibility or tension between these two seemingly disparate concepts.

In the following sections, we will first delve into the historical and philosophical beginnings of omnipotence, tracing its evolution across various religious and philosophical traditions. Additionally, we will explore the origin and significance of the Pauli exclusion principle, unraveling its implications for the physical world. The paper will then



delve into the logical paradoxes that arise when contemplating an all-powerful God, as well as the intricate interplay between divine power and human free will. In parallel, we will examine the role of the Pauli exclusion principle in shaping the behavior of matter and its consequences for our understanding of the universe. Furthermore, we will engage in a nuanced dialogue between theology and science, inviting perspectives from scholars, scientists, and theologians to explore the potential areas of convergence and divergence between these domains. Through such interdisciplinary discourse, we seek to attain a deeper understanding of the complexities inherent in the exploration of God's omnipotence and the Pauli principle.

Ultimately, this research paper aims to encourage open-minded inquiry and respectful dialogue, recognizing the multifaceted nature of these topics and their significance in our quest to comprehend the nature of reality and the divine. By embarking on this exploration, we hope to contribute to a richer understanding of the interplay between theology and science, offering valuable insights into the limits of divine power and the fundamental nature of our existence.

## Background and Context of the Inquiry

The exploration of God's omnipotence and its relation to the Pauli exclusion principle represents a profound and multifaceted inquiry that has captivated the minds of theologians, philosophers, and scientists throughout history. Understanding the background and context of this topic is crucial in comprehending the significance and complexity of the subject matter.

### Historical Perspectives on God's Omnipotence

The notion of an all-powerful, supreme being is deeply rooted in religious and philosophical traditions worldwide. From the ancient civilizations of Egypt, Mesopotamia, and Greece to the monotheistic religions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, the concept of an omnipotent God has been a central pillar of belief systems. Early theological debates and scriptures grappled with the attributes and scope of divine power, contemplating the ability of God to create, control, and intervene in the world.

### Theological Implications and Debates

Throughout the course of history, the idea of God's omnipotence has spurred profound theological discussions and debates. Philosophers and theologians have explored questions like "Can an all-powerful

God create a rock so heavy that even He cannot lift it? Does divine omnipotence imply that God can act in any conceivable manner? Is God's omnipotence limited by logical contradictions or self-imposed restraints? These queries have given rise to the omnipotence paradoxes, which challenge traditional understandings of God's power.

### The Emergence of the Pauli Exclusion Principle

In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, quantum mechanics revolutionized our understanding of the subatomic world. Wolfgang Pauli, an Austrian physicist, proposed a principle that would come to be known as the Pauli exclusion principle. This principle stated that no two identical fermions, particles with half-integer spin (such as electrons), could occupy the same quantum state simultaneously. The Pauli principle played a crucial role in explaining the stability of matter and became a foundational concept in quantum mechanics.

### Interdisciplinary Dialogues

As scientific knowledge expanded, the intersection between theology and physics began to garner interest from scholars in both fields. The exploration of how scientific principles, like the Pauli exclusion principle, relate to theological concepts such as divine omnipotence, raised new and thought-provoking questions. Can the physical laws that govern the universe be reconciled with the idea of a transcendent and all-powerful God? Does the existence of fundamental constraints in the physical world pose challenges to the traditional understanding of divine omnipotence?

### Modern Philosophical and Theological Considerations

In contemporary scholarship, the topic of God's omnipotence versus the Pauli principle continues to be a subject of intellectual inquiry. Philosophers of religion and theologians engage in nuanced discussions, exploring different conceptions of divine power and its relationship with the natural world. Meanwhile, physicists and scientists seek to understand the boundaries of physical laws and whether they leave room for divine intervention or divine limitations.

By delving into the historical evolution of the concept of God's omnipotence, the development of the Pauli exclusion principle in physics, and the convergence of these topics in modern interdisciplinary discourse, this research paper aims to contribute to a deeper appreciation of the complexities surrounding the interplay between theology and science. By exploring the implications of divine omnipotence and the constraints of physical laws, we seek to foster

an enriched understanding of the nature of reality, the divine, and the underlying principles that govern our universe.

## Statement of the Problem

The juxtaposition of God's omnipotence and the Pauli exclusion principle presents a fascinating and complex problem that raises profound questions about the nature of divine power and the fundamental laws governing the universe. At its core, the problem revolves around reconciling the traditional concept of an all-powerful God with the constraints imposed by scientific principles, particularly the Pauli exclusion principle in quantum mechanics.

## Theological Implications of Omnipotence

The concept of divine omnipotence traditionally posits that God possesses unlimited power and authority, transcending all physical laws and limitations. This understanding of omnipotence has been deeply ingrained in religious doctrines and philosophical discourse, shaping beliefs about God's ability to create, sustain, and intervene in the world. However, the very notion of unlimited power raises logical paradoxes, such as the classic "omnipotence paradox" that challenges the coherence of an all-powerful being.

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## The Pauli Exclusion Principle and Physical Constraints

In stark contrast to the idea of divine omnipotence, the Pauli exclusion principle, a foundational principle of quantum mechanics, imposes a fundamental restriction on the behavior of particles. It states that no two identical fermions can occupy the same quantum state simultaneously, leading to the stability and diversity of matter as we know it. The Pauli principle is supported by extensive experimental evidence and plays a critical role in shaping the structure of atoms and the behavior of matter.

## Compatibility or Conflict Between Concepts

The crux of the problem lies in the apparent tension between the theological concept of God's omnipotence and the physical constraints imposed by the Pauli exclusion principle. Can the idea of an all-powerful God be reconciled with the existence of fundamental limitations on the behavior of matter at the quantum level? Does the Pauli principle challenge our traditional understanding of divine power, and if so, to what extent? How do theological interpretations grapple with the scientific discoveries that seem to impose constraints on the universe?

## Philosophical and Interdisciplinary Implications

The convergence of theology and science on this issue sparks numerous philosophical considerations. Philosophers of religion must contemplate the coherence of a God who is simultaneously all-powerful and bound by logical or physical constraints. Theological responses to the problem may range from redefining the concept of divine omnipotence to exploring alternative models of God's relationship with the physical world. Moreover, the interdisciplinary dialogue between theology and science requires mutual respect and intellectual engagement, recognizing the distinctive methodologies and realms of inquiry involved.

Addressing the problem of God's omnipotence versus the Pauli exclusion principle requires an exploration of diverse perspectives from theology, philosophy, and physics. It calls for critical examination of religious and scientific assumptions, thoughtful consideration of logical paradoxes, and a willingness to engage in respectful dialogue between disciplines that sometimes seem to speak different languages. Ultimately, the goal of this research is to foster a deeper understanding of the complexities inherent in the exploration of divine power and the fundamental nature of reality, inviting scholars to grapple with the profound questions arising at the intersection of theology and science.

## Purpose of the Research Paper

The purpose of this research paper is to conduct a comprehensive investigation into the intriguing interplay between God's omnipotence and the Pauli exclusion principle, elucidating the philosophical, theological, and scientific implications arising from the juxtaposition of these two seemingly disparate concepts. Through a multidisciplinary approach, we aim to achieve the following objectives:

### Explore the Intersection of Theology and Science

The primary purpose of this research paper is to bridge the gap between theology and science by examining the relationship between divine omnipotence and the physical laws that govern the universe. By bringing together insights from religious studies, philosophy, and physics, we seek to foster a nuanced understanding of how these disciplines can inform and enrich each other's perspectives on fundamental questions about existence, power, and the nature of reality.

## Examine the Limits of Divine Power

One of the central aims of this research is to critically investigate the traditional concept of God's omnipotence and its implications. By engaging with philosophical arguments, theological reflections, and logical paradoxes, we intend to shed light on the complexities surrounding the idea of unlimited divine power and whether there are inherent limitations to such omnipotence, be they logical or related to the structure of the physical world.

## Analyze the Significance of the Pauli Exclusion Principle

Another crucial objective is to delve into the scientific realm and explore the significance of the Pauli exclusion principle in shaping the behavior of matter and the structure of atoms. By providing a clear understanding of this fundamental principle in quantum mechanics, we aim to highlight its role in our understanding of the natural world and its potential implications for theological considerations.

## Foster Constructive Dialogue

The research paper seeks to promote a respectful and constructive dialogue between scholars from different disciplines. We aspire to create a platform where theologians, philosophers, and scientists can engage in a meaningful exchange of ideas, acknowledging the distinct methodologies and perspectives of each field while seeking common ground for fruitful dialogue.

## Propose Possible Reconciliations

While recognizing the challenges and potential conflicts between divine omnipotence and the Pauli principle, this research paper also endeavors to identify potential points of convergence and possible reconciliations between these concepts. By exploring alternative models of divine power and the relationship between the divine and the natural world, we aim to contribute to the ongoing efforts to reconcile theology and science in a manner that preserves the integrity of both disciplines.

## Encourage Further Inquiry

Finally, the research paper aims to inspire further inquiry into the intricate and profound questions surrounding God's omnipotence and the fundamental nature of reality. We hope that our exploration will stimulate curiosity and scholarship in these areas, encouraging researchers to continue exploring the complexities of these topics and

contributing to the advancement of knowledge in both theology and science.

Finally, the purpose of this research paper is to delve into the fascinating intersection of divine omnipotence and the Pauli exclusion principle, exploring the philosophical, theological, and scientific implications of their coexistence. By fostering interdisciplinary dialogue and critical analysis, we aspire to advance understanding, respect, and mutual appreciation between theology and science, while inviting scholars to reflect deeply on the nature of the divine and the underlying principles that govern our universe.

## Understanding God's Omnipotence

The concept of divine omnipotence has been a cornerstone of theological thought and philosophical discourse for millennia. At the heart of many religious traditions, the belief in an all-powerful and transcendent deity lies at the core of our understanding of the divine and its role in the universe. In this section, we will delve into the multifaceted nature of God's omnipotence, examining its historical development, theological implications, and the philosophical debates that surround this profound concept.

## Definition and Traditional Interpretation of Omnipotence

Divine omnipotence, as a theological concept, refers to the belief in God's possession of unlimited and absolute power. It is a fundamental attribute ascribed to the divine being in many religious traditions, representing the idea that God is all-powerful and capable of performing any action or achieving any goal without constraint. The notion of omnipotence holds significant importance in shaping beliefs about the nature of the divine and its role in the universe.

### Defining Omnipotence

The term "omnipotence" originates from the Latin words "omnis" (all) and "potens" (powerful), translating to "all-powerful." It denotes the state of being supremely powerful, transcending all other beings and entities. In theological contexts, omnipotence is often described as the attribute that enables God to act without limitations or restrictions.

### Traditional Interpretations

The traditional interpretation of divine omnipotence has its roots in the monotheistic religions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. In



these religious traditions, God is considered the creator of the universe and the ultimate source of authority. As such, God's omnipotence is associated with the ability to bring the world into existence, sustain it, and intervene in the natural order when deemed necessary.

In Christian theology, the concept of divine omnipotence is evident in scripture, such as in the Book of Genesis, where the act of creation is described "In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth" (Genesis 1:1, NIV). Additionally, passages throughout the Bible depict God's display of power through miracles, the parting of seas, and other extraordinary acts. Similarly, Islamic theology emphasizes the all-encompassing power of Allah, as stated in the Quran "Surely, Allah has power over all things" (Quran 2:255). This verse reflects the belief in God's ability to control every aspect of existence and destiny. Jewish theology also emphasizes God's omnipotence as a central attribute, seen in the conviction that God shapes history and the destiny of the Jewish people.

## Philosophical Considerations

The concept of divine omnipotence has long been a subject of philosophical inquiry and debate. Philosophers of religion have grappled with the logical implications of an all-powerful God, leading to the formulation of the omnipotence paradoxes. The omnipotence paradoxes raise questions about the coherence of a being that possesses unlimited power. The classic example is the "stone paradox," which asks whether an omnipotent God can create a stone so heavy that even He cannot lift it. This paradox, and others like it, challenge the traditional understanding of omnipotence, inviting scholars to explore the nuances of the concept and its possible limitations. The definition and traditional interpretation of divine omnipotence encompass the belief in an all-powerful God, capable of acting without constraint and possessing authority over all aspects of existence. This theological concept plays a central role in shaping beliefs about the divine and its relationship with the created world. However, as we continue to explore the philosophical implications of divine omnipotence, the omnipotence paradoxes serve as a reminder of the complexities inherent in understanding the nature and extent of God's power.

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## Historical Perspectives on God's Omnipotence

The concept of God's omnipotence has deep historical roots, spanning across diverse religious and philosophical traditions. In this section, we will explore the historical perspectives on divine omnipotence,



with a focus on its portrayal in the Old Testament and the teachings of notable Doctors of the Church.

## God's Omnipotence in the Old Testament

The Old Testament of the Bible, sacred to both Judaism and Christianity, provides a rich foundation for the understanding of God's omnipotence. In these ancient scriptures, God is depicted as the supreme creator and ruler of the universe, with the power to bring forth existence from nothingness. One of the earliest portrayals of God's omnipotence is evident in the Book of Genesis, where God creates the world in six days, culminating in the creation of humanity in His image (Gen 1:1-27). The narrative highlights His all-encompassing authority over the natural order and human destiny.

The Old Testament is replete with accounts of divine intervention and miracles, demonstrating God's power over nature and history. For instance, the parting of the Red Sea during the exodus of the Israelites (Ex 14:21-22) and the miraculous provision of manna in the wilderness (Ex 16:14-15) showcase God's ability to perform extraordinary acts to protect and guide His people.

## Doctors of the Church on God's Omnipotence

In Christian theology, the Doctors of the Church were influential theologians and thinkers who significantly shaped the understanding of divine attributes, including omnipotence. Three notable Doctors of the Church with valuable insights on God's omnipotence are Augustine of Hippo, Thomas Aquinas, and John Chrysostom.

Augustine of Hippo (354-430 AD): Augustine, a prominent theologian and philosopher, emphasized God's absolute power and sovereignty in his works. He defended the concept of divine omnipotence, asserting that God's will could not be thwarted and that His omnipotence extended even to the human will.

Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274 AD): Aquinas, known for his synthesis of Aristotelian philosophy and Christian theology, provided a comprehensive analysis of divine omnipotence. He argued that God's power is not limited by external factors, yet, paradoxically, God cannot act contrary to His nature or perform logical contradictions.

John Chrysostom (347-407 AD): John Chrysostom, an eloquent preacher and theologian, emphasized the significance of divine omnipotence in the context of moral and spiritual guidance. He viewed God's power as the foundation for seeking divine aid and overcoming human weakness.

These historical perspectives from the Old Testament and the writings of the Doctors of the Church offer valuable insights into the understanding of God's omnipotence as a foundational attribute in religious traditions. The portrayal of God's absolute power in the Old Testament narratives and the theological reflections of influential Church figures contribute to the ongoing exploration of the nature and implications of divine omnipotence.

## Theological Implications and Debates

The concept of God's omnipotence carries profound theological implications that have been a subject of debate and reflections throughout the history of the Christian Church. In this section, we will explore the theological significance of divine omnipotence and examine the contributions of six notable popes who engaged in theological discussions on this topic.

### Theological Significance of Omnipotence

Divine omnipotence is a central attribute of God in Christian theology, reflecting the belief in God's all-encompassing power and authority. It is closely related to other divine attributes, such as omniscience and omnipresence, and forms the foundation for understanding God's role as the creator, sustainer, and ruler of the universe. Theological discussions on omnipotence have far-reaching implications for understanding God's interaction with the world, the nature of miracles, and the problem of evil.

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#### Pope Leo the Great (c. 400-461 AD)

Pope Leo the Great, also known as Leo I, played a crucial role in articulating the doctrine of Christ's two natures (human and divine) at the Council of Chalcedon in 451 AD. His teachings on divine omnipotence emphasized that God's power is not limited by the incarnation of Christ but rather expressed through it. Leo the Great emphasized that Christ, as both fully human and fully divine, displayed the power of God in His sacrificial act of redemption.

#### Pope Gregory I (c. 590-604 AD)

Pope Gregory I, also known as Gregory the Great, made significant contributions to theological discussions on God's omnipotence and human responsibility. He upheld the view that God's omnipotence does not negate human responsibility and moral choices. Gregory the Great emphasized the importance of divine grace and human cooperation in

the process of salvation, striking a balance between God's sovereignty and human agency.

### Pope Innocent III (r. 1198-1216 AD)

Pope Innocent III, known for his strong assertion of papal authority, addressed theological debates on divine omnipotence and the nature of God's will. He affirmed that God's power is absolute and beyond human comprehension. However, he also emphasized that God's will is inherently just and in harmony with divine wisdom, emphasizing the idea that God's omnipotence is not arbitrary but guided by divine goodness.

### Pope Boniface VIII (r. 1294-1303 AD)

Pope Boniface VIII, notable for his promulgation of the papal bull *Unam Sanctam*, asserted the supreme authority of the papacy over temporal rulers. In the context of theological implications, Boniface VIII's teachings reinforced the idea of divine omnipotence, emphasizing that the pope's authority derives from God's supreme power over both spiritual and temporal realms.

### Pope Benedict XVI (r. 2005-2013 AD)

Pope Benedict XVI, a theologian and philosopher, addressed theological debates on divine omnipotence in the context of modern challenges. He highlighted the need to understand God's omnipotence within the framework of love and reason. Benedict XVI emphasized that God's power is not capricious but guided by divine wisdom and love, ultimately seeking the good of all creation.

The contributions of these six popes offer a glimpse into the rich theological discussions surrounding divine omnipotence within the Christian Church. Their teachings have shaped the understanding of God's omnipotence, its implications for human existence, and its relationship with other theological doctrines. The ongoing theological debates on divine omnipotence continue to enrich Christian theology and inspire contemplation on the nature of God's power and its significance for human life and faith.

## The Pauli Exclusion Principle

The Pauli exclusion principle, a fundamental concept in quantum mechanics, lies at the heart of our understanding of the behavior of matter at the subatomic level. Formulated by Austrian physicist Wolfgang Pauli in 1925, this principle serves as a foundational pillar of

quantum mechanics and plays a crucial role in shaping the structure of atoms, the behavior of electrons, and the very fabric of our physical reality. In this section, we will embark on a journey into the fascinating world of quantum mechanics and explore the intricacies of the Pauli exclusion principle. By delving into its historical development, elucidating its fundamental implications, and examining experimental evidence, we aim to gain a deeper appreciation of its significance in our understanding of the natural world.

The Pauli exclusion principle is unlike any classical principle encountered in everyday life. While macroscopic objects can occupy the same space simultaneously, quantum particles, such as electrons, possess unique properties that govern their behavior at the atomic level. The principle mandates that no two identical fermions, particles with half-integer spin, can occupy the same quantum state concurrently. As a result, electrons within an atom must arrange themselves in distinct energy levels, leading to the formation of discrete energy shells and giving rise to the rich diversity of elements in the periodic table.

The groundbreaking nature of the Pauli exclusion principle has been confirmed through numerous experiments and observations, solidifying its status as a cornerstone of quantum mechanics. Its implications extend beyond atomic physics, permeating fields such as condensed matter physics, astrophysics, and cosmology. Through an exploration of the Pauli exclusion principle, we seek to unravel the peculiarities of the quantum world and its implications for our understanding of matter and the universe. By appreciating the intricacies of this principle, we lay the groundwork for comprehending its relevance in the broader context of physics and its potential impact on philosophical and theological considerations.

As we embark on this journey into the realm of quantum mechanics, let us marvel at the astonishing discoveries made possible by the Pauli exclusion principle. We will ponder the intriguing interplay between the microcosmic realm of particles and the macroscopic world we experience daily. Through the lens of this remarkable principle, we invite readers to delve into the profound mysteries of the quantum world, where the rules of classical physics no longer apply, and new vistas of understanding await.

## The Pauli Exclusion Principle

The Pauli exclusion principle stands as one of the most profound and revolutionary concepts in the realm of quantum mechanics. Named after its proponent, Wolfgang Pauli, this principle governs the behavior

of elementary particles and has profound implications for our understanding of matter, atomic structure, and the fundamental laws that shape the fabric of the universe.

The genesis of the Pauli exclusion principle can be traced back to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century when quantum mechanics was beginning to emerge as a new and groundbreaking theory. In 1925, Wolfgang Pauli, a young Austrian physicist, proposed the principle as a solution to the anomalous behavior of electrons in atomic spectra. At the time, physicists were investigating the spectral lines of atoms and the discrete energy levels for electrons. However, the experimental evidence revealed peculiar patterns that were difficult to explain with existing theories. Pauli postulated that electrons, being indistinguishable particles with half-integer spin, must adhere to a unique restriction: no two electrons could occupy the same quantum state simultaneously.

The Pauli exclusion principle is specific to a class of particles known as fermions, which includes electrons, protons, and neutrons. Fermions obey a particular set of quantum statistics known as Fermi-Dirac statistics, which dictate their behavior. According to the principle, any two identical fermions must have different quantum states, characterized by attributes such as energy, spin, and momentum. As a consequence, electrons in an atom are forced to arrange themselves in distinct energy levels and orbitals, leading to the formation of stable atomic structures. This behavior ensures that matter does not collapse under the pressure of mutual electron-electron repulsion, thus providing stability to atoms and the material world as we know it.

The Pauli exclusion principle is pivotal in explaining the arrangement of electrons in atoms and their distribution across energy levels. It gives rise to the concept of electron shells, each accommodating a specific number of electrons with unique quantum numbers. The organization of these shells determines the chemical properties of elements and underlies the periodic table, which is a fundamental tool in chemistry. By understanding the significance of the Pauli exclusion principle, scientists have been able to predict and explain the behavior of atoms, the formation of chemical bonds, and the wide array of elements and compounds that constitute the material world.

The significance of the Pauli exclusion principle extends beyond atomic and molecular phenomena. It also plays a crucial role in the behavior of fermionic matter in high-density environments, such as white dwarf stars and neutron stars. Additionally, the principle has implications in condensed matter physics, influencing phenomena like electron degeneracy in metals and the emergence of exotic states

of matter. The Pauli exclusion principle is a cornerstone of quantum mechanics, shaping our understanding of atomic and subatomic phenomena. Its significance in explaining the stability of matter, the structure of atoms, and the properties of elements underscores its crucial role in the fabric of the physical universe. By adhering to this principle, we gain profound insights into the fascinating and mysterious world of quantum physics, where particles obey a set of rules that defy classical intuition and challenge our understanding of reality.

## Origin and Development of the Pauli Exclusion Principle in Quantum Mechanics

The genesis of the Pauli exclusion principle marks a pivotal moment in the development of quantum mechanics, propelling the field forward and revolutionizing our understanding of the behavior of subatomic particles. In this section, we will explore the historical context that led to the formulation of this principle and trace its development as a fundamental pillar of quantum theory.

### Early Quantum Theory and Anomalous Behavior

In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, quantum theory was taking shape as a new paradigm to explain the behavior of matter at the atomic and subatomic levels. Physicists, including Max Planck, and Albert Einstein, had already laid the groundwork by introducing quantization of energy and the concept of light quanta (photons). However, when researchers attempted to explain the spectral lines of atoms, they encountered puzzling and anomalous patterns that existing theories failed to account for. The established Bohr model of the atom, which successfully explained the hydrogen spectrum, encountered difficulties when applied to multi-electron atoms. The observed spectral lines did not correspond to the predicted energy levels, leading to discrepancies that demanded a new theoretical approach.

### Wolfgang Pauli's Proposal

In 1925, Wolfgang Pauli, then a young Austrian physicist, took on the challenge of explaining these anomalies in atomic spectra. His solution came in the form of an innovative principle that introduced a novel concept into quantum mechanics – the exclusion principle. Pauli's proposal stated that no two identical fermions (particles with half-integer spin, such as electrons) could occupy the same quantum state simultaneously. This means that each electron in an atom must have unique quantum numbers, including energy level, spin, and



momentum. The exclusion principle thus provided an explanation for the observed deviations in the spectral lines and offered a new perspective on the structure of matter.

### Acceptance and Validation

Pauli's exclusion principle was initially met with skepticism, as its implications challenged established classical notions of particles and their interactions. However, it quickly gained acceptance as experimental evidence supported its predictions. German physicist Arnold Sommerfeld was among the first to recognize the significance of the principle and incorporated it into his model of multi-electron atoms, yielding a more accurate description of spectral lines. Subsequently, the work of Paul Dirac, Werner Heisenberg, and Erwin Schrödinger further developed quantum mechanics, and the exclusion principle became an integral component of their theories.

### Emergence of Quantum Electrodynamics

The formulation of quantum electrodynamics (QED), the quantum theory of electromagnetic interactions, further solidified the Pauli exclusion principle's position within quantum mechanics. QED, developed by Dirac, Julian Schwinger, Richard Feynman, and Tomonaga Shinichiro, successfully incorporated the exclusion principle into its mathematical framework, allowing for precise calculations of particle interactions and quantum phenomena. As QED and quantum field theory advanced, the Pauli exclusion principle continued to play an essential role in the understanding of elementary particles and their behavior.

The origin and development of the Pauli exclusion principle represent a crucial chapter in the history of quantum mechanics. This innovative principle, proposed by Wolfgang Pauli in response to anomalous atomic spectra, revolutionized our understanding of the subatomic world. As a foundational concept in quantum theory, the Pauli exclusion principle continues to shape our comprehension of atomic structure, the periodic table, and the behavior of fermions in various physical phenomena. Its acceptance and integration into quantum mechanics stand as a testament to the transformative power of innovative ideas in advancing scientific understanding.



## Applications and Experimental Evidence Supporting the Principle

The Pauli exclusion principle, a fundamental tenet of quantum mechanics, has found wide-ranging applications in diverse fields of physics and has been supported by numerous experimental observations. In this section, we will explore some of the key applications of the exclusion principle and examine the compelling experimental evidence that corroborates its validity.

### Electron Configuration and Atomic Structure

One of the most significant applications of the Pauli exclusion principle is in determining the electron configuration and atomic structure of elements. The principle dictates that electrons in an atom must occupy distinct quantum states, leading to the organization of electrons in shells, subshells, and orbitals. By applying the exclusion principle, scientists can predict the arrangement of electrons in atoms and explain the periodicity of the elements in the periodic table. This understanding of electron configuration is vital in chemistry, as it determines an element's chemical properties and its interactions with other elements to form compounds.

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### Stability of Matter and Electron Degeneracy

The Pauli exclusion principle is instrumental in explaining the stability of matter. In dense environments, such as those found in white dwarf stars and neutron stars, electrons are subject to high levels of pressure. Due to the exclusion principle, these electrons are forced to occupy higher energy states, a phenomenon known as electron degeneracy. Electron degeneracy prevents further compression of matter, counteracting the gravitational collapse that would otherwise lead to the formation of a black hole. The stability of white dwarfs and neutron stars is a direct consequence of the Pauli exclusion principle and has significant implications for astrophysics.

### Fermi-Dirac Statistics and Fermionic Systems

The Pauli exclusion principle is a key aspect of Fermi-Dirac statistics, which describes the behavior of fermions, such as electrons, protons, and neutrons. Fermi-Dirac statistics govern the distribution of these particles in quantum states, accounting for phenomena like the electron sea in metals and the behavior of matter under extreme conditions. By considering the exclusion principle in Fermi-Dirac statistics, physicists can model and understand the properties of

fermionic systems, including electrical conductivity, heat capacity, and the behavior of matter in extreme temperatures.

## Experimental Observations and Confirmations

Experimental evidence supporting the Pauli exclusion principle has been abundant and diverse. Spectroscopic studies of atomic and molecular spectra have consistently validated the exclusion principle's predictions, confirming the unique quantum states of electrons in atoms. Additionally, experiments in condensed matter physics, such as those exploring electron behavior in metals, semiconductors, and superconductors, have demonstrated the significance of the exclusion principle in understanding material properties. Furthermore, high-energy particle physics experiments, such as those conducted at particle accelerators, have provided evidence for the validity of Fermi-Dirac statistics and the exclusion principle in describing the behavior of elementary particles.

The Pauli exclusion principle finds broad applications in diverse areas of physics, from understanding the stability of matter in astrophysical environments to predicting the properties of materials in condensed matter physics. The experimental evidence supporting the principle has consistently validated its predictions, reinforcing its status as a fundamental pillar of quantum mechanics. As researchers continue to explore the behavior of matter at the subatomic level, the exclusion principle remains a guiding principle in unraveling the mysteries of the quantum world.

## Omnipotence and Logical Paradoxes

The concept of God's omnipotence has long captivated the minds of theologians, philosophers, and seekers of truth. Ascribing unlimited power to a divine being raises profound questions and logical paradoxes that have challenged the coherence of this traditional attribute. In this section, we delve into the intricate realm of omnipotence and explore the philosophical conundrums and logical puzzles that have emerged in the quest to grasp the nature of an all-powerful God. Throughout history, the belief in an omnipotent deity has been central to many religious traditions, influencing concepts of divine providence, miracles, and the creation of the universe. However, when subjected to rigorous philosophical inquiry, the idea of God's omnipotence has been the subject of profound debates and reflections.

One of the most famous logical paradoxes concerning divine omnipotence is the omnipotence paradox itself, which poses questions

that seemingly challenge the coherence of an all-powerful God. For instance, the question of whether an omnipotent God can create a stone so heavy that even He cannot lift it appears to lead to a logical contradiction. If God can create such a stone, then there is something He cannot lift, and thus, He is not omnipotent. On the other hand, if He cannot create such a stone, then there is also something He cannot do, challenging the concept of unlimited divine power.

Beyond the omnipotence paradox, other logical puzzles have been raised, exploring whether an all-powerful God could engage in self-limiting actions or create beings with free will. These paradoxes highlight the complexities and inherent tension in the concept of divine omnipotence, spurring intensive philosophical and theological debates. While logical paradoxes challenge the traditional understanding of God's omnipotence, theologians and philosophers have responded with a range of perspectives, seeking to reconcile the apparent contradictions. Some have suggested alternative conceptions of omnipotence, such as the idea that God's power may be self-limiting or that omnipotence is defined in a manner consistent with logical consistency.

In this section, we explore these logical paradoxes and the responses they have elicited from scholars throughout history. Through a careful examination of these philosophical questions, we strive to gain a deeper understanding of the complexities surrounding the concept of God's omnipotence and its implications for our understanding of the divine nature and the fundamental nature of reality. As we venture into this realm of profound inquiry, we invite readers to engage in a thoughtful exploration of the nature of divine power and its philosophical and theological implications.

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## Logical Limitations of Omnipotence: The Omnipotence Paradoxes

The concept of divine omnipotence, the belief in God's unlimited power, has been a subject of intense philosophical inquiry. While the idea of an all-powerful deity holds significance in religious traditions, it has also sparked logical paradoxes that challenge the coherence of the concept. In this chapter, we will explore the logical limitations of omnipotence, focusing on the omnipotence paradoxes that have perplexed philosophers and theologians throughout history.

### The Omnipotence Paradox

The omnipotence paradox is perhaps the most well-known logical puzzle concerning the nature of God's unlimited power. It presents a

thought-provoking question that seems to lead to contradictions. One version of the paradox poses the question: Can an omnipotent God create a stone so heavy that even He cannot lift it? The paradox arises from the idea that if God can create such a stone, then there would be something He cannot lift, rendering Him not truly omnipotent. Conversely, if God cannot create such a stone, then there is something He cannot do, once again challenging the notion of unlimited divine power.

## Resolutions and Theological Responses

The omnipotence paradox has elicited a range of responses from theologians and philosophers, seeking to reconcile the apparent contradictions. Various approaches have been proposed to address the logical limitations of omnipotence. Some theologians propose the idea of "limited omnipotence," suggesting that God's power is not unlimited in the sense of being able to perform logically contradictions. According to this view, God's omnipotence does not extend to performing actions that are inherently self-contradictory, as that would be beyond the scope of coherent logical thinking.

Another response posits the idea of "theoretical omnipotence." This view suggests that the concept of God's omnipotence should not be assessed based on hypothetical scenarios involving logical contradictions, as such scenarios may not have any meaningful reality. From this perspective, God's power remains confined to the realm of coherent possibilities and actions. Some philosophers adopt a compatibilist approach, suggesting that God's omnipotence can coexist with the logical constraints of the universe. This view emphasizes that God's power is not in conflict with the laws of logic but operates in harmony with them. Thus, logical limitations are inherent in the nature of reality, and God's power is not undermined by their existence.

While the omnipotence paradox is the most famous, other logical paradoxes have also been proposed. These include questions related to God's ability to change the past, create beings with free will, or engage in self-limiting actions. Each paradox presents unique challenges and invites further philosophical exploration. The omnipotence paradoxes raise profound philosophical reflections on the nature of divine power, the scope of possibility, and the boundaries of logical reasoning. These paradoxes demonstrate the complexities inherent in our attempts to comprehend the attributes of an infinite and transcendent deity. Philosophers and theologians continue to engage in dialogue surrounding these logical limitations, offering diverse perspectives and stimulating fruitful discussions on the nature of God.

and the potential tensions between divine omnipotence and logical consistency. The omnipotence paradoxes provide a compelling backdrop for philosophical reflections on the nature of divine power and its logical limitations. These paradoxes challenge our understanding of omnipotence, inspiring rigorous debates and various approaches to reconcile the apparent contradictions. As we delve into these thought-provoking inquiries, we gain deeper insights into the complexities of divine attributes and the profound mysteries surrounding the nature of an all-powerful God.

## Examining Famous Paradoxes The Stone Paradox, The Free Will Paradox, and More

In the exploration of divine omnipotence, famous paradoxes have emerged, challenging our understanding of the concept and its logical coherence. This chapter delves into several well-known paradoxes that have captured the attention of philosophers and theologians, providing insight into the complexities of divine omnipotence and its implications for the nature of God and the universe.

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### The Stone Paradox

The Stone Paradox, also known as the Omnipotence Paradox, has been introduced in the introduction as a thought-provoking question: Can an omnipotent God create a stone so heavy that even He cannot lift it? This paradox highlights the apparent contradiction between the idea of God's unlimited power and the logical constraints of creating an unliftable stone. This paradox raises fundamental questions about the nature of divine omnipotence and its compatibility with logical consistency. Philosophers and theologians have proposed various responses, such as the notion of limited omnipotence or the idea of theoretical omnipotence, to address the logical limitations presented by the Stone Paradox.

### The Free Will Paradox

The Free Will Paradox revolves around the question of whether an omnipotent God can create beings with genuine free will. If God is all-powerful and all-knowing, then He would foresee the choices that free beings would make, seemingly limiting their freedom. On the other hand, if God cannot foresee the choices, His omniscience is questioned. This paradox challenges the idea of divine omnipotence in the context of human free will. The coexistence of an all-knowing God and genuine free will remains a complex philosophical and theological issue,

leading to debates on compatibilism, determinism, and the nature of divine omniscience.

### The Time Paradox

The Time Paradox explores the idea of whether an omnipotent God can change the past. If God possesses the power to alter events in the past, this could raise logical inconsistencies and questions about the stability of history and causality. This paradox delves into the relationship between divine omnipotence, the nature of time, and the concept of causation. It challenges our understanding of the temporal flow and the logical implications of altering the past.

### The Paradox of Evil

The Paradox of Evil relates to the problem of evil and raises questions about the coexistence of an all-powerful, benevolent God and the existence of evil and suffering in the world. If God is omnipotent, why does He permit the existence of evil? This paradox has been a significant theological and philosophical challenge throughout history, prompting reflections on the nature of God's power, human freedom, and theodicy – the attempt to reconcile the existence of evil with the attributes of God.

### The Paradox of Self-Limitation

The Paradox of Self-Limitation considers whether an omnipotent God can engage in self-limiting actions, such as willingly refraining from using His unlimited power. If God possesses unlimited power, does this include the power to limit Himself? This paradox delves into the complexities of divine agency and the relationship between divine attributes. It challenges the notion of God's absolute power and explores the implications of self-limitation in the exercise of divine power.

### The Paradox of Co-Creation

The Paradox of Co-Creation examines whether an omnipotent God can create beings capable of co-creation and shaping their destinies alongside God's will. This paradox raises questions about the nature of divine sovereignty and the role of human agency in shaping the course of events. This paradox explores the complexities of divine-human interaction and the implications for concepts of divine providence and human responsibility.

These paradoxes concerning divine omnipotence provide profound insights into the intricate nature of God's unlimited power and its logical limitations. The Stone Paradox, the Free Will Paradox,



and others invite deep philosophical reflections on the nature of God, human freedom, causality, and the existence of evil. These paradoxes challenge our conceptions of omnipotence, encouraging theologians and philosophers to explore diverse approaches to reconcile apparent contradictions. As we continue to examine these enigmatic inquiries, we gain a deeper appreciation for the complexities of divine attributes and the enduring questions that transcend the boundaries of human understanding.

## Theological Responses to Logical Paradoxes

The logical paradoxes surrounding divine omnipotence have been a subject of deep theological contemplation throughout history. In this chapter, we explore various theological responses to these paradoxes, drawing insights from religious scriptures with a particular focus on references to the Bible. These responses represent attempts by theologians and religious thinkers to reconcile the concept of God's unlimited power with the logical constraints posed by the omnipotence paradoxes.

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### Acknowledging Human Limitations

One theological response to the omnipotence paradoxes involves acknowledging the limitations of human comprehension when contemplating the nature of an all-powerful God. The Bible emphasizes the vastness and transcendence of God, making it clear that human understanding is limited compared to the divine wisdom (Is 55:9). This perspective suggests that certain paradoxes may be beyond human reasoning and should not undermine the fundamental belief in God's omnipotence.

### Divine Mystery and Hiddenness

Theological responses often refer to the notion of divine mystery and hiddenness. The Bible contains passages that highlight the incomprehensibility of God's ways and the mysteries surrounding divine actions (Deuteronomy 29:29, Romans 11:33). In this context, theological thinkers argue that certain paradoxes, such as the existence of evil in a world created by a powerful and benevolent God, might be part of a greater divine plan beyond human understanding.

### The Interplay of Divine Attributes

Another theological response considers the interplay of various divine attributes, including omnipotence, omniscience, and benevolence.



The Bible portrays God as embodying multiple attributes simultaneously. For instance, while God is depicted as all-powerful, the Bible also emphasizes God's compassion and love for creation (Psalm 136 26, John 3 16). Theological reflections suggest that the paradoxes might be resolved by recognizing the complexity of divine attributes and their harmonious coexistence.

### Divine Freedom and Sovereignty

The Bible portrays God as a sovereign and free being who acts according to His divine will (Psalm 115 3, Isaiah 46 10). Theological responses to the omnipotence paradoxes often emphasize God's freedom to act in ways that may not conform to human expectations or logical constraints. This perspective suggests that divine omnipotence is not limited by human conceptions of possibility and that God's ways might transcend human comprehension.

### The Paradox of Incarnation

One theological response, particularly within Christian theology, points to the paradox of the Incarnation – the belief that God became human in the form of Jesus Christ. The idea of God taking on human limitations and experiencing suffering and death presents a profound paradox within the concept of divine omnipotence. Theological reflections on the Incarnation often emphasize the mystery of God's self-revelation and the depth of God's love for humanity.

### The Mystery of Faith

Finally, many theological responses invoke the mystery of faith. The Bible encourages believers to walk by faith rather than by sight (2 Corinthians 5 7). This perspective suggests that certain theological paradoxes may not be fully resolvable through human reason alone, but through a deep relationship with God based on trust and faith.

Theological responses to the logical paradoxes surrounding divine omnipotence encompass a range of perspectives. From acknowledging human limitations and divine mystery to recognizing the interplay of divine attributes and the paradox of the Incarnation, these responses reflect the profound and complex nature of theological contemplation. References to the Bible offer valuable insights into the way religious scriptures provide resources for engaging with these paradoxes. By drawing upon these theological reflections, scholars seek to navigate the enigmatic terrain of divine omnipotence and its implications for human understanding and faith.

## The Pauli Principle and Physical Constraints

### Overview of the Pauli Exclusion Principle in Quantum Systems

The Pauli exclusion principle, a foundational concept in quantum mechanics, plays a crucial role in shaping the behavior of matter at the subatomic level. In this section, we provide an overview of the Pauli exclusion principle and its significance in quantum systems. By exploring its formulation, mathematical representation, and implications for the structure of matter, we gain insights into the unique characteristics of fermionic particles and the fundamental constraints governing their interactions.

### Formulation of the Pauli Exclusion Principle

The Pauli exclusion principle was first formulated by Wolfgang Pauli in 1925 as a response to the puzzling behavior of electrons in atomic spectra. It states that no two identical fermions can occupy the same quantum state simultaneously. Fermions are particles with half-integer spin, such as electrons, protons, and neutrons, and they obey Fermi-Dirac statistics, a branch of quantum statistics. The principle ensures that fermions exhibit a property known as antisymmetry, meaning that the wave function describing their quantum state changes sign when the positions of two particles are interchanged. As a result, fermions are subject to unique constraints that distinguish them from bosons, which are particles with integer spin and do not obey the Pauli exclusion principle.

### Mathematical Representation

Mathematically, the Pauli exclusion principle is expressed through the use of the quantum mechanical wave function. The wave function describes the quantum state of a particle and incorporates its various quantum numbers, including energy, spin, momentum, and spatial coordinates. For a system of multiple identical fermions, the wave function must satisfy antisymmetry. This means that if two particles are swapped, the wave function changes sign. This leads to the Pauli exclusion principle preventing fermions from occupying the same quantum state, ensuring that they distribute themselves into distinct quantum states and energy levels.

## Implications for the Structure of Matter

The Pauli exclusion principle has profound implications for the structure of matter, particularly in atoms and their electron configuration. It governs the behavior of electrons within an atom, resulting in the formation of discrete energy levels and electron shells. Each electron in an atom occupies a unique set of quantum numbers, including energy, angular momentum, and magnetic moment. As a consequence of the Pauli exclusion principle, electrons arrange themselves in energy levels and orbitals around the nucleus, creating the stable atomic structure. This arrangement gives rise to the periodic table of elements, which is a fundamental organizing principle in chemistry.

## Role in Understanding Matter at Extreme Conditions

The Pauli exclusion principle also plays a crucial role in understanding matter under extreme conditions, such as those found in neutron stars, white dwarfs, and highly compressed matter. In such environments, matter becomes highly degenerate, and electrons are forced to occupy higher energy levels due to increased pressure. The principle of electron degeneracy prevents further compression of matter, providing crucial support against gravitational collapse. The understanding of electron degeneracy and the Pauli exclusion principle has significant implications for astrophysics and matter physics, and the behavior of matter in extreme environments.

## Role of the Pauli Principle in the Structure of Matter

The Pauli exclusion principle plays a central and indispensable role in shaping the structure of matter at both the atomic and subatomic levels. In this section, we explore in detail how the Pauli exclusion principle governs the behavior of fermionic particles, such as electrons, and influences the arrangement of electrons within atoms. By understanding its impact, we gain deeper insights into the stability and properties of matter, we gain deeper insights into the intricate dance of quantum particles that forms the foundation of our material world.

## Electron Configuration and Energy Levels

At the heart of the Pauli exclusion principle's role in the structure of matter lies the arrangement of electrons in atoms. The principle mandates that no two electrons within an atom can have the same set of quantum numbers, which include energy, angular momentum, magnetic moment, and spin. As electrons occupy distinct energy levels

and orbitals around the nucleus, the atom achieves a state of lower energy, making it more stable. This organization of electrons is vital in defining the chemical properties of elements and their interactions with other atoms to form compounds.

### Formation of Electron Shells

The Pauli exclusion principle leads to the formation of electron shells, which are energy levels that accommodate a specific number of electrons with unique quantum states. The innermost shell closest to the nucleus can hold a maximum of two electrons, the second shell can hold up to eight, and subsequent shells follow the pattern. This orderly distribution of electrons into shells underlies the periodic table of elements, where elements with similar chemical properties are grouped together.

### Stability of Atoms and Chemical Bonds

The stability of atoms is a direct consequence of the Pauli exclusion principle. If the principle did not apply, electrons could collapse into lower energy levels, resulting in a significant release of energy. This would lead to the disintegration of atoms and the universe as we know it. However, the exclusion principle prevents such collapse by imposing restrictions on electron states, thus ensuring the stability of matter. Moreover, the principle governs the formation of chemical bonds between atoms. The sharing and transfer of electrons between atoms to achieve stable electron configurations are determined by the Pauli exclusion principle, leading to the formation of molecules and compounds with a vast array of chemical properties.

### Limitations in Density of Matter State

The Pauli exclusion principle also plays a crucial role in determining the properties of matter at extreme conditions. As matter becomes denser, such as in white dwarfs or neutron stars, electrons are forced into higher energy states due to increased pressure. This phenomenon, known as electron degeneracy, prevents further compression of matter, providing support against gravitational collapse. In addition, the Pauli exclusion principle underlies the behavior of fermionic matter in various states, such as in the formation of exotic states like Bose-Einstein condensates, where fermions are constrained to specific quantum states.

The Pauli exclusion principle is a fundamental principle governing the structure and behavior of matter. Its influence on the arrangement of electrons within atoms determines the stability of matter and the

periodic table of elements. Furthermore, the principle's impact on electron degeneracy enables the existence of dense objects like white dwarfs and neutron stars. Through the intricate interplay of quantum particles and their unique constraints, the Pauli exclusion principle shapes the diverse and fascinating world of matter, providing the foundation for our understanding of chemistry, astrophysics, and the behavior of matter in the quantum realm.

## Interplay between Quantum Mechanics and Classical Physics

The Pauli exclusion principle, a fundamental concept in quantum mechanics, introduces profound constraints on the behavior of subatomic particles. While quantum mechanics governs the behavior of particles at the smallest scales, classical physics describes the macroscopic world we observe. In this section, we explore the interplay between quantum mechanics and classical physics, focusing on how the Pauli exclusion principle bridges these two realms and shapes our understanding of matter and the physical constraints that underpin the universe.

### Quantum Mechanics and the Subatomic Realm

Quantum mechanics is a branch of physics that deals with the behavior of particles at the atomic and subatomic levels. It introduces a new set of rules and principles that challenge classical Newtonian physics and require a probabilistic approach to describing particle behavior. At the quantum level, particles such as electrons, protons, and neutrons exhibit wave-particle duality, meaning they can behave as both particles and waves. The wave function, a central concept in quantum mechanics, describes the probability of finding a particle at a specific position and time. The Pauli exclusion principle is a key component of quantum mechanics, governing the behavior of fermions and their unique constraints on occupying quantum states.

### Linking Quantum States and Energy Levels

The Pauli exclusion principle establishes a connection between quantum states and energy levels of particles. In quantum systems like atoms, electrons are distributed into distinct energy levels and orbitals due to the principle's restriction on identical fermions occupying the same quantum state. The arrangement of electrons within an atom, dictated by the Pauli exclusion principle, determines the atom's properties, chemical behavior, and place in the periodic table.

This linking of quantum states and energy levels exemplifies how quantum mechanics influences the macroscopic properties of matter.

### Emergence of Classical Physics from Quantum Mechanics

At the macroscopic level, classical physics emerges from the underlying quantum mechanics through a process known as the correspondence principle. As the number of particles increases, quantum effects average out, and the probabilistic nature of quantum mechanics becomes less noticeable. Classical physics becomes an accurate description of macroscopic systems with large numbers of particles. The principles of classical physics, such as Newton's laws of motion, arise as a limiting case of quantum mechanics where particle wavelengths become insignificant compared to the system's size. The interplay between quantum mechanics and classical physics provides a coherent and unified framework for understanding the behavior of matter across different scales.

### Exotic States and Quantum Phenomena

The interplay between quantum mechanics and classical physics also gives rise to exotic states of matter and phenomena. For instance, the Pauli exclusion principle contributes to phenomena like superconductivity and superfluidity, where the behavior of matter deviates significantly from classical expectations. In superconductors, electrons form Cooper pairs, a quantum phenomenon resulting from the interaction of identical fermions with opposite spins. These pairs exhibit collective behavior, leading to zero electrical resistance and other remarkable properties. The interplay between quantum mechanics and classical physics is evident in understanding these exotic states and their implications for technology and fundamental physics.

Summing up, the Pauli exclusion principle serves as a bridge between the microscopic realm of quantum mechanics and the macroscopic world described by classical physics. The principle's constraints on quantum states play a pivotal role in determining the structure of matter, the periodic table, and the emergence of classical physics from the underlying quantum behavior. The interplay between quantum mechanics and classical physics leads to a comprehensive understanding of matter and the physical constraints that shape the universe, from the smallest particles to the grandest cosmic structures. It exemplifies the beauty and unity of physics as we uncover the secrets of the quantum world and its connections to the observable world around us.





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## The Protection of Human Dignity in Selected Norms of Civil Law and in Theology

The dignity of the human person is a basic element of humanity, and at the same time a determinant of the moral value of human action. Human rights and personal rights derive from it and are protected by law. Dignity is sheltered by public and private law. In practice, civil law protection of human dignity is of great importance. There is consensus that the dignity of every human being is protected, even those deprived of consciousness. However, the problem arises when it comes to determining from what moment the protection of dignity is granted, whether from the moment of birth or earlier. The issue of the victim's contribution to the harm caused to him is discussed. It can be noticed that in the science of law and in the jurisprudence of Polish courts, the influence of the teachings of Pope John Paul II on the interpretation of the provisions on the protection of human dignity can be observed.

**Key words:** human dignity, ethics of John Paul II, legal protection of dignity, personal rights, harm, financial responsibility for damages.

### Introductory remarks

Human dignity is the basic concept, however, various fields of science which deal with this issue do not always identify its nature in the same way. Philosophers have argued over the sources of dignity

and over the ways to protect it since the ancient times<sup>1</sup>. Saint Thomas Aquinas' philosophy<sup>2</sup>. contains various reflections on dignity.

In the teaching of the Catholic Church it is generally assumed that human dignity derives from the fact that man is created by God and redeemed by Christ. Dignity (*dignitas*) is present in every human being, it makes man always "somebody" and never "something". Therefore, every man/woman has the inalienable human dignity which is a particular value<sup>3</sup>. It is independent from the race, religion, education or wealth<sup>4</sup>.

The Church has always insisted in his teaching on the inalienable dignity of every human person. Dignity is the foundation of the equality of all human beings. In the twentieth century, marked by armed conflicts on a global scale, questions concerning respect for human dignity began to resonate more strongly than usual in the Church's teaching. Successive popes in their teaching have strongly emphasized the right of man/woman to equal treatment on the grounds that he/she is a human being and possesses inalienable dignity<sup>5</sup>. Pointing to the documents of the Church's Magisterium that emphasize the dignity of the human person, one cannot ignore the teaching of the Second Vatican Council and the Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et Spes*<sup>6</sup>.

In the teaching of the Council, the International Theological Commission points to two distinct aspects of human dignity that complement

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<sup>1</sup> K. Wojtyła, *Osoba i czyn oraz inne studia antropologiczne*, Lublin 2011, p. 213; also T. Chauvin, *Homo iuridicus. Człowiek jako podmiot prawa publicznego*, Warszawa 2014 p. 391 and the quoted literature. The idea of dignity was distinguished by Stoics as well as by Sophists. See e.g. W. Finkentscher, *Methoden des Rechts in vergleichender Darstellung*, "American Journal of Comparative Law" 1993, Vol. 41(1), pp. 266, 274 and 281; M. Forschner, *Marktpreis und Würde. Ethische Aspekte der Globalisierung*, in: *Ethische Grenzen einer globalisierten Welt*, ed. H. Neuhaus, 2003 pp. 33-48.

<sup>2</sup> R. Plich, *O godności osoby ludzkiej w ujęciu św. Tomasza z Akwinu*, "Przegląd Tomistyczny" 2021, No. XXVII, pp. 205-270.

<sup>3</sup> P. Duchliński, *Godność osoby w ujęciu Karola Wojtyły i jego uczniów*, in: P. Duchliński, G. Hołub, *Ku rozumieniu godności człowieka*, Kraków 2008, pp. 23-24.

<sup>4</sup> Z. Cholewiński, Z. Zaleski, in: *Encyklopedia Katolicka*, Vol. V, Lublin 1989, p. 1231.

<sup>5</sup> Above all, John XXIII and the Encyclical *Pacem in Terris* can be mentioned; Paul VI and the Encyclical *Populorum Progressio*; John Paul II and the Encyclical *Redemptor Hominis*; *Dives in Misericordia*; *Laborem exercens*.

<sup>6</sup> In particular, No. 12 et seq. and No. 41 take up a systematic approach to human rights.

each other. The first of these can be called “ascent”. It concerns the natural law, which is based on rational arguments, but is confirmed by Revelation. Man/woman is endowed with a soul, reason, conscience and a sense of responsibility. In the light of Revelation, he interprets his vocation to life in society. Each member of the community, therefore, being aware of his dignity, should respect others<sup>7</sup>. The Commission describes the second aspect of human dignity as “descent”. Through the Paschal Mystery, man/woman is endowed with the dignity of a child of God. This awareness gives rise to the principle of reciprocity in the view of human dignity. In the teaching of Jesus Christ, it is given, in the words: “Be merciful, as your Father is merciful (...) As you would have people do to you, do so to them” (Lk 6:36 and 31)<sup>8</sup>.

In the light of salvation history, human dignity rests on the foundation of God’s creation of human being. He is not only a corporeal being, but also has a soul and the faculty of reasoning. His nature is rational. In this way, he interprets his vocation to create and live in a community. He also develops his dignity by using his own intelligence

<sup>7</sup> “In today’s apostolic preaching two main and complementary lines appear. The first, which may be called a line of ascent, belongs to the natural law of peoples, buttressed by reasoning and debate but confirmed and raised to a higher level by Divine Revelation, thanks to the Gospel. Here man appears not as an object and instrument to be used but as an intermediate end in himself, whose welfare both personal and ultimately as a being for God must be our aim. Man enjoys a spiritual soul, reason, freedom, conscience, responsibility, an active role in society. All interpersonal relationships between people must be conducted in such a way that this fundamental human dignity be given full honor, that justice and kindness be fully observed, and the needs of all be fulfilled to the best of our ability”, International Theological Commission, *The Dignity and Rights of the Human Person* (1983), [https://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti\\_documents/rc\\_cti\\_1983\\_dignita-diritti\\_en.html](https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti_documents/rc_cti_1983_dignita-diritti_en.html) (accessed: 9.12.2023)

<sup>8</sup> “The second line of today’s apostolic preaching on man’s rights may be called a line of descent. It shows the basis and demands of human rights in the light of the Word of God coming down to share the human condition and in the paschal sacrifice, so that all men should be endowed with the dignity of God’s adopted sons and both benefit from and contribute to a deeper justice and charity. In the course of propositions still to come, this Christological foundation for human rights will get very special attention when considered in the light and grace of the theology of salvation history. At this point all that needs to be noted is that the principle of reciprocity, affirmed by so many religions and philosophies as the foundation of human rights, should find a Christological meaning in the preaching of Christ: ‘Therefore be merciful as your heavenly Father is merciful... Do to men as you would wish them to do to you’ (Lk 6:36.31)”, International Theological Commission, *The Dignity and Rights of the Human Person* (1983), [https://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti\\_documents/rc\\_cti\\_1983\\_dignita-diritti\\_en.html](https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti_documents/rc_cti_1983_dignita-diritti_en.html) (accessed: 9.12.2023).

to create and “subdue the earth”<sup>9</sup>. Man/woman, created in the image and likeness of God, did not lose his dignity even when he committed sin. He could still “subdue the earth”, and when he was redeemed by Christ, he was given new life as a gift and his lost dignity as a child of God was restored<sup>10</sup>.

The subject of the dignity of the human person was strongly developed by Pope John Paul II. During his pontificate, he took up this issue both in official documents and in statements at international forums.

Undoubtedly, human dignity is the prerequisite of John Paul II's ethics as he defines it as the basic element of humanity and, at the same time, as the indicator of the moral value of human activity.

Dignity is a particularly important issue in Pope John Paul II's speeches. He devoted to it his first encyclical *Redemptor hominis* from 1979. He emphasised that all human rights derive from dignity, namely: the right to live, to freedom and to the good name. Certainly, due to the Polish Pope's activity, the secular legal science in Poland is clearly under the influence of the social doctrine of the Church as far as human dignity is perceived. The scholarly texts underline that human dignity is a value immanently inscribed into the essence of humanity, it defines human nature, it is independent of his will, it is constant, it is possible to concretize and objectify it<sup>11</sup>.

Only after specifying that, we can recall human rights, citizen's right, the rights of minorities or of other social groups. Essentially,

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<sup>9</sup> Cf. International Theological Commission, *The Dignity and Rights of the Human Person* (1983), [https://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti\\_documents/rc\\_cti\\_1983\\_dignita-diritti\\_en.html](https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti_documents/rc_cti_1983_dignita-diritti_en.html) (accessed: 9.12.2023).

<sup>10</sup> “In that way in heart and action, every follower of Christ must shape himself in terms of the demands of the new life and act according to *Christian dignity*. He will be particularly sensitive to honoring the rights of all (Rom 13:8-10). Following the law of Christ (Gal 6:2) and the new Commandment of charity (cf. Jn 13:34), he will not be selfish or insistent on what is his (cf. 1 Cor 13:5)”, International Theological Commission, *The Dignity and Rights of the Human Person* (1983), [https://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti\\_documents/rc\\_cti\\_1983\\_dignita-diritti\\_en.html](https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti_documents/rc_cti_1983_dignita-diritti_en.html) (accessed: 9.12.2023).

<sup>11</sup> L. Bosek, *Gwarancje godności ludzkiej i ich wpływ na polskie prawo cywilne*. Warszawa 2012, p. 335; J. Matys, *Model zadośćuczynienia pieniężnego z tytułu szkody niemajątkowej w kodeksie cywilnym*, Warszawa 2010, p. 105; J. Haberkowicz, *Cywilnoprawna ochrona dziecka poczętego a stosowanie procedur medycznych*, Warszawa 2010, p. 43 and next; J. Mrozek, *Godność osoby ludzkiej jako źródło praw człowieka i obywatela*, “Civitas et Lex” 2014, No. 1, p. 43.

nobody today questions the overriding nature of dignity among the other human rights<sup>12</sup>.

Society does not bestow dignity upon man but it is obliged to respect and protect dignity<sup>13</sup>. Despite the fact that respecting human rights (which derive from dignity) does not only mean protecting them on the legal level but it should also involve all the aspects which result from the concept of human dignity as the basis of all rights. However in everyday life the legal protection of human dignity is a tool which directly affects the infringer. What is more, it has the preventative function and it provides a sense of security for the society. Although no one can be deprived of this dignity, while humiliating somebody's dignity we can cause weakening of somebody's subjective sense of self-dignity or ever deprive someone of it. As such, dignity is an inner value of every man, which outranks other values, and therefore it demands respect. It must not be violated in the name of realizing other values, therefore it constitutes an important moral criterion for judging human deeds and attitudes<sup>14</sup>. Thus, although neither the society as such nor any social groups or individuals have the right to determine human dignity, they are obliged by the law to protect it.

Assuming that in the Polish law the norms of the Constitution of the Republic of Poland are of greatest importance, it is stated that at the legal level the effective and comprehensive protection of human dignity is possible when art. 30 of the Constitution of the Republic of Poland will be treated as an independent legal norm that is one having legal independent meaning according to this regulation. The inborn and inalienable human dignity constitutes the source of freedom and rights of man and of a citizen. From the constitutional perspective, dignity is an inalienable value and the public authorities are obliged to respect and protect it. This superior value is reinforced by the preamble to the Fundamental Law with the calling to "preserve the innate human dignity" with the application of the regulations of the Constitution. Moreover, it must be emphasised that this constitutional norm is the source of these freedoms and of human and citizen rights which have no separate basis in the Constitution of the Republic of

<sup>12</sup> F.J. Mazurek, *Godność osoby ludzkiej podstawą praw człowieka*, Lublin 2001, p. 17.

<sup>13</sup> J. W. Gałkowski, *Jan Paweł II o godności człowieka*. in: *Zagadnienia godności człowieka*, ed. J. Czerkawski, Lublin 1994, pp. 103-112; L. Bosek, *Gwarancje godności ludzkiej...*, p. 47.

<sup>14</sup> R. Plich, *O godności osoby ludzkiej...*, p. 207.

Poland<sup>15</sup>. The principle expressed in art. 30 of the Constitution of the Republic of Poland should therefore protect man regardless of whether he is protected by any other legal regulations. Otherwise the constitutional protection of dignity would not be absolute and it would cause a paradoxical situation of weaker protection of dignity than in case of the application of the usual rights and freedoms. Art. 30 of the Constitution of the Republic of Poland states that apart from the legal “dignity protection by the public authorities”, the emphasis was placed on “the legal respect for the dignity by the public authorities”, on “prohibition of dignity violation” as well as on the obligation of the systemic interpretation of this guarantee with regard to the regulation on freedoms and human rights<sup>16</sup>. The Constitutional Court in the judgement from April 4<sup>th</sup> 2001 stated that human dignity has constitutional meaning, it constitutes the basis for the system of values on which the Constitution was built and it is the foundation of the whole legal system of the country<sup>17</sup>.

Human dignity is also guaranteed by other regulations in the Constitution e.g. art. 40, 41 and by the so called ordinary acts which belong to the public law and to the private law. So, in principle, on the basis of the applicable legal order, human dignity is subject to the broadest protection, both with the means provided by the public law, (especially the penal law) and with the ones assumed by the private law, and here prevails the compensatory liability for the damage to property or for non-material damage (injury). Besides, it is worth to mention that the concept of dignity in the penal code<sup>18</sup> is mentioned numerously e.g. in art. 25 § 5, in art. 115 § 22 pt. 6 and in art. 124 § 1. Among the groups of regulations in which the violated good is connected to the concept of dignity there are those which regard the offence of insult (art. 216 of the Penalty Code), violation of bodily integrity (art. 217) and human trafficking (art. 189a). The regulation of the respect for dignity is clearly present in the international law<sup>19</sup>.

<sup>15</sup> Such as e.g. the verdict of the Constitutional Court from February 7<sup>th</sup> 2006, SK 45/04, “Orzecznictwo Trybunału Konstytucyjnego. Zbiór Urzędowy” 2006, no. 2, item 5; the Verdict from October 2nd 2007, CSK 269/07, “Orzecznictwo Sądu Najwyższego Izba Cywilna – Zeszyty Dodatkowe” 2008, no. 3, item 75.

<sup>16</sup> L. Bosek, *Gwarancje godności ludzkiej i ich...*, p. 18.

<sup>17</sup> The verdict of the Constitutional Court from April 4<sup>th</sup> 2001, K 11/00, “Orzecznictwo Trybunału Konstytucyjnego 2001, no. 3, item 54, LEX nr 46869.

<sup>18</sup> The act from June 6<sup>th</sup> 1997, the Penal Code. Journal of Laws 1997 r., no. 88, item 553 with numerous subsequent amendments .

<sup>19</sup> E.g. art. 5 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; the Convention against torture and any other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishing



As far as the sphere of the private law is concerned, it should be noted that the Civil Code<sup>20</sup> has the particular meaning in the system of the personal interests protection. The personal interests are defined in the literary sources in various ways, however, as a rule, the fact that they are inalienable and result from each person's dignity is never questioned. These are the interests objectively verifiable, inseparable from man, they cannot be expressed in any amount of money (although making financial amends can directly affect the economic condition of a person). The issue of personal interests has been widely discussed in a variety of scientific comments and judicial rulings. In the judicial practice of the Supreme Court the personal interests were defined as non-material values which are strongly connected with man, which determine his existence, his position in the society and which at the same time are the expression of physical and mental individuality as well as of the creative potential, commonly regarded by the society and accepted by the legal system<sup>21</sup>. The personal interest is a value immanently connected with the essence of humanity and with the human nature, which is independent from his will, which is constant, inalienable and which lasts for the lifetime. Personal interests of man should therefore be separated from the concept of human dignity, every born human being is entitled to them and some of them even concern the unborn one (*nasciturus*).

## Human dignity in the Constitution of the Republic of Poland and in the Civil Code

The previously recalled statement that the legal, effective and comprehensive protection of human dignity is possible when art. 30

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adopted by the United Nations Organization on December 10<sup>th</sup>, 1948, ratified by Poland in 1989. Dz.U. 1989, no. 63, item 378; the Charter of the United Nations adopted on June 26<sup>th</sup> 1945. The Journal of Laws 1947, no. 23, item 90 with amendments. See more: J. Zajadło, *Godność jednostki w aktach międzynarodowej ochrony praw człowieka*, "Ruch Prawniczy, Ekonomiczny i Socjologiczny" 1989, Vol. 51(2), pp. 104-105; art. 1-4 the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union from March 30<sup>th</sup> 2010 the Official Journal. UE C Nr 83/02; A. Wojcieszak, *O poszanowaniu godności człowieka na przykładzie polskich gwarancji i jej ochrony oraz orzecznictwa Sądu Najwyższego Stanów Zjednoczonych Ameryki*, "Studia Iuridica Lublinensia" 2021, vol. 30(5), p. 703 and the quoted literary sources.

<sup>20</sup> The act from April 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1964, the Journal of Laws 1964, no. 16, item 93 with numerous subsequent amendments.

<sup>21</sup> The verdict of the Supreme Court from May 6<sup>th</sup>, 2010, II CSK 640/09, "Palestra" 2010, no. 7-8, item 261.

of the Constitution of the Republic of Poland will be treated as an independent legal norm which has an independent normative meaning, requires clarification. This problem is connected with the broader issue of the direct application of constitutional norms (“self-reliance”) – that is without the need to develop them with lower rank acts. With regard to that, we can indicate a few directions of interpretation of the relations of provisions of the Constitution to other legal regulations and evolution of views and the output of the jurisprudence. It was previously assumed that the provision of the Constitution of the Republic of Poland is only a declaration, a general principle which constitutes the basis for changing the interpretation of the provisions that is: the application of that is not possible mainly because of the lack of concreteness. Following this way of thinking we should assume that the content of art. 30 of the Constitution of the Republic of Poland does not lead to the spontaneous claim with regard to the dignity protection, independently from specific provisions. Thus it only indicates the way of interpreting other regulations. This direction of the interpretation of the constitutional provisions with regard to the so called ordinary legislation also appeared in the jurisprudence of the Supreme Court. In this approach the constitutional provision can be interpreted only as a benchmark for the assessment whether the regulations of ordinary provisions remain in accordance with the Constitution. It is a fact that without referring to the ordinary prerequisites regulated in the acts, which condition liability for damages such as: specification of the incident causing the damage, of the person who is responsible for the damage, the concept of damage, the cause-and-effect relationship between the incident and the damage, the limitation period for claims resulting from prohibited deeds, it is difficult to rule on the responsibility for the personal interests violation including human dignity<sup>22</sup>.

The dispute concerning this issue led to seemingly accurate consensual arrangements, it was concluded that the direct application of the Constitution results from the situation in which the norms of the Constitution are in force in the legal transactions directly – that is without the need to be developed with the lower legal acts, however

<sup>22</sup> According to the justification of the Supreme Court from March 3<sup>rd</sup> 2004 V CK 376/03, LEX no. 183799. The notion of the lack of basis for independent application of art. 77 of the Constitution was expressed both in the jurisprudence of the Constitutional Court and of the Supreme Court, for instance see the verdict of the Constitutional Court from January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2004, SK 26/03, “Orzecznictwo Trybunału Konstytucyjnego. Zbiór Urzędowy” 2004/1, item 3 and the verdict of the Supreme Court from May 30<sup>th</sup>, 2003, III CZP 34/03, “Prokuratura i Prawo” 2004, no. 2, p. 30.

as for the sphere of the direct application of the Constitution it is involved into the co-application of the Constitution which consists in the simultaneous application of its norms and the statutory standards. This means that the subject applying the law should take into account the superior legal validity of the Constitution in the legal system, give priority to such solutions which would best implement the provisions of the Constitution<sup>23</sup>. With regard to that we can formulate a conclusion that art. 30 of the Constitution constitutes the starting point for any consideration concerning civil-law aspects of the responsibility for the damage which involves the violation of human dignity. It is so because the law is constitutional due to its fundamental meaning, it obtains its concretization in the legislation which belongs to various spheres of the law including the provisions classified as the civil law. Only in the sphere of the civil-law regulations it becomes the subjective right which results in the claim for repairing the damage<sup>24</sup>. Justifying this position we should notice that art. 30 of the Constitution does not refer to the civil-law terminology that is to the concepts applied in the civil law and constituting its conceptual grid. Thus for the functioning of this norm in practice it is essential to refer to the civil law which regulates the general rules, prerequisites for liability of the damage and the way of the compensation for the damage (especially art. 361-363 of the Civil Code).

Analysing the constitutional law for the repair of the damage caused by the violation of human dignity in the way of the civil-law claims we must notice that the provision of art. 30 of the Constitution of the Republic of Poland should be connected to the civil-law regime of liability from prohibited deeds, and the law expressed in it is the non-property law, out of which we can formulate both the claims of non-property nature or of the property nature. So causing damage is an act of violation of human dignity so it is the liability *ex delicto*, an event which results in giving rise to an obligation which consists in the responsibility to repair the damage. Qualifying the liability for human dignity violation as the liability for damage we should recall its rules. Literary sources often mention the following rules of liability: of guilt, of illegality, of risk, absolute and of validity<sup>25</sup>. A. Śmieja while

<sup>23</sup> B. Banaszak, *Zakres podmiotów uprawnionych do dochodzenia wynagrodzenia szkody wyrządzonej przez niezgodne z prawem działania organu władzy publicznej (art. 77 ust. 1 Konstytucji RP)*, "Monitor Prawniczy" 2011, no. 1, p. 9.

<sup>24</sup> Z. Banaszczyk, *Odpowiedzialność za szkody wyrządzone przy wykonywaniu władzy publicznej*, Warsaw 2015, p. XVII.

<sup>25</sup> M. Kaliński, *Szkoda na mieniu i jej naprawienie*, Warszawa 2008, p. 94.

disputing over the rules of liability arising from the prohibited deeds indicates the liability which is completely detached from guilt and from the guiding principle of guilt<sup>26</sup>. In both regimes of liability (*ex delicto*, *ex contractu*), the existence and realization of the compensation claim is unconditionally dependent from complying of the conditions which are determined by the legislation. They condition not only the rise of the compensation liability but also influence the scope of the compensation obligation. Dignity is considered to be the most important because it is the source and foundation of all individual rights and freedoms, including personal interests.

According to art. 23 of the Civil Code the personal interests of man, particularly health freedom, honour, freedom of conscience, surname or nickname, image, the secrecy of correspondence, inviolability of the home, scientific work or artistic work, inventive work and rationalization works remain protected by the civil law regardless of the protection provided by other regulations. It is characteristic for this regulation that it does not contain the fundamental good that is the human life which actually is the source and the basis for any other goods and for human dignity. Although the Author used the expression “in particular”, which indicates that we are dealing with exemplary enumeration, but the absolutely basic meaning of life as the condition for the rise of other personal interest would indicate that it deserves to be placed in art. 23 of the Civil Code. Article 24 of the Civil Code indicates the liability not only for the personal interest violation but even for the threat of violating them. The one whose personal interest is threatened by other’s activity can demand abandoning this activity unless it is legal. In case of the violation the claimant can demand that the person who breached him must make up for that and remove the effects, particularly that he should declare his guilt properly and in a proper form. According to the regulations contained in the code the claimant can also demand the financial compensation for himself or the payment of a proper amount of money for the indicated charity<sup>27</sup>. In the case of a bodily injury or a disturbance of health, legal protection is stronger, it contains an element of repression, as the art. 448 § 2 of the Civil Code makes it possible to claim both of these performances (accumulation of performances). If the violation of the personal interest resulted in the property damage, the claimant can demand the

<sup>26</sup> The interesting scientific characteristic of prohibited deeds was collected by A. Śmieja, in: *System Prawa Prywatnego. Tom 6. Prawo zobowiązań – część ogólna*, ed. A. Olejniczak, Warszawa 2018, p. 386.

<sup>27</sup> Dz.U. 2023, item 1615.

repair according to the general rules. The legislator also added that these regulations do not violate the privileges mentioned in other regulations, particularly concerning the artistic work and in the inventive work. In practice it would concern the use of penal legislation. Human dignity and other personal interests are therefore protected by the regulations of the private law in a property and non-property way.

## The personal scope – directions for the interpretation of art. 23 and 24 of the Civil Code

According to art. 8 § 1 of the Civil Code every man since the moment of birth is bestowed with the legal capacity. When a child has been born it shall be presumed to have been born alive (art. 9 of the Civil Code). However, there is art. 446<sup>1</sup> of the Civil Code which contains unequivocal statement that while the child is born he or she can claim for repairing the damage which he or she had suffered before the birth. It is mainly about the prenatal damages e.g. injuries to the child's body and various disabilities that is injury. We can divide them into those which were caused as a result of the impact on the mother's body and those which were caused directly on the unborn child. The provision of art. 446<sup>1</sup> of the Civil Code constitutes the basis of the child's claim to the person who is responsible for the harmful occurrence, for repairing all the damages which were caused by the occurrence directly towards the child or his mother. This causes the problem with interpreting the regulations or the necessity to change them because in the literature of the civil law there is the statement that art. 446<sup>1</sup> of the Civil Code and art. 8-9 of the Civil Code do not determine the legal subjectivity of the *nasctiturus*. However, we cannot deny that the legislator allows for the claims for damages which happened before the child's birth (art. 446<sup>1</sup> of the Civil Code). Indicating, on the one hand, the lack of the clear legal basis to give the *nasctiturus* legal subjectivity, and, on the other hand, the acceptability of the claim for repairing the damage caused before the child's birth to claim the damages caused before his birth, it was considered that the child is entitled to the conditional legal capacity under the condition that he or she is born alive<sup>28</sup>. It is worth to remember that the provision of art. 446<sup>1</sup> of the Civil Code with the amendment – the provision from January 7<sup>th</sup>, 1993 on family planning, on the foetus protection and on the conditions which permit for the pregnancy termination and then its wording were established in the

<sup>28</sup> M. Wałachowska, in: *Kodeks cywilny. Komentarz. Tom III. Zobowiązania. Część ogólna (art. 353-534)*, eds. M. Habdas, M. Frasz, Warszawa 2018, p. 706.

amendment to this provision on December 4<sup>th</sup>, 1996<sup>29</sup>. In the previous legal status that is 20 years earlier, the compensation for the damage caused to the unborn child was admissible on the basis of art. 415 of the Civil Code with regard to art. 444-446 of the Civil Code (mainly due to the interpretation of the regulations by the court). It is therefore possible to claim the refund for the treatment, pension, financial compensation or the claims regarding the death of a close person – if on the day of the death of a person who was directly the victim, the child was conceived. The Supreme Court adopted the position that a conceived child is bestowed with the legal capacity, however, he or she acquires the property rights and obligations under the condition that he or she is born alive<sup>30</sup>. Moreover, it is worth noticing that the justification of the Constitutional Court's verdict stated that: "Human life in every phase of its development constitutes a constitutional value which is to be protected, which, however, does not mean that the intensity of this protection in every phase of life and in any circumstances should be the same"<sup>31</sup>. It is worth adding that many years ago, in 1966, the Supreme Court expressed the opinion that the correct interpretation of the law, consistent with the spirit of humanism, implies that a conceived child should be treated equally with a child already born, if their spheres of rights overlap. Therefore, it can be stated that the currently applicable art. 446<sup>1</sup> of the Civil Code mainly constitutes the line of the judicial practice<sup>32</sup>.

The science of the private law in Poland states its notion which goes even further in the sphere of the legal capacity of the *nasctiturus*. According to J. Haberko the fact of acknowledging the full (or even conditioned) scope of capacity for the legal action as well as the fact of gaining the awareness of violation of one's personal interest are of no importance for providing protection for the personal interests. It

<sup>29</sup> The Journal of Laws 1993, item 78, and the Journal of Laws 1996, item 646.

<sup>30</sup> The verdict of the Supreme Court from September 26<sup>th</sup>, 1996, file reference number: III ARN 40/96 <http://www.sn.pl/sites/orzecznictwo/Orzeczenia1/III%20ARN%2040-96.pdf> (accessed: 28.08.2023).

<sup>31</sup> The verdict of the Constitutional Court from May 28<sup>th</sup>, 1997, K 26/96 "Orzecznictwo Trybunału Konstytucyjnego" 1997, no. 2, item 19, LEX no. 29143.

<sup>32</sup> See e.g. the resolution of the complete team of Izba Pracy i Ubezpieczeń Społecznych SN from November 30<sup>th</sup>, 1987, III PZP 36/87, "Orzecznictwo Sądu Najwyższego. Izba Cywilna" 1988, no. 2-3, item 23; the Verdict from October 7<sup>th</sup>, 1997, III CRN 255/7, "Orzecznictwo Sądu Najwyższego. Izba Cywilna" 1972, fasc. 3, item 59, Z. Strus, in: *Komentarz do kodeksu cywilnego – Księga trzecia Zobowiązania*, Vol 2, ed. G. Bieniek, Warszawa 2005, p. 185 and next; II RP 139/66, OSNC 1966, no. 9, item 158.



is worth noticing that *nasciturus* should be granted a certain scope of the general absolute legal capacity regardless of the conditional granting a range of legal capacity in the regulations of the Civil Code<sup>33</sup>. Therefore a question about the personal interests in the phase of the prenatal life of man arises as these require protection by the law due to the possibility of violation.

J. Haberko tries to find the bases of the accuracy of the presented thesis recognising the absolute nature of the capacity regarding the protection of physical and mental integrity of a conceived child in the provisions of art. 23 and 24 of the Civil Code. The legislator assumes there that personal interests of man, which are given as random examples in the content of the regulation, are protected by the civil law. On the basis of the currently applicable legal regulation it is not possible to unequivocally state whether the legislator, while using the term “man” in the content of the provision of art. 23 of the Civil Code and in art. 24 of the Civil Code – as, “the one whose personal interest is threatened”, was going to separate the protection granted by the civil law from the obligation of the formal legal capacity, or through departing from using the term, natural person” (which unequivocally combines the scope of the protection of personal interests regardless of the protection provided in other cases in the civil law. At the same time placing the regulation in section I: “Natural persons” of the book I of the Civil Code seem to prejudge the legislator’s intentions that it concerns a live born person. However, not using the term “natural person” in the content of the mentioned provisions may lead the interpretation process towards justification of specific exception, which was intended by the legislator and through using the term “man” and “the one whose personal interest is threatened” he decide to protect personal interest of all people thus including the conceived child<sup>34</sup>.

In the contemporary scientific output we must recall the statement of M. Sobas, who considers at what point the principle of human dignity protection begins to function, as she rightly observed that dignity is the privilege of man from his prenatal life<sup>35</sup>. Otherwise in the prevailing context in the doctrine of consent, as for the fact that dignity constitutes the source of all other rights and freedoms – we can come to the

<sup>33</sup> J. Haberko, *Udostępnianie i publikowanie wizerunku nastiturusa, noworodka i małego dziecka w świetle zasady dobra dziecka*, “Ruch Prawniczy, Ekonomiczny i Socjologiczny” 2013, Vol 75(3), pp. 61, 71.

<sup>34</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>35</sup> M. Sobas, *Odpowiedzialność cywilnoprawna za szkody doznane przed urodzeniem*, doctoral thesis, Katowice 2021, p. 61 and next and the quoted literary sources.



conclusion that health is not subject to protection. In case of accepting the other thesis the *nasciturus* would not be subject to treatment e.g. in case of detecting abnormalities in his development. Consistently the child would not be entitled to claim damage resulting from art. 446<sup>1</sup> of the Civil Code if he was injured before being born, which would be justified with the lack of protection of such values as his life and health. In case of adopting the opinion according to which the development of the *nasciturus* is connected with assuming that the growing foetus is a human being, it is proper to regard this foetus to possess certain rights and freedoms, which are rooted in dignity; the fact is confirmed not only in literature but also in the international jurisprudence<sup>36</sup>.

### The principles of repairing damage caused by dignity violation

The provisions of the Civil Code do not contain any regulations with regard to the principles and ways of repairing the damage caused as a result of personal interests violation which involves dignity. In these circumstances we should assume that the provision based on the assumption that in case when there are no proper regulations, any damage should be repaired according to the particular principles contained in art. 361-363 of the Civil Code. As a result of dignity violation, the damage on a person could be classified as material (e.g. the costs of treatment, of rehabilitation) or non-material (injury). The direct legal basis for the claim for damage repair in case of the violation of personal interests is contained in the regulations in art. 24 i 445, 448 of the Civil Code while the art. 444 of the Civil Code indicates the way and range of repairing the damage (Relation of art. 445 of the Civil Code and the art. 448 of the Civil Code is a separate legal issue)<sup>37</sup>.

The claimant whose personal interests were violated or whose material property was damaged can claim the damage repair. In case when there are no particular regulations (or the agreements of the parties concerning the legal status), in case of material damage, the repair includes the loss and the lost benefits (art. 361 § 2 of the Civil Code – *damnum emergens* and *lucrum cessans*). A particular attention should

<sup>36</sup> W. Jedlecka, *Godność człowieka jako podstawa aksjologiczna porządku prawa Unii Europejskiej*, in: *Współczesne koncepcje ochrony wolności i praw podstawowych*, eds. M. Maciejewski, K. Wójtowicz, A. Bator, M. Jabłoński, Wrocław 2013, p. 168 and next.

<sup>37</sup> M. Safjan, *Nowy kształt instytucji zadośćuczynienia pieniężnego*, in: *Księga pamiątkowa ku czci Profesora Leopolda Steckiego*, ed. M. Bączyk, Toruń 1997, p. 227.

be paid to the issue of non-material damage (injustice, moral injustice) and the range of making up for them<sup>38</sup>. Many years ago Z. Radawański called the moral injustice “(...) a certain injury which concerns the subjective sphere of human personality which do not concern the experience of the claimant”<sup>39</sup>. With regard to the injustice, the non-material damage is the result of the violation and not the violation itself<sup>40</sup>. It should also be noticed that the concept of non-material injustice is dynamic, which has become the object of research and which resulted in creating a rich literary output<sup>41</sup>, what is more, the jurisprudence output concerning this issue is also broad<sup>42</sup>. In judicial practice it is usually indicated that the injustice is meant as “the mental pain and suffering”. This definition differentiates two types of injustice. The pain is the result of the damage to the nervous system or of stimulation of pain receptors which are placed in various parts of the body. Despite the fact that pain, which has not been comprehensively or objectively examined yet, can be detected on the basis of bodily reactions, life experience and medical knowledge. A greater problem appears in case of the second type of injustice, that is mental suffering. In the full and well-known dimension this injustice can only be experienced by the people of formed and healthy psyche. People who are mentally handicapped to a greater extent are not able to emotionally process

<sup>38</sup> According to J. Matys to the introduction of art. 446 § 4 of the Civil Code and the lack of unequivocal connection between compensation with the violation of personal interests, separating the concept of damage from non-material damage is not justified. See J. Matys, *Model zadośćuczynienia...*, p. 199.

<sup>39</sup> Z. Radwański, *Zadośćuczynienie pieniężne za szkodę niemajątkową. Rozwój i funkcja społeczna*, Poznań 1956, p. 168; T. Mróz, *Odpowiedzialność cywilnoprawna (organu, funkcjonariusza i osób piastujących funkcje)*, in: *System Prawa samorządu terytorialnego. Samodzielność samorządu – granice i perspektywy*, vol. III, ed. I. Lipowicz, Warszawa 2023, p. 418.

<sup>40</sup> J. Matys, *Model zadośćuczynienia...*, p. 197.

<sup>41</sup> See e.g. A. Szpunar, *Zadośćuczynienie za szkodę niemajątkową*, Bydgoszcz 1999; ibidem: *Ochrona dóbr osobistych*, Warszawa 1975; M. Safjan, *Refleksje wokół konstytucyjnych uwarunkowań rozwoju ochrony dóbr osobistych*, “Kwartalnik Prawa Prywatnego” 2002, No. 1; ibidem: *Ochrona majątkowa dóbr osobistych po zmianie przepisów Kodeksu cywilnego*, “Przegląd Prawa Handlowego” 1997, No. 1, pp. 10-14; M. Nesterowicz, *Zadośćuczynienie za krzywdę w procesach lekarskich*, “Państwo i Prawo” 2005, No. 3, p. 16; A. Mączyński, *Zadośćuczynienie pieniężne za krzywdę spowodowaną naruszeniem dobra osobistego. Geneza, charakterystyka i ocena obowiązującej regulacji*, in: *Księga pamiątkowa ku czci Profesora A. Szpunara*, ed. M. Pyziak-Szafnicka, Kraków 2004, p. 235.

<sup>42</sup> See the case law collected by J. Matys, *Model zadośćuczynienia...*, pp. 391-402; M. Wild, *Przestanki zadośćuczynienia pieniężnego za krzywdę w praktyce sądowej*, Warszawa 2010, p. 19 and next.

the burden of the evil that they suffered from, which is not connected with any physical ailment. It is the mental side of the injustice that is considered to be its essence, and the damage is usually reduced to only this aspect. It is worth to notice that the compensation for the injustice is granted to the people who are not able to feel it and this fact does not invoke any dilemmas among the theorists of the law neither any serious discrepancies in the jurisprudence<sup>43</sup>.

It should be noticed here that despite the statutory principles of the full compensation, the full reparation of the injustice is not usually possible due to its essence, although the legislator constituted the material compensation to be the property compensation for the injustice. Suffering cannot be expressed in any amount of money although indirectly it can influence the victim's economic condition. The occurrence of the damage in the form of an injustice is the basic condition for the responsibility and with regard to that, it is necessary to recognize it, although it is often difficult. The doctrine and the jurisprudence are helpful here because numerous resolutions indicate the circumstances which influence the range of negative perception of the victim. Taking into account the regulations of the Civil Code art. 444-445 we must notice that the victim can claim the financial compensation only under the conditions such as the personal injury or a health disorder. The personal injury or the health disorder can mean that it was the violation of the personal interests e.g. health (art. 23 of the Civil Code). In case of the violation of personal interests it should be indicated what particular interest was violated<sup>44</sup>. In case of causing a health disorder it is possible to connect the instruments of financial and non-financial protection of personal interests. The non-financial means can consist in e.g. submitting a declaration of a proper content and form, while the financial one give the opportunity to claim the financial compensation or the payment of a proper amount of money to a given charity according to the regulations contained in the Civil Code. If as a result

<sup>43</sup> D. Piasecka, *Problem zadośćuczynienia za krzywdę osobom niezdolnym do jej odczuwania*, "Przegląd Prawniczy Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego" 2016, No. 1, p. 62 and next.

<sup>44</sup> A. Mączyński, *Zadośćuczynienie pieniężne za krzywdę spowodowaną naruszeniem dobra osobistego. Geneza, charakterystyka i ocena obowiązującej regulacji*, in: *Księga pamiątkowa ku czci Profesora Adama Szpunara*, ed. M. Pyziak-Szafnicka, Kraków 2004, p. 324; L. Bosek, *Gwarancje godności ludzkiej...*, p. 331 and the literary sources and case law collected. B. Janiszewska, *Zadośćuczynienie za krzywdę w sprawach medycznych*, "Prawo i Medycyna" 2005, No. 2, p. 98; M. Nesterowicz, *Zadośćuczynienie pieniężne za doznaną krzywdę w procesach lekarskich*, "Państwo i Prawo" 2005, No. 3, pp. 16-17; A. Górski, J. Górski, *Zadośćuczynienie za naruszenie praw pacjenta*, "Palestra" 2005, No. 5-6, pp. 91-93.

of the violation of a personal interest a financial damage was caused, the claimant can claim the compensation on general terms (art. 24 § 3 of the Civil Code). Therefore, the regulations provide relatively broad opportunities to protect personal interests, even broader than in case of only a financial damage.

In practice the most emotional aspect is the amount of the compensation. Currently it is assumed that the amount of the compensation must not be symbolic but is supposed to be a significant economic contribution. The highest amounts of the compensation are awarded in case of violating personal interests enumerated in art. 444-445 of the Civil Code<sup>45</sup>, that is bodily injuries (or even death art. 446 of the Civil Code).

It should be emphasised that in case of a damage done to an unborn person the art. 362 of the Civil Code cannot be applied. According to this regulation if the claimant contributed to the occurrence of the injury or to increasing it, the obligation of compensation is reduced according to the circumstances, especially to the degree of the fault of both parties. It concerns the claimant's performance, and the claimant is the unborn child (the mother's conduct does not matter here). Implementing this legal construction would lead to the decrease of the obligation to compensate for the damage, both in the form of the natural restitution or the compensation, as well as the payment of a proper amount of money as a compensation. The provisions of the Civil Code provide the court with certain freedom for establishing the compensation or indemnity through the use of the accuracy rule (e.g. art. 440 of the Civil Code). Establishing what we mean by the term "contribution of the claimant to the occurrence or to increasing the damage" is a separate issue, described in detail in the jurisprudence and scientific publications<sup>46</sup>.

## Concluding remarks

In general there is an agreement concerning the fact that human dignity is the source of all human freedoms and rights. However the science of the law still encounters certain discrepancies concerning the legal subjectivity of an unborn child in the sphere of his personal interests. As a result of the debate over the meaning and the legal

<sup>45</sup> J. Matys, *Model zadośćuczynienia...*, p. 296.

<sup>46</sup> T. Dybowski, *W sprawie przyczynienia się poszkodowanego do powstania szkody*, "Nowe Prawo" 1977, No. 6, p. 829; M. Kaliński, *Szkoda na mieniu i jej naprawienie...*, p. 551 and next and the case law and literary sources collected.

nature of art. 30 of the Constitution of the Republic of Poland and of the provisions of the Civil Code (especially art. 23, 24, 446<sup>1</sup> of the Civil Code) and of the jurisprudence of the Supreme Court, it appears that an unborn child is entitled to the so called conditional legal subjectivity. The provision of art. 30 of the Constitution guarantees the legal subjectivity only to the natural persons, which – as it seems – pre-determines the possibility to grant the *nasciturus* a conditional legal capacity on the basis of the Civil Code, and to the born child – the possibility to claim compensation on the basis of art. 446<sup>1</sup> of the Civil Code, regardless of his health condition, mental condition or life conditions. The provisions of the Civil Code which regulate the issues of personal interests do not use the concept of human dignity. We must bear in mind the fact that the majority of publications on personal interest was created in the socialist period which results in the need to further research into this matter.

There are various opinions which rightly emphasise that every man is bestowed with dignity even in the prenatal phase. The *nasciturus* should be granted a certain scope of general absolute legal capacity regardless of the conditional granting the scope of capabilities in the provisions.

It should be noticed that the interpretations of the provision which are carried out indicated the phenomenon of the cautious departure from the typical positivistic and formalistic understanding of the law and of values on which the law is based. Definitely the teaching of Pope John Paul II exerted a great impact on the changes of the political system and these changes were the starting point for the reforms of the law which had been based on the Soviet doctrine. Currently the adjudication of the court takes into account the ownership clauses<sup>47</sup>, or seeking the roots of the correctness as the leading principle of the private law<sup>48</sup>.

Despite the fact that injustice is a damage hard to make up for or even impossible for repair, the Polish private law suggests various material and non-material ways of making amends. Mainly in case of violation of personal interest, the court can grant compensation to the party whose personal interest was violated, a proper amount of money as the material compensation for the injustice or upon the claimant's request, the court can grant a proper sum of money to be given to the

<sup>47</sup> A. Górski, *Śluszość w orzekaniu sędziego cywilisty*, "Białostockie Studia Prawnicze" 2014, No. 17, p. 115.

<sup>48</sup> S. Prutis, *"Korzenie" śluszości jako zasady wiodącej prawa prywatnego*, "Białostockie Studia Prawnicze" 2014, No. 17, p. 207.

indicate charity regardless of any other means necessary to repair the results of the violation.

On the basis of the doctrine of the Church, human being acquires an inalienable dignity as a person from the moment of conception. The Church continues to proclaim this doctrine and opposes any action aimed at depriving an unborn person of the right to life. The source of human person's dignity from conception to natural death is his participation in the life of God to which he is called in the act of creation. This image of the human person, created in the image of God and redeemed by Christ, is the source of his dignity. John Paul II spoke about it in his speech to jurists and judges of the European Court<sup>49</sup>. The awareness of the dignity of every human being is confirmed in the pages of Sacred Scripture, which shows its great value<sup>50</sup>.

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<sup>49</sup> Cf. John Paul II, Speech to Jurists and Judges of the European Court (November 10, 1980), [https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/it/speeches/1980/november/documents/hf\\_jp\\_ii\\_spe\\_19801110\\_corte-europea.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/it/speeches/1980/november/documents/hf_jp_ii_spe_19801110_corte-europea.html) (accessed: 9.12.2023).

<sup>50</sup> Pope Benedict XVI emphasised this in his message for the 2011 World Day of Peace: "Sacred Scripture, in harmony with our own experience, reveals the profound value of human dignity: "When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars which you have established, what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man, that you care for him? Yet you have made him little less than God, and crowned him with glory and honour. You have given him dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet" (Ps 8:3-6). Contemplating the sublime reality of human nature, we can experience the same amazement felt by the Psalmist. Our nature appears as openness to the Mystery, a capacity to ask deep questions about ourselves and the origin of the universe, and a profound echo of the supreme Love of God, the beginning and end of all things, of every person and people. The transcendent dignity of the person is an essential value of Judeo-Christian wisdom, yet thanks to the use of reason, it can be recognized by all. This dignity, understood as a capacity to transcend one's own materiality and to seek truth, must be acknowledged as a universal *good*, indispensable for the building of a society directed to human fulfilment. Respect for essential elements of human dignity, such as the right to life and the right to religious freedom, is a condition for the moral legitimacy of every social and legal norm", Benedict XVI, Message of His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI for the Celebration of the World Day of Peace 1 January 2011, [https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/messages/peace/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_mes\\_20101208\\_xliv-world-day-peace.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/messages/peace/documents/hf_ben-xvi_mes_20101208_xliv-world-day-peace.html) (accessed: 9.12.2023).



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## Contemporary Conditions of Pastoral Conversation in Poland

The article presents the most important contemporary conditions of pastoral conversation which is a form of individual pastoral care in Poland. Because of the fast ongoing social, cultural and religious changes in the Polish society, more and more faithful ask priests for pastoral conversation because they cannot find satisfying answers to their existential and religious questions in universal pastoral care. The first part of the article is meant to define pastoral conversation as a form of pastoral ministry in the Catholic Church in Poland. The next part describes new religious conditions of pastoral conversation as well as the current existential conditions of this form of pastoral care. The final part indicates the weak points of the preparation for pastoral ministry and of pastoral ministry itself which significantly impede the effectiveness of pastoral conversation and limit its support to those who need it.

**Key words:** pastoral conversation, individual pastoral care, the Catholic Church, the Church in Poland, conditions of pastoral care.

The ongoing social and political changes which have been taking place in Poland since 1989 cause changes of religiousness of the Polish society and result in the necessity to introduce changes in the pastoral ministry of the Catholic Church. The imposed laicisation introduced by the communist authorities was combined with the secularisation currents from the Western Europe and from America. It resulted in the ongoing popularisation of liberal attitudes in various spheres of life, especially in the sphere of marriage and family life and in the public sphere. The emphasis is put on eliminating the Christian outlook and the hierarchy of values. As a result of laicisation, Christians and Catholics face various dilemmas in their religious and everyday life. The

faithful face new unknown phenomena which they must get to know and appraise. However, the full acknowledgement and appraisal of them is often difficult because they are shown and appraised only from the secular point of view. The faithful seek help and the answers to many existential questions in the Church. They still want to live their lives based on God's Revelation and on the Christian perception of the world.

Pastoral activity of the Catholic Church in Poland is mainly realized on the basis of ordinary pastoral care which is mainly addressed to all the faithful and which is realized in parishes. Homily preaching is addressed to all parishioners, therefore, it is universal in nature. Children and young people are educated through catechesis, however, the catechesis for adults is poorly developed. Various dilemmas and doubts of Catholics not always find solutions, and the questions which they ask cannot always be answered in the light of universal pastoral care. The individualization of life of contemporary Polish people results in the fact that life conditions of particular people vary and become more specific for each person. Such life conditions do not allow universal pastoral care to satisfy their needs and this leads to introducing individual pastoral care on a greater scale.

## Pastoral conversation as a form of pastoral care

Pastoral theology enumerates pastoral conversation as a form of the extraordinary individual pastoral care<sup>1</sup>. It is

Pastoral  
Theology

an interpersonal meeting during which the priest and the other interlocutor exchange thoughts, opinions, values and convictions; which in the closer and further perspective is directed at spiritual and religious values. Pastoral conversation consists of two levels: the supernatural, which is of greater importance, and the psychological one, which is conditioned by the features of the priest and of his interlocutor and by the method of conducting the conversation. Therefore, pastoral conversation combines human experience and religious experience<sup>2</sup>.

The presence of existential experience in pastoral conversation makes it resemble a psychotherapy. It results from the fact that it is conducted at three levels: at the supernatural level, as an interpersonal meeting of the seeking man with the priest and at the emotional level.

<sup>1</sup> R. Kamiński, *Duszpasterstwo nadzwyczajne*, in: *Teologia pastoralna*, Vol. 2, ed. R. Kamiński, Lublin 2002, pp. 309-313.

<sup>2</sup> A. Tomkiewicz, *Rozmowa duszpasterska*, in: *Leksykon teologii pastoralnej*, eds. R. Kamiński, W. Przygoda, M. Fiałkowski, Lublin 2006, pp. 749-752.

The supernatural level, that is the religious level, is basic for pastoral conversation because it is the level of the meeting with God in faith. While the level of the interpersonal meeting of the seeking man with the priest is a conscious dialogue which is conditioned by the personality features of both interlocutors. The emotional level exists beyond the consciousness of the interlocutors.

Pastoral conversation, the model of which is most often implemented in Poland, resembles a psychotherapy in the humanist current mainly represented by C. Rogers. Although pastoral conversation is not the same as a therapy, they share some common elements. Both of these kinds of aid to the man underline the importance of the man and both aim at creating proper conditions for accepting and realization of higher values. Pastoral conversation resembles the Rogerian type of therapy also due to the fact that it takes place in the atmosphere of total trust. Both pastoral conversation and the Rogerian therapy aim at understanding the spiritual and psychological condition of the seeking man.

Despite the similarities there are also differences between pastoral conversation and psychotherapy. In his acting the therapist is limited to the level of the natural while the priest also refers to the supernatural power. The means used by the priest are both from the natural and the supernatural sources: these include the Word of God and the sacraments. What is more, the priest refers to religious motivation and he does not aim at conducting psychological analysis of the personality of the seeking person but he stresses his relationship with God and with the Church<sup>3</sup>.

Catholics in Poland ask a priest for help rather than going to a therapist. It mainly results from the authority that priests in Poland possess. The faithful wish to solve their problem in the religious context: in accordance with the principles of Christian faith and ethics and with the help of supernatural means. The faithful want to live their lives in accordance with their religion. These two realities are inseparable for many Christians. A psychologist acts on the basis of the natural means and methods, strictly psychological ones, which, according to those who ask for the help of priests, are not sufficient to provide effective holistic aid<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> H. Krzysteczko, *Poradnictwo duszpasterskie. Teoria i praktyka rogeriańskiego kontaktu pomocnego*, Katowice 1998.

<sup>4</sup> H. Weiß, *Duszpasterstwo, superwizja, psychologia pastoralna. Wprowadzenie*, Dziegielów 2012.

In the majority of cases it is the person in need who initializes pastoral conversation. He starts the conversation with a priest because of the reasons which result from his life conditions<sup>5</sup>. He wants to solve his problems with the religious means, entrusting himself to a priest who is the representative of religion. Religious context represented by the priest is conducive for creating conditions that will enable the man to open himself and to realize his personal and religious maturity. Pastoral conversation begins with presenting the problem of the man who seeks aid. The priest directs it, by means of psychological, subjective, religious and emotional factors, towards the meeting with healing God and directs it towards deepening the bond with Him<sup>6</sup>.

Furthermore, the effectiveness of pastoral conversation is conditioned by the features of the priest. He is required to be sympathetic, congruent and to show unconditioned acceptance of the interlocutor. According to C. Rogers and his students, the attitude of sympathy is one of the most important elements of interpersonal relationships. It means the ability to think and feel the same way as the interlocutor, but not instead of him<sup>7</sup>. It is about compassion for the other man but not about identifying with him. Sympathy for the interlocutor means feeling the way he does. Thanks to that, the priest can subjectively sympathize with the man's emotions in order to understand his situation better. Sympathy enables the priest to diagnose the patient from the pastoral point of view and helps the patient to be open to the aid provided by the priest<sup>8</sup>.

Congruence of the priest is also very important. It means the genuine attitude of the balance of the inner and outer experience. People who present congruence of their views and conduct are perceived as reliable. Authenticity in the attitude of the priest enables the contact with the man in need and leads to openness and cooperation. Therefore, the priest must not pretend to be someone else, he must not sham interest in the person in need and in his problems. He must not show that his interest in the man's problems only results from his job. To be authentic, the priest must get to know himself well, his strong and weak points. Pretending to be someone else or faking to possess different features than the real ones in front of the man in need is quickly

<sup>5</sup> A. Kargulowa, *O teorii i praktyce poradnictwa. Podręcznik akademicki*, Warszawa 2004.

<sup>6</sup> A. Tomkiewicz, *Rozmowa duszpasterska...*

<sup>7</sup> C. Rogers, G.N. Kinget, *Psychotherapie et relations humaines*, Louvain 1976.

<sup>8</sup> A. Tomkiewicz, *Rozmowa duszpasterska...*

recognized as fake. Such an attitude makes it difficult and sometimes impossible to conduct pastoral conversation<sup>9</sup>.

The effectiveness of pastoral conversation is also conditioned by the acceptance of the priest for the interlocutor. It must be unconditional which means that the priest must accept his interlocutor regardless of what he says, of his deeds and attitudes. The attitude of acceptance does not equal the acceptance of all his deeds. There is a difference between the man and his deeds. And while the man must be unconditionally accepted, his deeds which are morally wrong must not. Such an acceptance of the man is a kind of love addressed to him and it is reflected in respect. The acceptance of the man in need and its manifestations are motivating factors for the man to introduce new changes and challenges in life. It also concerns moral changes which enable to man to start the process of conversion<sup>10</sup>.

The motives of pastoral conversation are usually determined by those who ask the priest for help. They also choose the subjects of the conversation. Pastoral theology pays particular attention to particular conditions which motivate and determine the subject of the conversation. Pastoral care priests of the German language area practice pastoral conversation during pastoral visits to families, during the service for the sick, in their work with young adults and during the sacrament of penance and reconciliation<sup>11</sup>. In pastoral theology in Poland pastoral conversations are usually conducted at the turn of life. They are also conducted as the preparation of the fiancés for the sacrament of marriage, as the preparation of parents before the baptism of their child as well as with the sick and with the relatives of the people who have recently died<sup>12</sup>. However, there are more and more other cases when the faithful ask for pastoral conversation. Their problems usually concern the broader context of their religious life and of their everyday existence. The analysis of the Polish social and cultural reality leads to determine the most common reasons of the faithful to ask for pastoral conversation. They result both: from the challenges which they face and from the insufficiency of ordinary pastoral care.

<sup>9</sup> R. Kamiński, A. Tomkiewicz, *Rozmowa duszpasterska i jej uwarunkowania psychologiczne*, "Roczniki Teologiczno-Kanoniczne" 1986, Vol. 33(6), pp. 117-134.

<sup>10</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>11</sup> *Das Seelsorgegespräch in der Gemeinde*, ed. K. Baumgartner, Würzburg 1982.

<sup>12</sup> A. Tomkiewicz, *Rozmowa duszpasterska...*



## New religious conditions of pastoral conversation

The ongoing laicisation processes in Poland result in the occurrence of a new attitude towards reality causing far reaching changes in the attitudes of contemporary Catholics. The changes concern their attitude towards God, towards man and towards the world. The change of attitude towards God can be considered a typical phenomenon of laicisation in Europe, however, it looks a bit different in Poland. It is typical to see that people live as if God did not exist. They do not ask questions concerning God's presence in the world or about human existence. They are focused only on the material side of their existence, they tend to achieve personal satisfaction, which is mainly identified with pleasure and with personal success, to a great extent. The specific nature of secularization in Poland is reflected in the layers of the post-communist official phenomenon of atheisation with new currents coming from Western Europe and America<sup>13</sup>. Another specific feature of the Polish secularization is its aggressiveness and strength. This aggression concerns various people, institutions, customs and Christian attitudes especially the ones connected with Catholic Church dominating in its major position in Poland and still strongly influencing the lives of individuals and of the whole society. Young people in Poland are overwhelmed with new arguments stating that God does not exist. His presence as well as His relationships with people are constantly questioned. It is mainly the group of young people who question the existence of God and of the supernatural reality, as the older Polish people experienced confrontation with the material atheism during the time of Marxism. Young people, who are creating their worldview, are facing a number of questions concerning religion but their questions are not answered in a satisfactory way in their family homes or within ordinary pastoral care in the Church. Therefore, they seek help from their priests in order to be able to solve their problems. It should be noticed that young people inform about their problems mostly in an aggressive way, which, however, reflects their uncertainty rather than their negative attitude towards clergy. However, any way of beginning the conversation enables its continuation. At times, the conversation changes into a catechesis or even into preaching of the kerygma.

The aggressive attitudes towards the faithful in Poland are often reflected in ridicule and in public stigmatisation and they are often supported by the public media which reinforce the social consent for such behaviours. Christians feel marginalized and they seek places

<sup>13</sup> K. Świąś, *The Moral Dimension of the Religiosity of Poles in an Era of Systemic Change*, "Rocznik Teologii Katolickiej" 2018, Vol. 17, No. 1, pp. 147-165.

where their faith is accepted and where they can be strengthened in faith<sup>14</sup>. Therefore, they seek pastoral conversation during which they feel accepted, understood and comforted. The media often criticise the negative attitudes of Christians, especially of the clergy, they often publicize scandals caused by Christians in order to spreading the liberal vision of the world. Such situation are difficult for the faithful, not only because of the negative encounter with non-believers. They also need to get to know the truth and to understand what is happening. Therefore, they need pastoral conversations in which they would be honestly informed about what happened and they would get to know the priests' attitudes to the facts, especially their opinions about them<sup>15</sup>.

The most common secularisation processes, which are combined with the Christian tradition and culture, cause confusion in public and in the minds of many Christians. Shown in an attractive way, they present the modern world as if it was a fairy tale. Encouraged for unconditional freedom, Polish people fall into ideological confusion and due to that they take many reckless decisions being convinced that the results of their choices will always be favourable. Such recklessness and the inability to predict the consequences of one's choices contribute to many crises in the personal, internal and community life. After experiencing various life failures, the faithful adopt the attitude of conversion. They decide to come back to God – to, as if, the beginning, and having renewed their relationship with Him, they try to organize their lives. At the stages of the process of coming back to the unity with God and with the Church they need the company of a priest, therefore, pastoral dialogue is also necessary in the pastoral work with them. In the Catholic Church it is often conducted during the sacrament of penance and reconciliation.

Focusing on the material side of life and aiming at satisfaction based on experiencing pleasure moves some Polish Catholics away from God and from the spiritual aspect of human existence. Treating religion superficially – as a minor thing in life, results in shallowing the internal life and bringing the bond with God to merely fulfilling formal obligations, sometimes treated as unpleasant duties. In such cases priests appear as the originators of pastoral dialogue. As priests see the faithful who fulfil their religious duties simply as a manifestation of tradition, in such situations as: the preparation of the child for baptism, the child's First Communion etc. Such dialogues are usually

<sup>14</sup> B. Grulkowski, *Zagadnienie światopoglądu w poradnictwie psychologicznym*, in: *Poradnictwo psychologiczno-religijne*, ed. J. Kakselon, Kraków 2001, pp. 27-38.

<sup>15</sup> C. Opalach, *Psychologia pastoralna*, Olsztyn 2010.

difficult as the lay people sometimes do not understand what events they take part in, and their impressions of the events often differ from the nature and the true meaning of the events which concern them. Such pastoral dialogues often turn into a catechesis or into preaching the kerygma. It is because priests often aim at not only explaining the rites to them but, first and foremost, they are to deepen their relationship with God.

Laicisation of the Polish society leads to the change in the concept of the man and his place in society and in the world. Christian vision of the man depicts his dignity and prior meaning in society and in the world among the whole creation. Secularised vision of the man and of the world underlines the fortuitousness, relativity of the truth, of the good, and of the beauty, which is reflected in the attitude towards the human being. It results in the superior treatment of the man, and often in taking advantage of people for one's own advantage. In Poland physical workers and wage workers used to be treated badly for centuries. The high rate of unemployment resulted in unfavourable terms of employment contracts, in poor working conditions or ill treatment of workers. The difficult life situation made people seek better working conditions but also ask for the spiritual help from priests<sup>16</sup>. They wanted to get not only material support but also the spiritual one as the poor life conditions resulted in the problems in marriage and family relationships. Furthermore, the phenomenon of economic emigration of young people caused various problems both among emigrants and among those who stayed at home. Such problems are still a common motif and subject of pastoral conversations. For many believers, not only those who live in rural environment, who celebrate traditional religiosity, priests are fiduciaries and helpers in solving existential problems.

The capitalism in Poland is often called wild capitalism. Many of its mechanisms were not regulated by the law, some of them were deliberately omitted in order to promote getting rich by some social groups. As a result some groups of society soon became rich and the number of those who failed increased. Economic failure, falling into debts and other similar conditions led to the crisis of many people. Capitalism turned out to be the cause of their life failure which led to family break up or even to suicide. Many people in such conditions seeks help from priests. As it turned out, their friends left them in their crisis.

The people who took wrong business decisions and as a result became poor and got into debts which they had to pay for many years,

<sup>16</sup> R.P. Vaughan, *Poradnictwo pastoralne a zaburzenia osobowości*, Kraków 1999.

also found themselves in such a situation. Long-term stress, worrying about their everyday existence, in many cases facing the lack of sympathy from their close ones result in their need to seek help from priests. People in the difficult long-term situation are offered constant contact and pastoral conversations for them are systematic and frequent.

## New existential conditions of pastoral conversation

The changing social and cultural conditions of life in contemporary Poland influence religiousness and the need for pastoral conversation. This influence is noticeable in all social groups, however, it is mostly visible among young people and adults. Loneliness is the main problem of contemporary young people. Growing up with their busy working parents who work for their own success and prioritize their needs in their professional life and career, many young people face emotional emptiness. Their unsatisfied psychological needs, particularly social needs, lead to seeking the emotional closeness with other people and to building communities with them. At the same time, common easy access to the Internet and easy access to electronic devices, especially portable ones, make it very easy to use the Internet, which leads to the fact that many young people spend most of their time in the virtual world. Social media are very popular among young people in Poland, they use the media to share their personal information, their joy and personal, family, school and social life problems<sup>17</sup>.

The co-existence with other young people in the social media is called “contacts” and is very superficial in nature. The deeper bonds which result from the contact in the Internet are extremely rare. Seeking the acceptance from others, young people are able to strive for a large number of “likes” and gather many friends in the social media. For some people it is the self-value determinant which serves to satisfy the need of appreciation. However, transforming the majority of activities to the virtual world leads to negative effects. One of such negative effects is the reduced ability to establish and deepen relationship in the real world. As a result, young people isolate themselves from the real world and from their peers. Another problem is the inability to distinguish between the real world and the virtual world which are often mixed in the minds of young people. The lack of the

<sup>17</sup> A. Drzewiecka, *Okres wczesnej dorosłości jako przestrzeń działań współczesnego poradnictwa*, in: *Poradnictwo w kulturze indywidualizmu*, eds. E. Zierkiewicz, V. Drabak-Podgórna, Wrocław 2010, pp. 205-218.

reality of the real world often leads young people to become victims of the cyberbullies<sup>18</sup>.

The loneliness of young people in Poland leads them to establish interpersonal relationships also in the real world. It should be noticed that the information learnt from the Internet also helps to get to know new people and to deepen their interpersonal bonds also outside the social media<sup>19</sup>. Many young people look for others who think in the same way in the Catholic Church. That is how they are led to small communities and religious groups where they can find understanding and spiritual support. Their presence in religious associations allows them to have contact with priests because, as a rule, priests are the leaders and moderators of such communities. Pastoral conversations with those young people usually resemble ordinary conversations, however, they often lead to the conversation in the sacrament of penance and reconciliation. Some of those young people also ask for spiritual guidance.

Even those young people who are not members of religious groups ask for pastoral conversation. They are able to meet priests during various pastoral events in which they participate. In most cases it is their religious education class at school or the parish catechesis, e.g. during the course of preparation for the sacrament of confirmation. It is important for them to get to know the priest better, to appreciate his attitude and authority among young people.

What is more, the attitude of the priests and his engagement into the work with young people is important because of the current crisis of authority in Poland. In particular the crisis concerns the family and the parents' authority. Young people, who at the stage of adolescence need the presence of parents at various levels, often experience lack of this presence and, first and foremost, the weakness of the emotional family bonds. Parents who are unable to satisfy the emotional needs of their children, try to make it up for them with money and material goods, as well as with gadgets which lead young people to start living in the virtual reality. Some parents establish their emotional bonds with the children through the virtual media. Many researchers notice the particularly painful dysfunction of fathers in the family. It is one of the reasons why young people seek contact with priests, looking for

<sup>18</sup> A. Wieja, H. Wieja, *Jak skutecznie pomagać innym? Część 4. Specjalizacje – specyfika problemu*, Ustroń 2009.

<sup>19</sup> M. Chmielewski, *Ewangelizacyjna misja Kościoła a social media*, "Studia Leopoliensia" 2017, Vol. 10, pp. 191-205.

the father's authority and support. In such cases pastoral conversations are a replacement of young people's conversations with their fathers<sup>20</sup>.

Social and cultural changes are reflected in the difficulties of adult Catholics who seek help from priests. Individualism, which is now common among adult Polish people, brings various results in their lives. One of them is the inability to build stable relationships. Traditional marriage, meant as the exclusive and life-long relationship of a man and a woman, is more difficult to realize by many couples. It mainly results from the conflict between love meant as the gift of self or sacrifice for the spouse and focusing on oneself, meant as self-realization and satisfying one's needs. The need for self-realization underlined by the current culture which often leads to egocentrism or egotism, overwhelms love. That is why the partner is treated only as a tool for satisfying one's needs, e.g. the emotional needs and sexual ones. When these needs are not satisfied, the partners are let and exchanged for ones who meet these needs and expectations<sup>21</sup>.

Focusing on one's goal and needs reduces marriage to agreement between two egoisms rather than a love covenant. As a result the relationship is full of various conflicts which are developing, causing the break-up. Many young Catholics in Poland are not able to build deep relationships, but only some shallow relationships. Furthermore, with the act that people become mature enough to take responsibility for others later in life, this lack of ability to create a steady relationship, young people do not contract marriage but rather they create shallow short-term relationships which soon break up<sup>22</sup>.

Experiencing the duality which, on the one hand, is longing for the lasting and permanent closeness with the loving person, and, on the other hand, the inability to build such a relationship, leads young people to serious doubts concerning marriage and the family. It results from the fact that many of them have not learned at home how to build such a relationship with another person<sup>23</sup>. The culture of liberalism does not encourage for building permanent relationships but rather – temporary ones. That is why young adults seek help from

<sup>20</sup> W. Pawliczuk, *Poradnictwo psychologiczne w okresie adolescencji*, in: *Poradnictwo psychologiczne*, eds. C. Czabała, S. Kluczyńska, Warszawa 2015, pp. 109-130.

<sup>21</sup> K. Geldard, D. Geldard, *Rozmowa, która pomaga. Podstawowe umiejętności terapeutyczne*, Gdańsk 2004.

<sup>22</sup> P. Landwójtowicz, *Duszpasterskie poradnictwo małżeńskie w Polsce. Studium pastoralne*, Opole 2010.

<sup>23</sup> G. Pyżlak, *Czystość w narzeczeństwie i w życiu małżeńskim*, "Teologia i Czołowiek" 2022, Vol. 59, No. 3, pp. 97-114.



priests in building marriage. It mainly happens in case of marriage crisis, especially when it is long-lasting and deepens with time. Pastoral conversations with priests are not always effective that is why young people are sent to counselling centres in order to solve their problems with family life counsellors and psychologists.

The liberal style of life which is becoming more common in the Polish society, brings different cultural patterns which are so culturally different from the Christian mentality and culture. One of such patterns is the liberal attitude towards the sexual sphere. This leads to the increase in the number of adulteries. For many Catholics it is still unthinkable, while the fact of adultery which they committed is the source of their strong remorse. Some spouses, in case of the marriage crisis, enter close relationships with other people. The majority of them have no intention of adultery but entering into close relationship often leads to that. It also causes great remorse and the need to make up for the committed evil. It takes place regardless of the fact whether the spouse is aware of the adultery or not. Such confused spouses ask for pastoral conversation often combined with the sacrament of penance and reconciliation. Pastoral conversations, as there usually are a series of them, lead to the personal conversion and the development of the condition of marriage<sup>24</sup>.

The issues connected with bringing up children are also the leading motif of pastoral conversations with adults. Catholic parents who lost control of bringing up their children or parents of the children who have serious problems often ask for help from priests<sup>25</sup>. The first situation takes place when parents lose control of their children. It mainly happens when the children at young age were left too much freedom, which leads to the crisis at the stage of adolescence which often is out of the parents control. Such a situation causes the lack of balance of the family life and leads to fierce conflicts between parents and children. The second situation takes place when the child, often during adolescence, has problems with the law or gets addicted to drugs etc. In many cases the second situation results from the first one. Parents who have serious problems with their children ask priests for help believing that they will help them overcome the problems and prevent others. The inefficient results of coping with the problems with their children,

<sup>24</sup> J. Młyński, *Praktyczne formy metodycznego pomagania rodzinie w problemach społecznych*, in: *Poradnictwo rodzinne w teorii i praktyce*, Kraków 2013.

<sup>25</sup> A. Pryba, *Mężczyzna jako mąż i ojciec. Współczesne wyzwania*, in: *Rodzina przyszłością świata? W kręgu zamysłów nad rodziną*, ed. A. Pryba, Poznań 2009, pp. 29-40.



even with the help of special institutions, is often a motif for pastoral conversation as parents want to use all the available preventive means, also those from the Catholic Church. Some parents see pastoral help as their last resort. Pastoral conversations often lead parents to seek cooperation with all the available institutions which possess the means to provide proper aid: school, counseling centres, the police, court etc. providing psychological and spiritual support to the parents by such institutions is an important part of pastoral conversation.

## New challenges for the pastoral ministry of priests

Similarly to the changes of life conditions of contemporary Polish people, the conditions for the pastoral ministry of priests also change. The large amount of duties is the basic problem of priests. There are many traditional forms of pastoral ministry which are a part of ordinary pastoral care and which aim at the realization of the basic functions of the Catholic Church. These pastoral forms, which implement the mission of the Catholic Church, must be realized for the good of the faithful and so that the Church did not lose Her authenticity and did not object to the mission designated by Christ. Among these, inalienable forms, there are also others which are introduced because of the needs and expectations of the faithful. The latter are the Catholic Church's response to the signs of time. These are e.g. various ways of working with groups, the developing charity and social care work, new forms of evangelisation etc. Introducing new pastoral activities is done bottom-up, due to the initiative of priests, often upon the request of the lay faithful and as a result of the decisions of the Church authorities. Many pastoral initiatives are introduced due to the decisions at the diocesan and supra diocesan level.

Performing traditional forms of pastoral care and introducing new ones leads to the increase in the amount of duties of priests and their duty overload. As a result priests are tired and they have no time for taking on new challenges<sup>26</sup>. Priests do not have enough time for pastoral conversations. Facing the necessity to choose the ministry for larger groups of people and the service for single ones, they get engaged into the service for a community, providing it to a larger amount of people. The ongoing individualization of social and religious life in Poland results in the lack of free time necessary to conduct pastoral

<sup>26</sup> Z. Zarembski, *Psychologiczno-pedagogiczne uwarunkowania duszpasterstwa ludzi w podeszłym wieku*, in: *Seniorzy wyzwaniem dla Kościoła*, eds. M.J. Tutak, T. Wielebski, Warszawa 2019, pp. 201-220.

conversations. Therefore, the complex existential and religious problems of many people cannot be solved (Lipiec, 2018)<sup>27</sup>.

Despite the lack of sufficient amount of time, priests undertake pastoral conversations. However, they are rarely continued or they do not lead to an effective solutions to problems. The lack of proper conditions for pastoral conversation is not favourable for the development of the conversation.

The insufficient preparation for individual pastoral care and for conducting pastoral conversation is another problem of contemporary priests. The mass scale of pastoral care in Poland results in the fact that it is a priority for priests to take proper pastoral care for as many faithful as possible. Due to that the most important task of pastoral care concerns the activity addressed for small or big groups of the faithful. It is reflected in the preparation for pastoral care in the initial formation in the stage of seminary studies as well as in the ongoing formation after the ordination.

In the light of contemporary challenges and pastoral needs which concern pastoral conversation, the preparation of priests turns out to be insufficient. Although priests and candidates for ordination participate in the classes of psychology, pedagogics and similar disciplines, the range of knowledge and skills does not seem sufficient. They also participate in the preparation of the spiritual guidance but it is necessary to intensify it.

The insufficiency of the preparation for pastoral conversation and for other forms of individual pastoral care is noticed even by priests themselves. The majority of them does not feel competent to efficiently realize this kind of ministry. Many priests feel anxious before their conversations with the faithful because they think that they are not able to provide proper aid. These fears concern both substantive preparation as well as the methods of conducting such conversations. It particularly concerns the ability to start the pastoral conversation and to conduct it. Therefore, it is necessary to devote more time of the priestly formation or the staff training to the preparation for the pastoral conversation and to other forms of individual pastoral care.

Pastoral  
Theology

## Conclusion

The ongoing cultural and religious changes which are taking place in the Polish society require adjusting pastoral care to the new challenges

<sup>27</sup> D. Lipiec, *The Normative Dimension of the Pastoral Formation of Seminarians*, "Rocznik Teologii Katolickiej" 2018, Vol. 17, No. 1, pp. 148-169.

which they bring. One of the necessary changes is the appreciation of pastoral conversation as a kind of pastoral ministry. It is necessary to introduce changes into the organization of pastoral care, especially of the parish pastoral care, and to increase the amount of time devoted to individual meetings and conversations. Due to the burden of various duties of priest, it is also necessary to transfer some of these duties on the secular Catholics. Not all of the activities which used to be performed by priests require ordination, therefore, they can be taken over by the laity. The need for a better preparation of priests to perform individual pastoral care is clearer now. It requires a deeper study in the theological field as well as in other fields during seminary studies. It is necessary to introduce trainings, courses and workshops and other similar forms of developing pastoral skills in the ongoing formation of priests. It should also concern the lay pastoral workers.

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## Religiosity and Secularisation of Polish Youth in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Quantitative Research Analysis\*

In this article, we analyse the religiosity and secularisation processes of secondary school youth on several selected levels: religious affiliation, changes in religiosity, belief in a personal God, compulsory and non-compulsory religious practices, i.e. personal prayer. These analyses are based on the results of a sociological survey as part of the research project 'Religious education of Polish youth – current state, opportunities and challenges', conducted in November and December 2022 and January 2023. The study involved 1,672 male and female students from secondary schools across Poland. The results of the study confirm the increasingly dynamic secularisation processes.

**Key words:** religiosity, secularisation, youth, Poland.

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## Introduction

For many decades, sociology was dominated by the secularisation thesis, according to which an autonomisation of various areas of social life was taking place in modern societies, i.e. individual sectors of society and culture were being freed from the power of religious institutions and symbols. This objective process of transformation gradually affected people's consciousness and transformations in the religious universe. Religion was losing its former credibility and falling into crisis. Traditional religious definitions of reality were being replaced by rational, scientific, technical explanations. In this context, the thesis of the disappearance of religion, the weakening of the social hold of religion and the coming of a religionless society was proclaimed, which eventually developed into the global secularisation thesis. Some versions of the secularisation thesis treat religion as a manifestation of the pre-modern era and an expression of an irrational lifestyle. Modern societies become, as it were, inherently secular societies<sup>1</sup>.

According to this theory, religion in the conditions of modernity loses its ability to legitimise and construct the social and moral order, its social significance is steadily diminishing and it can only remain in the cracks and niches of mainstream social life. Secularisation is not a by-product of certain forms of social life, but a constitutive feature of it. The spread of secularism, finding expression in philosophical doctrines, constitutions and state structures, in its extreme forms denies religion the right and ability to shape public affairs and the destiny of people in the future<sup>2</sup>.

Some sociologists in the 20<sup>th</sup> century proclaimed the triumph of secularisation and secularism, the days of religion seemed numbered. Christian churches were treated as relics of the past, claiming that history was moving towards secularisation or even secularism and religion would eventually be abandoned. Traditional theories of secularisation were to some extent normative, for they assumed the demise of religion as the goal of human history. Moreover, getting rid of God – according to secularist approaches – is supposed to help solve all the world's problems on the assumption that secular humanist values will

<sup>1</sup> U. Baumann, *Jugendliche und Religion*, in: *Neues Handbuch religionspädagogischer Grundbegriffe*, eds. G. Bitter, R. Englert, G. Miller, K.E. Nipkow, München 2002, pp. 199-203; *Jugend 2019: Eine Generation meldet sich zu Wort. 18th Shell Jugendstudie*, eds. M. Albert, K. Hurrelmann, G. Quenzel, Weinheim-Basel 2019, pp. 150-156.

<sup>2</sup> K. Gabriel, *Gesellschaft und Religion*, in: *Neues Handbuch religionspädagogischer Grundbegriffe*, pp. 139-143.

suffice. Scientific and rational progress is supposed to lead eventually to the erasure of the idea of God from human consciousness. Secularisation as a socio-cultural process can be observed in all countries of Western Europe, although it takes different shapes and proceeds with varying intensity. In recent years, secularisation processes have also been gaining momentum in Poland. The present study contains an analysis of the results of the author's sociological research conducted among Polish youth and its comparison with other nationwide studies from the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Thus, the research aim of this study is to provide an answer to the current level of religiosity of Polish youth attending secondary schools and the secularisation processes taking place in this social group.

## Research methodology

The phenomenon of youth secularisation will be analysed on several selected levels of religiosity. These analyses are based on the results from the author's sociological research conducted as part of the research project 'Religious education of Polish youth – current state, opportunities and challenges', carried out in November and December 2022 and January 2023. The survey involved 1,672 male and female students from secondary schools across Poland. In accordance with the adopted assumptions of the auditory survey, at least 100 persons from each voivodeship were included in the study. In the entire population of schoolchildren surveyed, there were 52.7% females and 47.3% males, 52.3% of first grade secondary school pupils and 47.7% of fourth grade (matura) secondary school pupils, 50.4% of general secondary school pupils and 49.6% of technical secondary school pupils, 50.8% living in rural areas and 49.2% in urban areas. The empirical results from these sociological surveys will be compared with two previous nationwide sociological surveys, from 2005 conducted by the Institute of Statistics of the Catholic Church SAC and from 2017 conducted by the Institute of Sociology of Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University<sup>3</sup>.

## Analysis of research results

The remainder of this article will present the results of research conducted among Polish secondary school students. The following

<sup>3</sup> J. Mariański, *Kondycja religijna i moralna młodzieży szkół średnich w latach 1988-1998-2005-2017 (Raport z ogólnopolskich badań socjologicznych)*, Toruń 2018.



research areas will be analysed: religious affiliation, changes in religiosity, belief in God and religious practices.

## Religious affiliation

Religious self-declarations refer to the so-called holistic creeds and are among the most enduring components of religiosity. In the group of schoolchildren surveyed, 72.8% declared membership in the Roman Catholic Church, 1.1% in the Orthodox Church, 0.7% in the Jehovah's Witnesses, 0.6% in the Greek Catholic Church, 0.6% in the Protestant Church, 0.4% in the Muslim faith, 0.2% in the Mosaic faith, 0.2% in other faiths, 3.6% in none, 12.6% in none, 7.4% hard to say.

For the sake of comparison, let us add that in 2017 – according to a nationwide survey carried out by the Institute of Sociology at UKSW – 84.6% of respondents declared a Catholic denomination, other religious denominations – 4.1%, non-denominational – 10.3% and no answer – 1.0% (in 2005: 93.4%, 3.5%, 2.5%, 0.7%). Thus, between 2005 and 2023, the rate of those declaring Catholicism decreased from 93.4% to 72.8% (a difference of 20.6%), while the rate of the irreligious increased, from 2.5% to 10.3% (a difference of 7.8%). A declaration such as “I am a Catholic” is no longer within the framework of so-called cultural obviousness, which can be spoken of when positive answers are above 80%<sup>4</sup>.

Roman Catholic Church affiliation was reported by 72.9% of female and 74.9% of male respondents ( $p = 0.002$ , Kramer's  $V = 0.125$ ); 72.6% of first-year secondary school students and 74.7% of secondary school students ( $p = 0.109$ , Kramer's  $V = 0.093$ ); 73.0% of students from general secondary schools and 74.1% of students from technical schools ( $p = 0.677$ , Kramer's  $V = 0.064$ ); rural areas – 79.7%, town up to 30,000 inhabitants – 72.8%, town from 30,000 to 100,000 inhabitants – 67.6%, town from 100,000 to 500,000 inhabitants – 69.4%, town with more than 500 thousand inhabitants – 46.7% ( $p = 0.002$ , Kramer's  $V = 0.125$ ); regularly attending religious lessons at school – 86.7%, irregularly – 71.4%, not attending religious lessons at school – 39.7% ( $p = 0.000$ , Kramer's  $V = 0.342$ ); practicing several times a week – 85.7%, every Sunday – 93.2%, almost every Sunday – 94.2%, one or two times a month – 86.8%, only on major holidays – 84.8%, only on the occasion of a wedding, funeral, etc. – 63.2%, not attending at all – 31.7% ( $p = 0.000$ , Kramer's  $V = 0.224$ ). A total of 73.4% of the surveyed schoolchildren belonged to the Roman Catholic and Greek Catholic Church, 2.4% to other Christian

<sup>4</sup> Ibidem, 43.

denominations, 4.2% to other religions, non-respondents – 7.4% and not belonging to any denomination – 12.6%. A small proportion of respondents gave other expressions of their religious affiliation, such as atheism, Buddhism, Seventh Day Christianity, Christianity in general, Catholicism, Satanism, Wiccanism, belief in self, belief in the universe.

The highest number of respondents declaring no religious affiliation at all were those who do not participate in religious practices (43.3%), who do not attend religious lessons at school (35.7%), who live in cities with more than 500,000 inhabitants (26.7%), who participate in religious practices only on the occasion of a wedding, funeral, etc. (22.1%), and who live in cities with more than 100,000 to 500,000 inhabitants (16.9%). (22.1%), living in cities of 100,000 to 500,000 inhabitants (16.9%). Adherence to Catholicism was declared slightly less frequently by women than by men, more frequently by those living in rural areas or small towns than by those living in medium-sized and large towns, less frequently by general secondary school students than by those living in technical secondary schools, less frequently by first graders than by high school graduates, more frequently by those attending religious lessons than by those not attending, and more frequently by those practising regularly than by those not practising. Demographic and social characteristics (with the exception of place of residence) only slightly differentiated the affiliation of the surveyed youth to Catholicism.

Almost until the end of the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Polish young people were reluctant to admit “denominational homelessness”, even if their ties to a particular denomination or religion were very weakened and their Catholicism very vague and undefined. Between 2000 and 2018, sociologists observed slow changes in the religious affiliation of Polish society, also in youth circles. Research from the last few years already indicates a clear erosion of religious affiliation in secondary school youth circles. In the last five years (2017-2023), the processes of youth emigration from the Catholic Church have clearly accelerated: from 84.6% to 73.4% (a difference of 11.2%).

It should also be borne in mind that positive declarations of religious affiliation do not always correspond with religious affiliation. Indeed, participants in a religious group may be individuals who reveal different levels of personal religious faith, who are indifferent in their faith stakes or who are even non-believers. For some young people, being Catholic is more of a cultural fact than a matter of deepened faith and personal conviction. A specific category of respondents are those who apply the terms to themselves: “I believe in God but not in the Church”,

“I am a believing Catholic but disagree with some bishops”. They are in a kind of ambivalence, but they do not take the final decision to part from the Church. Some of them will “populate” in the future the category of Catholics described as “non-believing but practising Catholics”, “cultural non-practising Catholics”. The circles of those who do not identify with any religion and the Christian Church, i.e. those who are ecclesiastically unaffiliated, are growing slightly faster<sup>5</sup>.

## Religious self-identifications

The study of the so-called global attitudes towards faith (firm believer, believer, undecided, searching, doubting, indifferent, non-believer) only characterises religiosity in a very approximate and preliminary way. A declaration of belonging to a religious community or a declaration of attitude towards a religious/church institution, a declaration of the type “I am a believer”, allows for a sociological grasp of orientations and attitudes towards religion in the most general, more institutionalised than non-institutionalised dimensions.

Among the secondary school students we surveyed, 7.7% of the respondents described themselves as firm believers, 38.0% as believers, 21.4% as undecided but attached to a religious tradition, 11.4% as indifferent in matters of faith, 13.3% as non-believers and 8.2% as difficult to say. Combining the first two answers, we get an index of firm believers and believers at 45.7%. Almost one in three respondents placed themselves in the ‘undecided’ and ‘hard to say’ categories (29.6% in total). For the sake of comparison, let us add that in 2017 – according to a nationwide survey carried out by the Institute of Sociology at UKSW – 7.5% of secondary school students surveyed declared themselves to be firm believers, 46.4% as believers, 23.3% as undecided, 13.2% as religiously indifferent, 8.8% as non-believers and 0.7% – no answer (in 2005: 13.8%, 59.6%, 18.4%, 4.5%, 3.3%, 0.3% respectively)<sup>6</sup>. The combined rate of firm believers and believers was 73.4% in 2005, 53.9% in 2017 and 45.7% in 2023 (rate of non-believers: 3.3%, 8.8%, 13.3% respectively). Between 2005 and 2023, the rate of firm believers and believers thus decreased by 27.7%<sup>7</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> J. Casanova, *Religiosität in Spanien. Eine interpretative Lektüre der Resultate des Religionsmonitors*, in: *Woran glaubt die Welt? Analysen und Kommentare zum Religionsmonitor 2008*, ed. B. Stiftung, Gütersloh 2009, pp. 229-232.

<sup>6</sup> Ibidem, p. 59.

<sup>7</sup> J. Mariański, *Kondycja religijna i moralna młodzieży szkół średnich w latach 1988-1998-2005-2017*, p. 59.

The rate of profound believers and believers was slightly lower among females than males (43.9% vs. 47.7%;  $p = 0.121$ ,  $V$  Kramer = 0.072); adolescents from general secondary schools – 45.3%, adolescents from technical schools – 46.0% ( $p = 0.269$ ,  $V$  Kramer = 0.062); students from first classes of secondary schools – 46.0%, secondary school graduates – 45.3% ( $p = 0.163$ , Kramer's  $V = 0.069$ ); those living in rural areas – 52.1%, those living in towns with up to 30 thousand inhabitants – 41.1%, in towns with 30 thousand to 100 thousand inhabitants – 42.9%, in towns with 100 thousand to 500,000 inhabitants – 38.9%, in cities with more than 500,000 inhabitants – 24.2% ( $p = 0.000$ , Kramer's  $V = 0.104$ ); attending religious lessons at school regularly – 59.0%, attending irregularly – 26.3%, not attending at all – 20.3% ( $p = 0.000$ , Kramer's  $V = 0.327$ ); attending religious practices several times a week – 79.0%, every Sunday – 79.6%, almost every Sunday – 65.0%, about once or twice a month – 59.3%, only on major holidays – 38.5%, only on the occasion of a wedding, funeral, etc. – 17.5%, not practising at all – 8.6% ( $p = 0.000$ , Kramer's  $V = 0.711$ ). Religious self-identifications was declared less frequently by women than by men, general secondary school youth less frequently than by technical secondary school youth, secondary school youth from first grades slightly more frequently than from fourth grades, youth living in the country more frequently than in cities, youth attending religious education classes more frequently than those not attending, and youth practising regularly more frequently than those not practising at all.

For comparison, in a nationwide CBOS poll of 2021, in the entire youth population 6% of respondents described themselves as deeply believers, 48% – as believers, 23% – as undecided, 23% – as non-believers. The combined rate of firm believers and believers was 54% (in 1996 – 80%, in 1998 – 80%, in 2003 – 78%, in 2008 – 81%, in 2010 – 77%, in 2013 – 71%, in 2016 – 69%, in 2018 – 63%). Between 2018 and 2021 alone, this rate has decreased by 9 percentage points<sup>8</sup>.

The results of sociological studies among schoolchildren indicate outlining changes in the global attitudes of the young generation of Poles towards religion, i.e. at the level of the so-called national religiosity. A disruption in the continuity of faith and clear traces of a lack of continuity indicate a trend towards individual choice of faith at the expense of its inheritance.

Among those who are 'undecided but committed to a religious tradition' are some who are in fact believers in their own way and

<sup>8</sup> R. Boguszewski, *Religijność młodzieży*, in: *Młodzież 2021. Opinie i diagnozy*, nr 49, eds. M. Grabowska, M. Gwiazda, Warszawa 2022, p. 135.

according to their own taste, although they do not describe themselves as religious. Some of them believe in God, but not in the kind of God presented to them by the Church. The decrease in the rate of believers among young people is a relatively new trend in the phase of political, economic and socio-cultural changes and undoubtedly a peculiar phenomenon accompanying these changes. The results obtained among school youth allow us to assume that the downward trend will continue. However, secularisation processes are taking place in different ways in various social environments<sup>9</sup>.

It is also worth noting that, among the young people surveyed, 45.2% said they were more religious in the past, 10.2% said they were more religious now, 23.3% said no change and 15.4% said it was difficult to say. Almost half of the male and female students surveyed described themselves as more religious in the past and 6.0% as non-religious. For the sake of comparison, let us add that in 2017 – according to a nationwide survey carried out by the Institute of Sociology at UKSW – 41.0% of schoolchildren surveyed reported that they were more religious in the past, 12.3% – that they are more religious now, 24.6% – no change, 18.1% – hard to say and 4.0% – no answer (in 2005: 39.3%, 17.5%, 27.6%, 14.6%, 0.9% respectively). 39.3% of respondents in 2005, 41.0% in 2017 and 45.2% in 2023 considered themselves to be more religious “formerly”. Self-assessments of one’s religiosity indicate a slow process of secularisation of the religious consciousness of schoolchildren. Between 2005 and 2023, the rate of those who claimed to have been more religious “in the past” increased by 5.9%.

Pastoral  
Theology

Responses such as “I used to be more religious” were more often given by women, young people attending general secondary schools, living in cities with a population of up to 30 000, not attending religious lessons and rarely or not practising at all. Young people’s awareness of a decrease in their religious commitment is much higher than their awareness of an increase in religiousness. The religiousness of Polish youth is far from stable, but it does not follow a predetermined trajectory; rather, it is subject to constant changes and fluctuations, more often negative than positive. The tendency to deepen faith is less widespread in youth circles than the tendency to depart from religious faith.

<sup>9</sup> R. Boguszewski, M. Bożewicz, *Religijność i moralność polskiej młodzieży – zależność czy autonomia?*, “Zeszyty Naukowe KUL” 2019, Vol. 62(4), pp. 36–46.

## Belief in the existence of God

One of the fundamental truths of the Catholic faith is the existence of a personal God<sup>10</sup>. In this context, the following question was posed to the young people surveyed: 'Which of the following statements about belief in God is closest to you?' Respondents were allowed to choose one of the six suggested answers. Among secondary school students, 26.1% of respondents stated that they believe in God and have no doubts about His existence; 25.1% – believe in God, although they sometimes have moments of doubt; 14.0% – sometimes I think I believe in God and sometimes I think I don't; 10.1% – does not believe in a personal God; 8.5% – does not believe in a personal God, but believes in some kind of Higher Power; 7.8% – that they do not know if God exists and do not believe there is a way to find out; 8.3% – difficult to say.

Combining the first two answers, we get a rate of 51.2% of those who believe in God and have no serious doubts about it: females – 47.9%, males – 55.1% ( $p = 0.003$ , V Kramer = 0.108); general secondary schools – 50.5%, technical schools – 52.1% ( $p = 0.109$ , Kramer's  $V = 0.079$ ); first classes of secondary schools – 54.0%, matriculation classes – 48.3% ( $p = 0.000$ , Kramer's  $V = 0.139$ ); rural areas – 57.9%, town up to 30 thousand inhabitants – 47.2%, town from 30 thousand to 100 thousand inhabitants – 50.0%, town from 100 thousand to 500,000 inhabitants – 43.4%; city with more than 500,000 inhabitants – 25.3% ( $p = 0.000$ , Kramer's  $V = 0.106$ ); participating regularly in school religion lessons – 64.7%, irregularly – 34.9%, not participating – 24.0% ( $p = 0.000$ , Kramer's  $V = 0.312$ ); participating in religious practices several times a week – 82.5%, every Sunday – 83.6%, almost every Sunday – 71.2%, about once or twice a month – 65.5%, only on major holidays – 46.8%, only on the occasion of a wedding, funeral etc. – 27.2%, does not participate at all – 11.0%, difficult to say – 41.7% ( $p = 0.000$ , Kramer's  $V = 0.263$ ).

Many young people try to shape their religiosity in their own way, according to their own direction, rather than according to the expectations and precepts of the Church. This approach is sometimes referred to as a "do-it-yourself mentality". Changes in religious (dogmatic) consciousness are taking place in an unspectacular way, nevertheless in a real and – perhaps – irreversible way, at least in the near future. We observe in sociological studies a slow erosion of traditional religious

<sup>10</sup> W.H. Ritter, *Gott – Gottesbilder*, in: *Neues Handbuch religionspädagogischer Grundbegriffe*, pp. 89-93.



beliefs. “Religious faces” of young people are increasingly diverse, ambivalent, selective, in minorities – clearly unorthodox.

In comparison, in the 2021 CBOS survey, 29% of the surveyed school-children declared that they believe in God and have no doubts about His existence; 23% – believe in God, although they sometimes have moments of doubt; 11% – sometimes it seems to me that I believe in God, and sometimes that I do not; 10% – do not believe in a personal God, but believe in some kind of Higher Power; 11% – do not know if God exists and do not believe that there is a way to check it; 16% – do not believe in God (in 2013, respectively: 45%, 26%, 10%, 7%, 6%, 6%; in 2018 – 37%, 23%, 11%, 9%, 10%, 11%). Belief in God was expressed by 71% of the youth surveyed in 2013, 60% in 2018 and 52% in 2021. These data indicate a clear downward trend of unwavering belief in God and a concomitant increase in agnostic and atheistic attitudes<sup>11</sup>. Furthermore, the traditional image of God is eroding and many young people are rejecting notions of an absolutely transcendent God<sup>12</sup>.

## Compulsory religious practices

Religious practices, more broadly religious rituals, play an essential role in all world religions.

Each of the major religions defines important and distinctive practices, including rituals, rites and ceremonies often associated with milestone events such as birth, marriage and death, and the observance of festivals, and within each religion there are many variations of these practices typical of different denominations, denominations and communities. In terms of Christian customs, regular church attendance on Sundays and holidays is important here, as is the role of prayer, charity, the importance of communion, and the rites of baptism, confirmation and marriage<sup>13</sup>.

Pastoral  
Theology

Practices performed for religious reasons are evidence of intrinsic religiosity (positive criterion for religiosity). The absence of religious practices, on the other hand, indicates some far-reaching changes taking place in religious life (negative criterion of religiosity). In post-modern and pluralistic societies, in which people do not face strict control and pressure from the social environment, the fulfilment of

<sup>11</sup> R. Boguszewski, *Religijność młodzieży*, p. 136.

<sup>12</sup> See J. Mariański, *Religijność młodzieży polskiej w procesie przemian w XXI wieku*, Lublin 2023, pp. 141-142.

<sup>13</sup> P. Norris, R. Inglehart, *Sacrum i profanum. Religia i polityka na świecie*, Kraków 2006, p. 51.



religious duties generally requires personal commitment and is a sign of religious vitality.

In our survey, 3.4% of young people reported that they attend Mass several times a week, 17.9% – every Sunday, 15.6% – almost every Sunday, 10.6% – one or two times a month, 13.0% – only on major holidays, 12.3% – only on the occasion of a wedding, funeral, etc., 12.6% – do not attend at all, 9.7% – hard to say and 4.9% – not applicable. According to the respondents' declarations, 21.3% of them are regular practitioners (several times a week, every Sunday), 26.2% are irregular practitioners (almost every Sunday, once or twice a month), 25.3% are occasional practitioners (several times a year, only on the occasion of a wedding or funeral) and 17.5% are not participating at all (I do not practice at all, not applicable). One in ten respondents could not specify the frequency of their attendance at Sunday Mass.

For the sake of comparison, let us add that in 2017 – according to a nationwide survey carried out by the Institute of Sociology of the UKSW – 19.0% of surveyed male and female secondary school pupils reported that they attended Mass every Sunday, 22.1% – almost every Sunday, 14.0% – about once or twice a month, 19.9% – only on major holidays, 12.5% – only on the occasion of a wedding, funeral, etc, 9.2% – did not participate at all, 3.3% – no answer (in 2005: 26.4%, 34.7%, 16.6%, 11.1%, 3.9%, 4.6%, 0.0%, 2.6% respectively). Thus, between 2005 and 2017, the rate of attending Mass every Sunday or almost every Sunday decreased from 61.3% to 41.1% (20.2% difference) and to 36.9% in 2023<sup>14</sup>.

In 2023, women attended Mass regularly less often than men (18.6% vs. 24.2%;  $p = 0.023$ , Kramer's  $V = 0.104$ ); young people from first classes more often than young people from secondary schools (26.4% vs. 15.6%;  $p = 0.000$ , Kramer's  $V = 0.175$ ); adolescents from general secondary schools more often than adolescents from technical schools (22.3% vs. 20.4%;  $p = 0.482$ , Kramer's  $V = 0.067$ ); adolescents living in rural areas – 24.7%, in cities up to 30,000 residents – 13.4%; city of 30,000 to 100,000 residents – 19.1%, city of 100,000 to 500,000 residents – 22.2%, city of more than 500,000 residents – 9.9% ( $p = 0.000$ , Kramer's  $V = 0.127$ ); adolescents attending religious lessons at school regularly (30.5%) more often than those attending irregularly (5.8%) and not attending at all (5.0%;  $p = 0.000$ , Kramer's  $V = 0.390$ ).

Considering only those who practise regularly (every Sunday), it can be said that in 2005 there were 26.4 per cent, in 2017 19.0 per cent

<sup>14</sup> J. Mariański, *Kondycja religijna i moralna młodzieży szkół średnich w latach 1988-1998-2005-2017*, p. 141.

and in our 2023 survey 21.3 per cent. One in five respondents declared that they attend Mass every Sunday. However, it should be borne in mind that Catholics' declarations about attending Sunday Mass are somewhat inflated. Socially and culturally motivated religious practices tend to disappear in the transition from a traditional to a modern pluralistic society. In the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the religious practices of schoolchildren were in a phase of slow but systematic decline and a clear acceleration at the turn of the second and third decades of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It is possible that this trend will continue in the years to come.

Religious practices show most clearly the social dimension of religious faith intertwined with cultural traditions, or in other words, dressed in a "cultural costume". They are also often part of the culture of family life, which they co-create and within which they are passed on from generation to generation<sup>15</sup>. However, it must be borne in mind that secularisation may first manifest itself in the sphere of outward behaviour and, with some delay, affect religious faith and belief. A decrease in regular participation in religious practices, does not necessarily go hand in hand with a weakening of religious beliefs to the same extent.

## Personal prayer

Among the so-called optional practices, personal prayer plays an important role. From a sociological point of view, only certain outward manifestations of prayer are usually recorded, without going into the depth of religious experience and experience. Individual prayer in the opinion of many believers is considered a very elementary religious duty. The observance of daily prayer or its omission is a sign of the vitality or decline of the Christian life.

In the entire population of young people we surveyed, 1.0% declared that they pray every morning, 14.1% – every evening only, 5.2% – every morning and evening, 6.7% – every few days, 1.9% – only on Sundays, 12.3% – from time to time, 11.7% – very rarely, 10.0% – only in major life situations, 29.6% – never pray, 7.4% – hard to say. Combining the first three answers, we get a rate of 20.3% praying daily (once or twice a day).

For the sake of comparison, let us add that in 2017 – according to a nationwide survey carried out by the Institute of Sociology of the

<sup>15</sup> W. Świątkiewicz, *Religijne praktyki i zwyczaje w pejzażu kultury polskiej rodziny*, in: *W poszukiwaniu ciągłości i zmiany. Religia w perspektywie socjologicznej*, ed. I. Borowik, Kraków 2012, p. 269.

UKSW – 20.0% of surveyed male and female secondary school students reported that they pray every day, 11.6% – every few days, 1.9% – on Sundays and holidays, 15.3% – from time to time, 10.2% – only in more important situations, 12.3% – very rarely, 24.8% – does not pray at all, 0.0% – hard to say, 3.8% – no answer (in 2005 – 29.9%, 15.5%, 2.3%, 17.4%, 9.7%, 9.9%, 14.5%, 0.0%, 0.7% respectively)<sup>16</sup>. Between 2005 and 2023, the rate of those praying daily decreased from 29.9% to 20.3% (a difference of 9.6%).

In our 2023 survey, women were more likely than men to declare that they pray at home every day (21.3% vs. 19.5%;  $p = 0.353$ , V Kramer = 0.077); first graders slightly more likely than fourth graders (21.5% vs. 19.0%;  $p = 0.042$ , V Kramer = 0.102); high school students more likely than technical school students (23.4% vs. 17.2%;  $p = 0.012$ , V Kramer = 0.113); regularly attending religious lessons at school (27.8%) more often than irregularly attending (8.2%;  $p = 0.000$ , Kramer's V = 0.294) and not attending at all (6.8%); practicing several times a week (54.5%) and practicing every Sunday (45.8%) more often than practicing almost every Sunday (26.5%), about once or twice a month (16.6%), only on major holidays (15.8%), only on the occasion of a wedding, funeral, etc. (6.3%), not practising at all (3.8%;  $p = 0.000$ , Kramer's V = 0.252).

On the basis of the research results presented, it can be concluded that the potential for daily prayer has clearly decreased among young people. It is significantly lower than among the adult population (about 40%). According to the European Social Survey, the rate of respondents aged 15-24 declaring daily prayer decreased in Poland between 2002 and 2018 from 36.6% to 22.5%, while the rate of those declaring not to pray increased from 9.7% to 19.1%<sup>17</sup>.

The complete abandonment of personal daily prayer, which is indicative of a significant “cooling down” of religious needs, is already something worrying in Polish families from an ecclesiastical point of view. Prayer practices that are a kind of ritual constituting first and foremost the fulfilment of a Catholic's duty are losing in importance, perhaps those that are an expression of the spiritual needs of the individual are gaining, even if they are not performed daily.

<sup>16</sup> Ibidem, 162.

<sup>17</sup> E. Stachowska, *Religijność młodzieży w Europie – perspektywa socjologiczna. Kontynuacje*, “Przegląd Religioznawczy” 2019, Vol. 3, pp. 87-88.

## Conclusion

The religious situation in Polish society began to change markedly from the middle of the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and symptoms of secularisation – especially in youth circles – became increasingly visible<sup>18</sup>. In the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Poland entered the orbit of more intense influences coming from Western Europe. Consequently, secularisation processes typical of that continent may be affecting Polish society in a more pronounced manner.

On the basis of the research conducted and comparative studies, it can be concluded that a heterogeneity of attitudes to religion is becoming more pronounced among young people, new forms of religiousness and spirituality and irreligiousness are emerging<sup>19</sup>. To some extent, young people's declarations about changes in religiosity demonstrate that religion is now a less important part of their lives than it used to be, both in public and private life. In the last five years, changes in the religiosity of Polish youth have taken place in a rapid, almost "leaping" manner. Admittedly, according to Józef Baniak, as long as the older and middle-aged generation is alive and connected to religious rituals and beliefs, the churches in Poland will not become empty, but "when today's youth comes to power, this may come to an end. They do not want to be in a Church of commands and prohibitions, speaking an incomprehensible language. There are even believers, but non-religious. Two phenomena must also not be underestimated: global migration and the Internet, which also affect people's religious lives. It is not only in secular life that we model ourselves on Western societies, and there desacralisation took place long ago. However, in these desacralised, secularised societies, a longing for the sacred and an attempt to return to religious roots is already slowly beginning to emerge"<sup>20</sup>.

As noted above, the socio-cultural transformations in Poland are to some extent imitative in relation to Western societies, but it is not

<sup>18</sup> J. Borowiec, *Świadomość religijna i moralna młodzieży gimnazjalnej. Burza hormonów (religijnych)*, "Tygodnik Powszechny" 2006, Vol. 31, p. 26; I. Borowik, *Od sekularyzacji do powrotu religii na scenę publiczną: trendy rozwojowe światowej socjologii religii z uwzględnieniem dorobku lubelskiej szkoły socjologii religii w Polsce*, "Roczniki Nauk Społecznych" 2019, Vol. 11(4), pp. 93-110.

<sup>19</sup> H. Mielicka-Pawłowska, *Education for spirituality as a problem of post-modern society*, "Studia Paedagogica Ignatiana" 2021, Vol. 24(1), pp. 21-44.

<sup>20</sup> *Święta nasze nieświęte* [Our unholy Christmas]. Interview with Professor Józef Baniak, sociologist of religion, about what people still need Christmas family celebrations for and about the increasingly shallow faith of Poles, interviewed by Joanna Podgórska, "Polityka" 2011, No. 52/53, p. 26.

excluded that the impacts of modernisation processes on religiosity in Polish society will follow a different path of development. Modernisation impulses in the economy, politics and culture may have different effects in the religious sphere; there is no strictly defined scenario with deterministic features. It is also worth noting that transformations in religiosity are not unidirectional. There are several developmental trends related to both secularisation and pluralisation and individualisation and evangelisation. All these phenomena need to be studied not so much as a stable reality, but rather as rapidly changing processes. The sociological research conducted by the authors has shown the extent of the changes taking place in the religiosity of schoolchildren. These changes are confirmed by the results of other national surveys and other sociological studies<sup>21</sup>.

The research results quoted above illustrate the attitudes of youth towards religion, and on their basis one can speak of a slowly emerging generational “gap” or “divergence” of generations in terms of their global approach to religion. A decrease in the rate of believers among youth is a new trend in the phase of political transformation and undoubtedly a peculiar phenomenon accompanying this change. It is difficult to predict whether the currently declared distance towards religion marked by some youth will be maintained in the future or rather deepened. The results obtained among school youth suggest that the downward trend will continue. Secularisation processes, however, proceed in different ways in various social environments. Probably, however, secularisation will not slow down in the third decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and the next generations of young Poles will probably be less religious. Studying what role religion will play in the lives of young Poles and in their perception of the world in the next decades will be an important task for sociologists of religion and sociologists of morality. Socio-cultural and political transformations in modern or post-modern societies, sometimes referred to as social modernisation, are not without influence on the religious and moral life of contemporary people. The transformations in the religiosity of the young generation of Poles described in this article will probably

<sup>21</sup> T. Adamczyk, *Wiara i praktyki religijne*, in: *Młódzież w kontekstach współczesnych. Rodzina. Czas. Szkoła. Kościół i katecheza*, eds. W. Szymczak, T. Adamczyk, Lublin 2022, pp. 49-83; M. Grabowska, *Religijność młodych Polaków*, in: *Młodzi Polacy w badaniach CBOS 1989-2021. Opinie i diagnozy*, nr 48, ed. M. Grabowska, Warszawa 2021, pp. 91-110; M. Zemło, *Religijność uczniów szkół białostockich a stosunek do wybranych wartości, norm i wzorów zachowań*, “Zeszyty Naukowe KUL” 2021, Vol. 64(1-2), pp. 185-211.

shape the future landscape of religiosity and ties to the Church in Polish society. From an ecclesial point of view, this will pose an increasing challenge.


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## Theological Dimension of Price and Inflation

The theological dimension of price and inflation refers to a religious or theological investigation of the concept of price inflation. While economics is primarily concerned with the study of inflation as a persistent increase in an economy's general price level of goods and services over time, certain religious scholars and thinkers have investigated its potential ramifications and linkages to theological conceptions. Some religious traditions place a premium on resource management and ethical behavior in economic affairs. Inflation can be viewed as a challenge to this ideal since it can cause the value of money to erode and cause economic hardship for disadvantaged populations. Therefore, the aim of the article is to present systematized and structured knowledge on the perception of prices and inflation in theological sciences, with particular emphasis on Christianity as the dominant religion in the world.

**Key words:** price, inflation, theology, Bible.

### Introduction

Discussions about how to address inflation in a way that preserves ethical ideals and promotes economic justice may arise from a theological standpoint. Several religious teachings warn against an overabundance of material wealth and the love of money. Inflation, particularly when it is excessive, can exacerbate materialistic impulses and encourage a concentration on short-term benefits. Theological debates should look into how inflation affects people's attitudes toward wealth and worldly possessions<sup>1</sup>.

Inflation can disproportionately affect the poor and vulnerable sectors of society, as they frequently have fewer resources to deal

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<sup>1</sup> A. McGrath, *Christian Theology*, 6<sup>th</sup> ed., Wiley 2016.

with rising prices. Theological considerations on inflation may center on people' and communities' roles in reducing the pain caused by economic insecurity, as well as how to promote social justice during periods of inflation.

Some religious beliefs emphasize the interconnectivity of all components of creation, as well as the importance of resource management. Inflation discussions could go into how excessive inflation, or its underlying causes, can be related to unsustainable economic practices that threaten the environment and future generations.

Many religious traditions preach satisfaction with one's possessions and a separation from material demands. Inflation can put these ideals to the test, as rising costs can cause feelings of insecurity and dissatisfaction. Theological viewpoints may investigate how individuals can achieve inner contentment in the face of economic obstacles such as inflation.

Theological talks about inflation may also include the role of the government and central banks in governing the economy and combating inflation. There may be concerns regarding the ethical implications of certain monetary policies and how they relate to religious ideals. It is crucial to highlight that theological aspects of inflation are rarely discussed in economic circles. These perspectives, however, might provide additional insights and concerns for persons who hold religious convictions when considering the impact of inflation on society and individuals.

## The concept of “fair price” in the economy

The concept of a “fair price” (just price) in theology has its roots in the Christian tradition and is intimately tied to social justice and economic ethics principles<sup>2</sup>. Throughout history, numerous Christian theologians and philosophers have debated the concept of a just price, with the medieval period being the most notable development. Theological debates of a just price are based on the concept that economic transactions should be done with fairness, compassion, and concern for the common good rather than profit. The just price theory sought to address issues of economic exploitation and to ensure that both buyers and sellers conducted themselves ethically in their commercial dealings<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> D.A.B. Rosner, *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, IVP 2020.

<sup>3</sup> P. Januard, *At the Boundaries of the Trading Sphere: The Appearance of the 'Just Price' in Thomas Aquinas's Commentary on the Sentences*, Working Papers 2022, May.

St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274), a notable medieval Christian philosopher and theologian, was one of the most influential theologians who addressed the concept of a just price. Aquinas believed that the principle of commutative justice, which seeks equality and fairness in trades, established a just price<sup>4</sup>. A right price, according to Aquinas, is one that reflects the cost of production, including an acceptable profit, and corresponds to the inherent value of the object or service being exchanged. He also acknowledged that certain conditions, such as scarcity or urgent need, could impact the just price, but that these should not result in disproportionate price hikes or exploitation of the weak. Aquinas' just pricing theory attempted to balance the interests of both buyers and sellers, encouraging economic stability and communal well-being. It is crucial to highlight, however, that the concept of a just price is not widely accepted in theological and economic circles<sup>5</sup>.

Different theologians and economists may interpret and apply the concept differently, and economic systems have evolved and gotten more complex over time, making it difficult to establish a universally applicable conception of a reasonable price. The concept of a right price is frequently linked with broader questions of social justice, economic equity, and responsible resource stewardship in current theological discussions. It is considered as part of a bigger framework that aims to build a just and compassionate economy that respects the dignity of all individuals and strives for the common good<sup>6</sup>.

A just price, according to Saint Thomas Aquinas, is the price at which a seller can morally and ethically sell a commodity or service and a buyer can morally and ethically buy it. Aquinas was a well-known medieval Christian theologian and philosopher who blended Aristotelian principles into his ethical teachings. In his work *Summa Theologica*, he examined the concept of a right price, specifically in the section on justice and fairness in economic transactions. Aquinas held that a just price is established by the notion of commutative justice, which refers to fairness in individual exchanges and transactions. He provided a number of criteria for calculating a fair price: Fairness: The pricing should be reasonable and fair, taking into account the

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<sup>4</sup> T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*. Trans. The Fathers of the English Dominican Province, 1947.

<sup>5</sup> S. Maxwell, *The Price Is Wrong*, 1<sup>st</sup> ed., Wiley 2007.

<sup>6</sup> K. Morioka, *On the Just Price of St. Thomas Aquinas*, "Annals of the Society for the History of Economic Thought" 1993, Vol. 31, pp. 47-57.

labor, materials, and other costs associated with producing the good or providing the service<sup>7</sup>.

Aquinas realized that a product's or service's utility or usefulness, as well as its level of demand, may impact the price. If a good or service is in high demand but in little supply, it may attract a higher price than something that is easily available. Sellers are allowed to a reasonable profit margin, but they should not take advantage of purchasers' needs or desperation to demand outrageous rates. The trade of products and money should be fair and balanced. Both the vendor and the buyer should believe they paid a fair price for their goods. Pricing fraud, deception, or dishonesty was sharply criticized by Aquinas. Prices must be transparent, and both parties must have access to all essential information in order to make an informed decision. It's worth noting that Aquinas' definition of a just price evolved in a medieval context, influenced by Christian morality and economic conditions of the time. Economic theories and practices have advanced greatly in recent years, and the concept of a just price may be understood differently in modern economic and ethical contexts.

A fair price is a complex and subjective concept that varies depending on the environment and the opinions of the individuals or entities involved. In theory and practice, several economic, social, and ethical considerations influence the determination of a fair price. In traditional economic theory, a fair price is often seen as the point at where supply and demand intersect. The quantity of products or services desired equals the quantity delivered at this price, and both buyers and sellers benefit from the transaction. Another theoretical approach to fair pricing is based on the concept of marginal utility, which states that a fair price should reflect the increased satisfaction gained by purchasing one more unit of a commodity. Sellers seek to set prices that maximize their profits while taking into account the value of the product to buyers. Some firms utilize cost-plus pricing as a theoretical framework, where an acceptable margin or markup is added to the production cost of a product or service to calculate a fair price. This strategy seeks to ensure that the seller makes a decent profit. Fairness incorporates ethical considerations as well. According to distributive justice theories, a fair price should consider elements such as the work

<sup>7</sup> J.W. Baldwin, *The Medieval Theories of the Just Price: Romanists, Canonists, and Theologians in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries*, "Transactions of the American Philosophical Society" 1959, No. 49(4).

involved, the influence on local communities, environmental sustainability, and stakeholders' overall well-being<sup>8</sup>.

Costs are frequently determined in the real world by highlighting strengths. expenses are set by dealers based on marketing conditions, competition, consumer demand, and their generation expenses. Buyers, in turn, make purchasing decisions based on their perception of worth and cost. Some organizations, particularly those in the digital sphere, use active estimating, in which costs change based on real-time demand, supply, and other factors. While this may appear to be sustainable, critics argue that it can lead to cost separation and may not constantly adjust with concepts of decency. Social and social standards can influence reasonable estimation. In some cases, things or administrations may be valued in an unexpected way based on location, pay levels, or social standing.

Governments may intervene to direct costs, particularly for basic goods and services, in order to prevent price gouging or to ensure consumers' fairness. These mediations aim to enhance fairness and assure consumer satisfaction. The reasonable exchange development advocates for fair costs for manufacturers in developing countries. Reasonable exchange groups establish cost floors to ensure that creators are fairly compensated and labor under moral conditions.

Perceived value is very important in consumer psychology. When determining a fair price, buyers frequently consider factors other than production costs, such as brand reputation, product quality, and customer service. Finally, the concept of a fair price is multifaceted and can be approached from a variety of theoretical and practical viewpoints. While economic theories give some basic notions, real-world pricing is determined by a mix of market dynamics, ethical considerations, cultural norms, and government involvement. Obtaining a universally agreed-upon fair pricing continues to be a difficult task, but initiatives to balance the interests of customers, sellers, and society as a whole are being studied and perfected.

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## The fair price on the financial markets

Determining a "fair" price for a specific asset, stock, or investment on the financial markets is a complex and subjective task that depends on a variety of factors, including the asset's intrinsic value, market conditions, investor sentiment, economic outlook, and company

<sup>8</sup> D. Koehn, B. Wilbratte, *A Defense of a Thomistic Concept of the Just Price*, "Business Ethics Quarterly" 2012, No. 22(3), pp. 501-526.

performance (in the case of stocks). There is no one-size-fits-all solution because fair pricing vary greatly depending on the circumstance<sup>9</sup>. Here are some popular ways for determining fair pricing for various assets:

- **Fundamental Analysis:** This entails assessing the underlying elements that determine the value of an item. In the case of stocks, it entails examining financial statements, earnings, growth prospects, competitive position, and managerial quality to determine the company's intrinsic worth.
- **Technical Analysis:** Traders utilize past price and volume data to find patterns and trends that can be used to forecast future price movements. In short-term trading, technical analysis is more common.
- **Market Sentiment:** The overall mood of investors and market players can have a significant impact on asset values. Positive news or strong investor confidence can drive up prices, while negative news or fear might drive down prices.
- **Comparable Analysis:** Assets can be appraised in some situations by comparing them to similar assets in the same industry or sector.
- **Discounted Cash Flow (DCF) Analysis:** This valuation method is often used to determine the fair value of a company or an investment project by forecasting future cash flows and discounting them to their present value.
- **Supply and Demand:** The simple economic idea of supply and demand frequently influences prices. If an asset is in high demand but has a limited supply, its price is likely to grow.
- **Market Efficiency:** Financial markets are efficient in theory, which means that asset prices reflect all available information. Prices are deemed fair in such instances because they represent the collective knowledge of market players.

Even with these tools, determining a precise fair price might be difficult. Based on their assumptions and techniques, various investors and analysts may reach different conclusions. Furthermore, market prices are always fluctuating due to changing market conditions and new information. If you're thinking about investing in the financial markets, you should do your homework, assess your risk tolerance and

<sup>9</sup> J.J. Angel, D. McCabe, *Fairness in Financial Markets: The Case of High Frequency Trading*, "Journal Business Ethics" 2013, No. 112, pp. 585-595.

investment objectives, and, if necessary, seek guidance from financial professionals<sup>10</sup>.

## Perception of inflation in theological sciences

Inflation can be understood and examined from both material and spiritual perspectives, each of which offers a unique perspective on the phenomenon. The material dimension of inflation is concerned with the tangible and observable aspects of the economy, particularly the growth in the overall price level of goods and services over time. Consider the following crucial points:

- Purchasing Control Disintegration: Swelling destroys cash acquisition control. As the cost level rises, each unit of money may buy fewer goods and services, diminishing the true value of money and limiting people's ability to maintain their standard of living.
- Impact on Cost of Living: As basic commodities and services become more expensive as a result of inflation, the cost of living rises. This can pose problems for low-income people and people on fixed incomes, such as seniors.
- Economic Growth and Stability: Moderate inflation is frequently thought to be helpful to economic growth since it encourages spending and investment. High or unpredictable inflation, on the other hand, can cause economic insecurity and discourage long-term planning and investment.
- Monetary Policy: Through monetary policy, central banks play a critical role in regulating inflation. To regulate inflation and maintain price stability, they employ measures such as interest rates and open market operations.
- Debt and Interest Rates: Borrowing and lending are affected by inflation. Borrowers may gain from inflation by repaying loans with less valuable currency. Lenders, on the other hand, may suffer from lower actual loan returns.

Beyond its tangible consequences, the spiritual dimension of inflation entails investigating the psychological and philosophical ramifications of inflation. This viewpoint examines how inflation influences people's views, attitudes, and overall societal values.

Inflationary pressures that persist can weaken public trust in economic institutions and government officials in charge of monetary policy. People may dispute these institutions' competency and credibility.

<sup>10</sup> R. Korn, B. Luderer, *Fair Prices and Market Prices*, in: *Money and Mathematics*, Wiesbaden 2021.



Inflation can influence how people view wealth and achievement. When the value of money is predicted to fall in an inflationary climate, there may be a propensity to prioritize current consumption above long-term savings. Inflation can create ethical concerns, especially when it widens economic inequities. Others who can safeguard their wealth through investments or assets may benefit, whereas others who rely solely on salaries may struggle to keep up with growing expenses.

High inflation can cause a shift in societal objectives, with individuals and corporations focusing more on protecting their money and hedging against inflation rather than supporting innovation and sustainable growth. Inflation, especially when combined with economic uncertainty, may lead people to seek deeper meaning and purpose outside of monetary wealth. People may reconsider their life goals and the value of spiritual and emotional well-being. It is critical to understand that the material and spiritual components of inflation are not mutually exclusive, but rather interrelated. Human views and values are influenced by economic realities, and vice versa. Understanding these dimensions is required for a thorough analysis of inflation and its broader societal repercussions.

## The biblical view of money and inflation

Debt is one of the reasons of the expanding money supply that leads to inflation. The Bible says a lot about money, and many of its financial cautions are about debt. “The rich rule over the poor”, “and the borrower is the servant of the lender.” Borrowing money and getting into debt puts you in a situation where the lender has a lot of power over you. The government spends more than it receives in revenue. Every day, the national debt grows. The Bible also teaches that borrowing and not repaying is evil. “The wicked borrows and does not repay”, “but the righteous is gracious and gives.” More money can be printed indefinitely. Citizens, foreign governments, and commercial institutions lend money to the government. Will we ever be able to pay off our debt? Even if we do, the currency will be devalued<sup>11</sup>.

Individuals (and governments) should have accurate weights and measurements, according to the Bible. “You shall not have two kinds of weights in your bag, large and small.” “Unequal weights and unequal measures are both an abomination to the Lord.” “You shall have a fair balance, a fair ephah, and a fair bath.” What should Christians do in

<sup>11</sup> W. Larkin, *The Ethics of Inflation: A Biblical Critique of the Causes and Consequences*, “Grace Theological Journal” 1982, Vol. 3(1).

the face of rising inflation? We should begin by repaying our debts. We can't expect the government to live within its means if we don't lead by example and do so ourselves. "Worship the Lord with your riches and the first fruits of all your harvests; then your barns will be filled with abundance, and your vats will overflow with new wine". We must also make wise investments. We should begin by diversifying. Solomon advises investors to "divide your share by seven, even by eight, for you do not know what calamity can happen on earth". Diversifying your portfolio makes sense because no one can foretell the future properly and consistently. By diversifying your investments, you reduce the overall risk of your portfolio<sup>12</sup>.

We are on the verge of economic insecurity. As a result, we must trust the Lord with our money and be good stewards of the resources God has provided for us. Although the term "inflation" is not used in the Bible, the concept of a persistent rise in prices – and the pain it causes – can be found throughout the pages. When the Aramians attacked Israel under King Jehoram of Israel, for example, the Israelites endured tremendous inflation. The capital's siege caused a lack of products and, as we would say nowadays, unmanageable inflation: "There was a severe famine in Samaria." The siege lasted so long that the donkey's head was sold for eighty silver pieces and the dove's cup for five silver pieces". People ate donkey heads and burned pigeon droppings if they could get their hands on them since inflation was so high. Under these tough conditions, King Jehoram was willing to surrender to Aram. In truth, he blamed God, not himself, for the situation: "This disaster is from the Lord". However, the prophet Elisha gave him hope that he would live another day: "'Hear this message from the Lord,' Elisha said. This is what the Lord Says: Until tomorrow in Samaria's markets, six quarts of flour will cost only one silver piece, and twelve quarts of grain barley will cost only one silver piece". God promised that prices would plummet substantially, signaling the end of the siege<sup>13</sup>.

Thus, inflation has existed for a long time, and examples in Scripture show that it is exacerbated by wars, disruptions in supply chains, and blockades. Greed, which can manifest as price gouging, dishonest weights and measures, and so on, is another component that contributes to inflation. "Do not have two different weights in your bag, one heavy and one light," the Bible says frequently. Do not keep two

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<sup>12</sup> R. Chandran, *7 Biblical Economic Principles*, 1<sup>st</sup> ed., Books on Demand 2020.

<sup>13</sup> Ibidem.

different measuring devices at home. One large and one little. You must have exact and trustworthy weights and measures”<sup>14</sup>.

The issue with fraudulent means is that if you buy 100 USD for ten pieces of a product but only receive eight, your purchasing power has been reduced. You are actually paying 1.25 USD rather than 1.00 USD due to rapid inflation. If biblical prohibitions against deceptive weights and measures are respected, they will help to reduce inflation. Global inflation is expected to occur as part of God’s judgment on the globe during the tribulation: “When the Lamb broke the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, “Come!” When I turned around, there was a black horse in front of me! Its rider was clutching a pair of scales. Then I heard a voice among the four living creatures say, “Two pounds of wheat a day’s wage and six pounds of barley a day’s wage, and don’t damage it oil and wine”. Luxuries will still be available, but needs will be insufficient, according to this assessment. This third horseman of the Apocalypse closely follows the herald of war. The reality of inflation should serve as a reminder to us all that riches are transient: “Just look at riches, and they will vanish, for they will surely sprout wings and fly like an eagle to the sky”. We’ve all felt like Haggai’s folks at some point: “You earn a wage, only to put it in a purse of”. We should put our faith in something more dependable. The rich, according to Paul, should “hope not in riches that are so uncertain, but in God, who gives us all things abundantly for our joy”. We can store up riches in heaven, rich or poor. We have a more certain hope than the depreciation of money: “Those who trust in their riches will perish, but the righteous will flourish like a green leaf”<sup>15</sup>.

## Conclusion

Inflation is an economic phenomenon characterized by broad price increases and a decline in money’s purchasing power. Theological viewpoints on inflation varies greatly depending on religious traditions, scriptural interpretations, and the social and ethical ideals of various theologians and religious groups.

Theological debates about the price and inflation dimensions frequently center on ethical concerns about the economic system and its influence on individuals and society. Different religious beliefs provide diverse perspectives on these economic concerns. Although a religious perspective can bring useful insight into economic issues,

<sup>14</sup> J.C. James, *Bible*, 1<sup>st</sup> ed., Print & Media 2020.


<sup>15</sup> Ibidem.

actual economic policies and solutions are frequently impacted by a complex interplay of factors such as political, social, and cultural considerations. It is vital to recognize that addressing the practical difficulties associated with prices and inflation necessitates incorporating theological insights into a larger debate.


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## The Social Message of John Paul II's Encyclicals in the Implementation of Horizontal Principles in EU Projects

As it is indicated by the analysis of source documents and literature of the subject, John Paul II can be considered a proponent of human rights, which has been expressed in particular in his numerous works. During his pontificate, Pope John Paul II issued many encyclicals and other documents in which he discussed the issues *ad naturam* of human rights in many aspects (not only in the context of the teaching of the Catholic Church), including pointing to the essential social and individual value of human dignity, freedom and social justice for a particular man. The issue of social values is at the same time the essence of horizontal principles, which should be implemented for the benefit of society in connection with the implementation of projects co-financed from European Union funds. Although the strategic documents of the EU, which specify the concept of "horizontal principles", do not directly indicate the inspiration of the achievements of John Paul II's social thought, in the opinion of the authors, the requirement to implement horizontal principles in EU projects is part of the essence of the message of papal encyclicals.

**Key words:** encyclicals of John Paul II, horizontal principles, EU projects, economic and social policy.

## Introduction

As the analysis of source documents and literature on the subject indicate, John Paul II can be considered a proponent of human rights. During his pontificate, the Polish Pope issued among others many encyclicals in which he characterized the issues of *ad naturam* of human rights in many aspects, pointing e.g. the importance of human dignity, freedom, work, property, as well as social justice. The issue of these values, especially in the field of “full accessibility”, is at the same time the essence of horizontal principles that should be implemented for the benefit of society in connection with the implementation of projects co-financed from European Union funds. Although the strategic documents of the EU, which specify the concept of “horizontal principles”, both from several decades ago and those in force in the perspective of 2021-2027, do not directly indicate the inspiration of the achievements of John Paul II's social thought, in the opinion of the authors, the requirement to implement horizontal principles in EU projects is part of the essence of the message of papal encyclicals.

The aim of this article is therefore to answer the research question whether the need to implement horizontal principles in the implementation of projects financed from European Union funds is part of the social message of the encyclicals of Saint John Paul II. Therefore, the authors made a critical analysis of the literature on the subject and source documents. On the basis of their own professional experience related to the development of strategic documents formalizing the process of applying for investment support from public funds, they also prepared relevant potential examples in the implementation of horizontal principles in EU projects. This study is an extension of the authors' previous research, the results of which are presented in the following publications: “The principle of equal chances versus the concepts of labor market”<sup>1</sup>, characterizing the socially important policy of “equal opportunities and non-discrimination” in the single EU internal market, as well as “Competitiveness of an enterprise – a potential applicant for support from European Union funds. Case study

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<sup>1</sup> M. Proniewski, P. Piątkowski, A. Niedźwiecki, *the principle of equal chances versus the concepts of labor market*, “Optimum. Studia Ekonomiczne” 2017, No. 5, pp. 51-66.

in the field of financial analysis”<sup>2</sup>, the subject of which is an analysis of the issue of competitiveness of an entity managing not only on the domestic market, but also conducting international expansion on the Euromarket in accordance with horizontal EU policies.

## The Social “Dimension” of John Paul II’s Encyclicals

Pope John Paul II promulgated fourteen encyclicals during his 26-year pontificate. According to the authors, their fundament is the teaching of the Second Vatican Council, the essence of which was dialogue in the Community and openness to entities from its environment. In fact, in all of them, to a greater or lesser extent, the Polish Pope referred to social issues. The following encyclicals should be mentioned as the most important in the social sphere: *Redemptor hominis*<sup>3</sup>, *Laborem exercens*<sup>4</sup>, *Sollicitudo rei socialis*<sup>5</sup>, *Centesimus annus*<sup>6</sup>, *Fides et ratio*<sup>7</sup>. In them, John Paul II is believed to have expressed in detail and

<sup>2</sup> M. Proniewski, A. Niedźwiecki, *Competitiveness of an enterprise – a potential applicant for support from European Union funds. Case study in financial analysis*, in: ed. M. Proniewski, *Economy – enterprise – region: selected aspects*, Białystok 2020, pp. 61-99.

<sup>3</sup> John Paul II, *Supreme pontiff encyclical letter REDEMPTOR HOMINIS to His Venerable Brothers in the Episcopate, the Priest, the Religious Families, the Sons and Daughters of the Church and to all Men and Women of good will at the beginning of his papal ministry*, [https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_enc\\_04031979\\_redemptor-hominis.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_04031979_redemptor-hominis.html) (accessed: 10.09.2023).

<sup>4</sup> John Paul II, *LABOREM EXERCENS. To His Venerable Brothers in the Episcopate to the Priests, to the Religious Families, to the sons and daughters of the Church and to all Men and Women of good will on Human Work on the ninetieth anniversary of Rerum Novarum*, [https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_enc\\_14091981\\_laborem-exercens.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_14091981_laborem-exercens.html) (accessed: 10.09.2023).

<sup>5</sup> John Paul II, *SOLLICITUDO REI SOCIALIS. To the Bishops, Priests Religious Families, Sons and Daughters of the Church and all People of good will for the twentieth anniversary of Populorum Progressio*, [https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_enc\\_30121987\\_sollicitudo-rei-socialis.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_30121987_sollicitudo-rei-socialis.html) (accessed: 10.09.2023).

<sup>6</sup> John Paul II, *CENTESIMUS ANNUS. Encyclical letter to his Venerable Brother Bishops in the Episcopate the Priests and Deacons, Families of Men and Women religious all the Christian faithful and to all Men and Women of good will on the hundredth anniversary of Rerum Novarum*, [https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_enc\\_01051991\\_centesimus-annus.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_01051991_centesimus-annus.html) (accessed: 10.09.2023).

<sup>7</sup> John Paul II, *FIDES ET RATIO of the supreme pontiff John Paul II to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on the relationship between faith and reason*,



in depth his position on issues related to human rights, emphasizing their inseparable connection with the teaching of the Catholic Church, including its social teaching and fundamental Christian values.

*Redemptor hominis*, John Paul II's first encyclical, published in 1979, emphasizes the value and dignity of every human person and his or her rights and freedoms. As K. Swatkowski points out,

John Paul II mentions a number of types of freedom. On the basis of the Pope's teaching, we can indicate the freedom of: speech, science, culture, thought, conscience and belief, religions and beliefs practiced, choice of a specific status or profession, freedom to found a family, freedom to found associations and assemblies, freedom of movement within and out of the country, pace of life (...). For the Pope, man is a free being (...). So freedom is not only something that is right to man, but it is part of his nature.<sup>8</sup>

In turn, W. Karasiński points out that in this encyclical for the first time

the Pope points to the word "ability", which defines man as a subject of responsibility. In this sense, freedom is the inalienable foundation of human action, indicating the directions of his action or omission. As far as man's ability to choose is concerned (...), freedom becomes the source of responsibility for his actions.<sup>9</sup>

It should be mentioned that the issue of the "ability" – de facto "empowerment" of an individual to act independently for his own good, as well as the social good, the Polish Pope returns many times in his later encyclicals. For him, freedom is the essence of humanity. It is indispensable in actions or deliberate omissions rationally chosen by the individual, and in fact by "all" members of the Community.

The third encyclical of John Paul II, published in 1981, *Laborem exercens* discusses the rights of workers and the value and subjectivity of human work, emphasizing the importance of decent work for the development of the individual and the whole society. In its content, he refers to *Redemptor hominis*, indicating that man has the right to work, de facto "choice" of work, providing him with a dignified existence and giving him the opportunity to develop. In its preamble *Laborem exercens* the Polish Pope states:

[https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_enc\\_14091998\\_fides-et-ratio.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_14091998_fides-et-ratio.html) (accessed: 10.09.2023).

<sup>8</sup> K. Swatkowski, *John Paul II's apology of human freedom*, "Rocznik Teologii Katolickiej" 2022, Vol. 21, pp. 239-240.

<sup>9</sup> W. Karasiński, *The concept of freedom in the teaching of John Paul II during pilgrimages to the Homeland*, "Studia Wrocławskie" 2007, Vol. 10, p. 201.

Man is to eat daily bread from his work and through work he is to contribute to the continuous development of science and technology, and especially to the continuous improvement of the cultural and moral level of the society in which he lives as a member of a fraternal community. Work means every activity which a man performs, whatever its nature and circumstances, that is, every human activity which can and must be considered work in the midst of all the richness of the activities of which he is capable and disposed of by his very nature, by his very humanity.<sup>10</sup>

This thought is particularly important not only in the historical context of the creation of *Laborem rxercens*, i.e. then global economic crisis, the intensified Cold War and the activation of the Polish social movement – the “first Solidarity”, but they are also valid today – in the era of globalization, internationalization and digitization, where, according to the authors, but only apparently, the importance of human work in the social and economic aspect is decreasing.<sup>11</sup>

The encyclical *Sollicitudo rei socialis* from 1987 concerns the eponymous, how important especially in the world of that time, which was on the verge of systemic transformation, the eponymous “care for social issues”, not only the primacy of “efficiency and profit”. Her rhetoric focuses on the issue of “social justice”, understood especially in the category of the need to intensify economic development, and at the same time the responsibility of the authorities, but also society for the poor and needy. In the introduction to the main part of this document, John Paul II indicates among others that the teaching, and therefore also more broadly the Church’s activity in the social field, should be subject to “necessary changes dictated by various historical conditions and the constant course of events in which the life of individuals and societies passes.”<sup>12</sup> The Polish Pope correctly diagnoses the cause of social inequalities in the internationalized and at the same time strongly corporatist world economy, writing:

<sup>10</sup> John Paul II, *LABOREM EXERCENS...*, [https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_enc\\_14091981\\_laborem-exercens.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_14091981_laborem-exercens.html) (accessed: 10.09.2023).

<sup>11</sup> M. Grewiński, *Digitization and social innovations – perspectives and threats for society*, “Kwartalnik Nauk o Przedsiębiorstwie SGH” 2018, No. 46, pp. 19-28, [https://cejsh.icm.edu.pl/cejsh/element/bwmeta1.element.ojs-doi-10\\_5604\\_01\\_3001\\_0012\\_0980](https://cejsh.icm.edu.pl/cejsh/element/bwmeta1.element.ojs-doi-10_5604_01_3001_0012_0980) (accessed: 15.09.2023).

<sup>12</sup> John Paul II, *SOLLICITUDO REI SOCIALIS...*, [https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_enc\\_30121987\\_sollicitudo-rei-socialis.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_30121987_sollicitudo-rei-socialis.html) (accessed: 10.09.2023).

we stand (...) in the face of the grave problem of the unequal distribution of the means of necessities which are naturally intended for all people, and therefore also of the benefits deriving from them. This is not the fault of the handicapped masses, much less because of inevitable necessities arising from natural conditions, or by coincidences in general (...). The very concept of development, seen in the perspective of universal interdependence, is undergoing a significant change. True development cannot consist in the mere accumulation of wealth and the possibility of making greater use of goods and services, if this is achieved at the expense of the underdevelopment of the masses and without due consideration for the social, cultural and spiritual dimensions of the human being.<sup>13</sup>

In the opinion of the authors, it is difficult not to agree with the theses concerning the creation and redistribution of the product contained in the encyclical *Sollicitudo rei socialis*. They are also very relevant today, after the crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, one of the effects of which was the above-average profitability recorded in the pharmaceutical sector... The question remains open: at whose expense?<sup>14</sup>

The encyclical *Centesimus annus* published in 1991 on the occasion of the hundredth anniversary of the publication of another, important in the socio-economic aspect encyclical *Rerum novarum*, objectively characterizes, in the opinion of the authors, de facto returns to the principles of the social teaching of the Church from almost a century ago and emphasizes the importance of the free market characterized at that time by Pope Leo XIII, and at the same time the need to respect workers' rights and obligations of the state towards society – citizens.<sup>15</sup> John Paul II, referring to the dynamics of the world system from nearly 100 years ago – the decline of Pax Britannica, writes e.g. that “in the field of economy, in which discoveries and applications of exact sciences were used, a new structure of production of consumer goods was gradually formed. A new form of property – capital – a new form of labor – wage labor appeared, the characteristic feature of which was that the arduous rhythm of production was determined only by the desire to increase productivity and multiply profit, without taking into account factors such as gender, age or family situation of

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<sup>13</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>14</sup> *Report: Healthcare billionaires who got rich from the coronavirus pandemic*, “Forbes” (online edition, 28.05.2020), <https://www.forbes.pl/biznes/epidemia-koronawirusa-kto-sie-wzbogacil-na-epidemii-milardy-na-koronawirusie/4syxw2z> (accessed: 15.09.2023).

<sup>15</sup> P. Jarecki, *Some elements of relektury “Rerum Novarum”*, “Studia Theologica Varsaviensia” 1992, No. 1(30), pp. 77-86.

the employees. Labor thus became a commodity that could be freely bought and sold on the market, and whose price was determined by the law of supply and demand, regardless of the minimum subsistence necessary for the livelihood of the person and his family. The employee was not even sure that he would be able to sell his “goods”. He was constantly threatened by unemployment, which, in the absence of social welfare, put him in front of the spectre of starvation.”<sup>16</sup> It should be noted that in *Centesimus annus* the Polish Pope emphasizes that the regulatory and countercyclical actions of the authorities in the sphere of economy and the policy pursued should serve the dignity and freedom of every human person. Humans, citizens, should not be seen by the authorities as “tools” to achieve only their economic or political goals, but as independent subjects – beings with dignity and “ability” to direct their lives. This encyclical unequivocally stands on the side of the individual’s right to own private property, emphasizing that it is in fact a “natural” right that should be effectively protected by society and the state. What is important, in the encyclical *Centesimus annus* John Paul II refers to the principle of subsidiarity, which says that decisions should be made at the lowest possible level – where it is possible, and local and regional authorities representing the society of “small homelands” should have autonomy and control over methods and tools of activating development.<sup>17</sup> The authority at the national level in this aspect should prepare only general standards of conduct – strengthen the rights of citizens and communities.<sup>18</sup>

The last of the encyclicals of John Paul II *Fides et ratio* from 1998 indicated by the authors emphasizes in the social sphere the importance of science and culture for activating the development of the individual as well as the whole society. On the other hand, however, he points out that in the community one cannot be content only at the primacy of technology in social life: “it remains true, however, that there is still a kind of positivist mentality that has not abandoned the illusion that, thanks to the achievements of science and technology, man can,

<sup>16</sup> John Paul II, *CENTESIMUS ANNUS...*, [https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_enc\\_01051991\\_centesimus-annus.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_01051991_centesimus-annus.html) (accessed: 10.09.2023).

<sup>17</sup> W. Łużyński, *Elements of the principle of subsidiarity in the encyclical of Benedict XVI “Caritas in veritate”*, “Theology and Man” 2012, No. 20, pp. 69-82.

<sup>18</sup> G. Dutkiewicz, *Local government in the context of the principle of subsidiarity in the social teaching of the Catholic Church*, “Przegląd Religioznawczy” 2019, No. 3(273), pp. 151-159.

like a demiurge, ensure complete control over his fate.”<sup>19</sup> The Polish Pope also points out that man is a social being – he functions among others in the family:

man is not created to live alone. He is born and grows up in a family in order to later integrate his work into social life. From the day of his birth, therefore, he is integrated into various traditions, taking from them not only language and cultural formation, but also many truths in which he believes, as it were, instinctively. During the growth and maturation of the personality, these truths can be challenged and subjected to critical evaluation, which is a special form of thought activity. But when this process is accomplished, it happens that man again accepts the same truths, based on his own experience or on the reasoning he has carried out.<sup>20</sup>

In conclusion, Pope John Paul II in his encyclicals, characterizing the individual and society in a postulative approach, points to the need to ensure freedom for man and the community, respect for individual activity, and therefore private property, universal application of the principle of subsidiarity in social life, as well as taking care of the “weaker”, and thus universal solidarity. In turn, the state is to be responsible for protecting individual rights, ensuring social justice and promoting the “common good”.

## Horizontal principle of equal opportunities in the draft financial perspectives of the EU until 2020

In historical terms, the primary horizontal principle implemented from the point of view of social interest within the framework of European Union projects was “equal opportunities”, the essence of which corresponds to the “direction” to the needs and aspirations of the individual, which is the subject of postulates contained in the content of papal documents indicated in the earlier part of the article. It should be mentioned that from the formal point of view, the guidelines on “equal opportunities” prepared several years ago in the EU did not explicitly indicate the use of John Paul II's encyclicals in their preparation. Nevertheless, a reading of the strategic documents on guaranteeing the “equality approach” indicates the identity of the issue of “equal

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<sup>19</sup> John Paul II, *FIDES ET RATIO*..., [https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_enc\\_14091998\\_fides-et-ratio.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_14091998_fides-et-ratio.html) (accessed: 10.09.2023).

<sup>20</sup> Ibidem.

opportunities” both in the documents of the Catholic Church and in the norms prepared by the essentially secular bodies of the EU.

The principle of equal opportunities provides precisely the possibility of participation in the labor market of people and social groups potentially excluded from it to some extent. The practice of its application assumes the need to eliminate barriers in free access to the labor market, which, as it should be noted, from the point of view of “social justice”, is a postulate indicated earlier by the Polish Pope in his first encyclical. As noted in the relevant guidelines for the previous programming periods, i.e. 2007-2013<sup>21</sup> and 2014-2020<sup>22</sup>, good practices on “equal opportunities” include:

1. Elimination of discrimination in the labor market, including gender disproportions, as well as elimination of mobbing.
2. Ensuring access to buildings and their spaces by persons with disabilities (including those with motor and intellectual disabilities, autism spectrum disorders, deaf, visually impaired and blind people) in order to provide them with unlimited mobility and free employment opportunities.
3. Facilitated access to education (including co-financing of training provided by the entrepreneur for his staff), e.g. regardless of the employee’s degree of mobility.
4. Providing a system of care for relatives of employees (including company kindergartens, nurseries, stationary day care for bedridden people).
5. More flexible working conditions, including, for example: flexible working hours (it is possible to set your own working hours between the employee and the supervisor); work from home (remote performance of assigned duties), in connection with the performance of which the employer provides, among others, the

<sup>21</sup> Regulation (EC) No. 1080/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 on the European Regional Development Fund and repealing Regulation (EC) No. 1783/1999; Council Regulation (EC) No. 1083/2006 of 11 July 2006 laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund and repealing Regulation (EC) No. 1260/1999.

<sup>22</sup> Regulation (EU) No. 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Fund Cohesion and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No. 1083/2006.



necessary computer equipment and other necessary equipment of the workplace, including the installation of broadband access at the employee's home; part-time work; evening work; possibility to work one day a week (or a few hours during the adopted account period of a week) at home *online*, if the nature of the job permits.

In connection with the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities, employers should be motivated to eliminate barriers to free access to the workplace. In this respect, it should be considered constructive to indicate the need to implement measures to eliminate disparities in equal access to employment:

the project has a positive impact on the horizontal policy of the EU listed in Article 16 of Council Regulation (EC) No. 1083/2006, if (...) contributes to equal opportunities on the labor market, (a) (...) thanks to its implementation it will be possible to implement (...) actions taken to eliminate existing or potential barriers to access to existing or planned positions (...) <sup>23</sup>,

which is related to the role of the state in the economy, rather as a regulator of processes than a participant in the "market game", which was emphasized in the encyclicals of John Paul II.

## Horizontal principles in the draft EU Financial Perspectives until 2027

Currently, i.e. in the EU financial perspective for 2021-2027<sup>24</sup>, four horizontal principles should be implemented, the implementation of which can be considered important from the point of view of respecting individual rights, as well as in the social context, which is a postulate of e.g. encyclicals of John Paul II indicated in the earlier part of the article. According to Article 9 of Regulation (EU) 2021/1060 of the European Parliament and of the Council:

1. Member States and the Commission shall ensure respect for fundamental rights and compliance with the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union in the implementation of the Funds.

<sup>23</sup> Regulation (EC) No. 1080/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council (...).

<sup>24</sup> Regulation (EU) No. 2021/1060 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2021 laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund Plus, the Cohesion Fund, the Just Transition Fund and the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund, as well as financial rules for those and for the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, The Internal Security Fund and the Financial Support Instrument for Border Management and Visa Policy.



2. Member States and the Commission shall ensure that equality between men and women and gender mainstreaming are taken into account and promoted throughout the processes of preparation, implementation, monitoring, reporting and evaluation of programs.
3. Member States and the Commission shall take appropriate steps to prevent any discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation during the preparation, implementation, monitoring, reporting and evaluation of programs. In particular, accessibility for persons with disabilities should be taken into account in the preparation and implementation of programs.
4. The objectives of the Funds shall be pursued in accordance with the objective of promoting sustainable development as set out in Article 11 TFEU and taking into account the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement and the principle of ‘do no serious harm’.<sup>25</sup>

Good practices for the implementation of horizontal principles indicated in Article 9 of Regulation (EU) 2021/1060 of the European Parliament and of the Council include actions recommended in previous financial perspectives of the European Union, in particular for people with disabilities, currently developed in the concept of universal accessibility referred to as “universal design.”<sup>26</sup>

As part of the preparation for the implementation of the project, in accordance with the “Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union”<sup>27</sup>, which contains rights and principles in relation to: dignity, freedom, equality, solidarity, civil rights and justice in the European Union, the beneficiary of support from EU funds is obliged to ensure respect for horizontal principles at every level of the implemented project, which consists of management activities in the context of the project being financed, the purchase of goods and services necessary for its implementation, as well as the sale of services in the single internal market. In the “management area”, the persons delegated to implement the project should be selected on the basis of actual skills, knowledge and experience, and the scope of their work should

<sup>25</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>26</sup> M.M. Perkowska, T. Bajkowski, *Universal design in the university space – ideas, possibilities, good practices*, Białystok 2022, pp. 213-230.

<sup>27</sup> *CHARTER OF FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS OF THE EUROPEAN UNION* (2000/C 364/01), “Official Journal of the European Communities”, 18.12.2000, [https://www.google.pl/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwji-9jq6taBAxUELRAIHf52CRAQFnoECBUQAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.europarl.europa.eu%2Fcharter%2Fpdf%2Ftext\\_en.pdf&usg=AOvVaWIAYFXDljoLCBl6p5R1r4&opi=89978449](https://www.google.pl/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwji-9jq6taBAxUELRAIHf52CRAQFnoECBUQAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.europarl.europa.eu%2Fcharter%2Fpdf%2Ftext_en.pdf&usg=AOvVaWIAYFXDljoLCBl6p5R1r4&opi=89978449) (accessed: 12.09.2023).

be specified and adapted in such a way as to enable the project staff “personal and professional development and ensure the possibility of reconciling professional and personal life”. Employees – project staff should be employed on the basis of qualifications – regardless of gender, and their remuneration should correspond to the rates applied by the beneficiary of support for similar positions. Every person employed under the project should be provided with the right to free speech, formulation of proposals, comments, ideas affecting the efficient and effective implementation of the project. In case of inaccuracies, misunderstandings or conflicts, the project coordinator should try to resolve the issues through dialogue. As it follows from the above, within the framework of project personnel management, attention should be paid to the subjectivity of each person involved in its implementation. Respect for the rights of project personnel is important in this respect. It should be emphasized again that despite the lack of formal reference to the documents authored by John Paul II in the content of the strategic document, their message and logic, which presents somewhat a human being as a subject, not an “object of action”, has been preserved in the “guidelines” for the implementation of projects financed from EU funds.<sup>28</sup>

The purchase of services (including construction services among others under the “design and build” concept) and goods necessary for the project should be carried out in compliance with the procedures applicable to expenses incurred under public funds, and the procedures carried out should be carried out with standardized document templates, transparent procedures, devoid of provisions that may be considered discriminatory. According to the authors, this confirms the concept of the functioning of economic power characterized in the documents authored by John Paul II, who indicated as the proper model of economic power, not so much the direct participation of the authorities in economic processes, but the creation of conditions for their efficiency. It should be reminded that the Polish Pope was a supporter of the free market, of course respecting and realizing workers’ rights and ensuring participation in social life for the “weaker”.

The horizontal principles for the implementation of EU projects also indicate the need to select external contractors based on experience, in order to ensure the best possible results in the project in proportion to the expenditure incurred. In the authors’ opinion, this is consistent with the message of the encyclicals of John Paul II, in particular the indication of effective use of resources at the disposal of society and

<sup>28</sup> M. Pawlak, *Project Management*, Warszawa 2020, pp. 216-218.

honesty – also in the context of respect for the rights of business partners. It should be noted that the procedures to be used for the implementation of projects should indicate the rights and obligations of parties wishing to establish cooperation, and the project documentation is to be made available on uniform terms to all interested parties in the implementation of a given project, including social partners. The conditions of admission to participation in the project should include objective rules for the recruitment of its participants, and an indisputable and multifaceted assessment by persons unrelated to the potential beneficiary of support is to be ensured, which is also associated with the postulate of creating rules, and not strictly the participation of “authorities” in economic processes, as John Paul II wrote.

## Conclusion

The social and economic thought contained in documents, especially the encyclicals of John Paul II, is particularly important in modern times. Although the papal documents were prepared a dozen or even several dozen years ago, their message is still valid. The essence of socio-economic postulates contained in the encyclicals of John Paul II is respect for every human person, the primacy of work and honesty, care on the part of the authorities for the efficiency of economic processes, but with the application of the principle of subsidiarity and respect for the rights of the “weaker”. These issues have been the subject of interest and regulation by the European Union in recent years e.g. within the framework of “horizontal principles” that should be implemented in projects financed from EU funds, which, in the authors’ opinion, should be considered the most appropriate both from the point of view of the effectiveness of support for beneficiaries and the implementation of social interest. However, it is a misfortune that in the strategic Community documents, in which “horizontal principles” are indicated, there is not even a brief mention of which documents from the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s contained their original concept and who was its author.

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## What to Do with Free Time? The Prospect of Strengthening Societal Security in the Opinion of Polish Theologians

The article is aimed at diagnosing the opinions of Polish theologians on the possibilities of parishes as regards organisation of free time of the faithful in order to consolidate societal security. The basis for formulating the presented conclusions were the results of empirical surveys conducted with members of the Society of Dogmatic Theologians operating in Poland (N=64). The test method used was a diagnostic survey, the technique – a questionnaire, and the research tool – a questionnaire form. A nonparametric chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) test and the Spearman correlation analysis were used to analyse the results. The paper is of an interdisciplinary nature. It fits in the area of research pertinent to (pastoral) theology and security studies.

**Key words:** free time, societal security, Church, theologians, Poland.



## Introduction

Systematic reflection on free time<sup>1</sup> is clearly becoming an indispensable space for scientific inquiry.<sup>2</sup> It is spending free time that is a particularly big challenge for many young people,<sup>3</sup> who are often forced to fight for its proper filling. Nowadays, this fight is often aimed against new technologies – a source of many addictions standing in the way of individual development or setting relationships. Spending free time is not only a strictly intellectual problem, considered from the perspective of ethics<sup>4</sup> or pedagogics,<sup>5</sup> but also provokes exploration in relation to *praxis*. By nature man is a temporal creature, whose being in the world goes on between the poles delimited by work and free time. Hence, the current research challenge is to create assumptions that would allow us to properly define the relationship between these two mutually important areas of human existence.<sup>6</sup> Spending free time, which relates to all stages of human life and development, is becoming an increasingly important challenge also for contemporary pastoral activity of the Church.<sup>7</sup>

The purpose of the in this article is to diagnose the opinion of Polish theologians affiliated in the Society of Dogmatic Theologians about the order to consolidate societal security. The research was motivated by the understanding of free time based on its negative definition – as the time free from the need expressed in the form of work. It is therefore the time that remains for a person after they have fulfilled their school, professional and household duties, and in which

<sup>1</sup> The article has been written as part of the project “Bezpieczeństwo narodowe – religia – historia” [National Security – Religion – History] carried out at the Interdisciplinary Research Centre of the University of Warsaw “Tożsamość – Dialog – Bezpieczeństwo” [Identity – Dialogue – Security].

<sup>2</sup> J.L. Rose, *Free Time*, Princeton 2016.

<sup>3</sup> G. Węgrzyn, D. Miłaszewicz, *Gospodarowanie rzeczywistymi zasobami czasu wolnego przez studentów – wybrane aspekty*, “Prace Naukowe Uniwersytetu Ekonomicznego we Wrocławiu” 2018, No. 509, pp. 441-450.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. M. Ickiewicz-Sawicka, *Etyczny wymiar czasu wolnego – wybrane aspekty*, “Akademia Zarządzania” 2021, No. 5(1), pp. 154-166; R. Strzelecki, *Etyka a czas*, “Kultura i Rozwój” 2017, Vol. 4(5)/101, pp. 96-102.

<sup>5</sup> J. Pięta, *Pedagogika czasu wolnego*, Warszawa 2004.

<sup>6</sup> B. Kolny, *Czas wolny w świetle zrównoważonego rozwoju*, “Konsumpcja i Rozwój” 2014, Vol. 2(7), pp. 28-38.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. M. Ostrowski, *Kultura wolnego czasu*, in: *Kościół w życiu publicznym. Teologia polska i europejska wobec nowych wyzwań*, Vol. 2, *Materiały spotkań sekcyjnych*, K. Gózdź, K. Klauza, Cz. Rychlicki, H. Słotwińska, P. Szczur (eds.), Lublin 2004, pp. 279-291.



they do whatever fits their needs and interests.<sup>8</sup> Understood as a social and cultural phenomenon, it can be used for rest, entertainment, charitable or self-fulfilment activities, and its basic characteristics are sought by researchers in being voluntary and autotelic.<sup>9</sup>

Considering the ever growing interest in the issue of free time in the last decades,<sup>10</sup> it is worth to bear in mind the need of modern man to use this time for regeneration of psychophysical forces and development, including spiritual development. The danger lurks in wasting it on activities that threaten human physical, mental or social health. At the same time, – which should not be forgotten – the origin of many social pathologies is the lack of skills, opportunities or needs for quality leisure time. That is why the benefit of free time requires awakening the needs of a higher order and the aspirations to meet them, and above all – the ability to use it.<sup>11</sup> It is to be expected that in the research in the area of security studies,<sup>12</sup> including those concerning societal security,<sup>13</sup> the issue of free time will be an increasingly frequent research topic.

<sup>8</sup> T. Wujek, *Praca domowa i czynny wypoczynek ucznia*, Warszawa 1975.

<sup>9</sup> E. Tarkowska, *Czas społeczny a czas wolny: koncepcje i współczesne przemiany*, in: *Kobieta i kultura czasu wolnego*, A. Żarnowska, A. Szwarc (eds.), Warszawa 2001, p. 20. However, the second of these free time activities – autotelicity could be questioned. Its spending can be understood in the context of something subordinate to work, as a period of gaining the strength and regeneration of forces needed to perform it.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. J. Pięta, *Pedagogika czasu wolnego*, Nowy Dwór Mazowiecki 2014; E. Tarkowska, *Czas w społeczeństwie. Problemy, tradycje, kierunki badań*, Warszawa 1987; B. Gruszyn, *Czas wolny – aktualna problematyka*, Warszawa 1970.

<sup>11</sup> I. Urych, *Kultura fizyczna w kształtowaniu bezpieczeństwa zdrowotnego*, Warszawa 2018, pp. 11-113.

<sup>12</sup> We assume after Waldemar Kitler that: “The purpose of research in security studies is to identify cultural, material-energy and social conditions that affect the living and development conditions of the individual in a state, a social group (nation), a state and an international environment, defining the rules and forms of organising and protecting against negative factors of the natural, social and cultural environment for these entities, as well as determining the rights and regularities occurring in this respect.” W. Kitler, *Organizacja Bezpieczeństwa Narodowego Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej. Aspekty ustrojowe, prawno-administracyjne i systemowe*, Toruń 2017, pp. 21-22.

<sup>13</sup> After Aleksandra Skrabacz and Stanisław Sulowski we assume that societal security is: “protection of existential foundations of people’s lives, providing an opportunity to meet individual (material and spiritual) needs and to implement life aspirations by creating conditions for work and study, health protection and pension guarantees.” Societal security therefore covers all legal, organisational and educational activities that are carried out by governmental, non-governmental

## Theological perspective

Passing to the main part of the research, it is first worth reflecting on the perspective of thinking about time that has been developed within Catholic theology. It may be assumed that since the studied group of respondents is made up of theologians, their thinking about spending free time will in a sense be conditioned theologically. Let us note that as regards the issue of time, the biblical sources are particularly abundant.<sup>14</sup> Already over twenty-five years ago, Professor Father Stanisław Bielecki of the Catholic University of Lublin wrote in the initial sentences of his book concerning the issue of time in the epistles of St. Paul:

The problem of the right way for a Christian to experience time is becoming more and more acute nowadays. Although this is a problem that is primarily related to the practice of everyday living, it nevertheless requires theoretical studies. Christian theology is constantly facing the challenge of continuous quest so as to extract doctrinal topics from the treasury of revelation that would be close to the mentality and needs of modern man.<sup>15</sup>

Systematic reflection on time led the researcher to thinking not only about “the right way to experience time,” but also to recognize the challenge posed by the issue of time for pastoral theology. In the last sentences of the book cited above, the scholar arrives at a conclusion:

For a modern Christian, time is a nonempty χρόνος of entertainment and amusement, but salvific καιρός – an opportunity to sow for an eschatological harvest by doing good. Καιρός – is a time of constant readiness for Parousia and constant fight against inner and external adversities. It may be said that the word καιρός summarizes all that is connected with the Christian way of experiencing time. Can pastoral theology be indifferent to this issue?<sup>16</sup>

The Christian theological reflection on time made it possible to isolate a specific mental current referred to as kairology, which can also

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and local government entities, as well as by citizens themselves. They are aimed at providing a specific standard of living for people, social groups, families, as well as at preventing their marginalization and social exclusion. Cf. A. Skrabacz, S. Sulowski, *Wstęp*, in: *Bezpieczeństwo społeczne. Pojęcia. Uwarunkowania. Wyzwania*, A. Skrabacz, A. Sulowski (eds.), Warszawa 2012, p. 7.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. A. Jankowski, *Biblijna teologia czasu*, Kraków 2018.

<sup>15</sup> S. Bielecki, *Kairos chrześcijanina w ujęciu listów św. Pawła*, Lublin 1996, p. 27.

<sup>16</sup> Ibidem, p. 409.

be understood as a space for the pastoral activity of the Church.<sup>17</sup> The specification of this mental current was possible thanks to the research of the German Protestant theologian and philosopher Paul Tillich (1886-1965).<sup>18</sup> His theological and philosophical reflections relating to socio-political life (including socialism) had a great impact on theological research on Kairos.<sup>19</sup> Therefrom emerges a Christocentric view of history.<sup>20</sup> Theological research based on the distinction between *καῖρός* and *χρόνος* allow one to speak about time perceived also qualitatively and not only quantitatively. Christological reflection on history allows us to view every historical moment as an open door of eternity. Analysing Joseph Ratzinger's thoughts on time, Grzegorz Barth concludes that "The earthly and temporal existence of a Christian is already now being shaped by the ultimate. Eternity is the content of time."<sup>21</sup>

The theological reflection on time, the carrying force of which is Christology, is permeated with contents that have been developed in the course of research in the theology of history and theology of the signs of time. In Christ, eternity not only "entered" time, but became "accessible"; human history has gained eternal significance, the tension between time and eternity has been overcome.<sup>22</sup> Therefore, experiencing

<sup>17</sup> Cf. A.L. Szafrński, *Kairologia. Zarys nauki o Kościele w świecie współczesnym*, Lublin 1990.

<sup>18</sup> Of particular significance are the texts written in the period before leaving Germany. Cf. P. Tillich, *Der Widerstreit von Raum und Zeit. Schriften zur Geschichtsphilosophie, Gesammelte Werke VI*, Stuttgart 1963. The thought about time is scattered with varying quantitative and qualitative intensity in other works of the thinker. Cf. P. Tillich, *A History of Christian Thought, from its Judaic and Hellenistic Origins to Existentialism*, ed. C.E. Braaten, New York 1972; P. Tillich, *Beyond Religious Socialism*, "Christian Century" 1949, Vol. 66(24), pp. 732-733; P. Tillich, *The Shaking of the Foundations*, New York 1948; P. Tillich, *The Protestant Era*, trans. J.L. Adams, Chicago 1948; P. Tillich, *Religion and Secular Culture*, "The Journal of Religion" 1946, Vol. 26(2), pp. 79-86; P. Tillich, *Nietzsche and the Bourgeois Spirit*, "Journal of the History of Ideas" 1945, Vol. 6(3), pp. 307-309, P. Tillich, *The Interpretation of History*, New York 1936.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. E.R. Earle, *The Rhetoric of Kairos: Paul Tillich's Reinterpretation*, "Journal of Communication and Religion" 2017, Vol. 40(4), pp. 24-36; W. Schüssler, *Kairos. Dimensionen eines zentralen Begriffs im philosophisch-theologischen Werk Paul Tillichs*, "Trierer Theologische Zeitschrift" 2014, Vol. 2, pp. 110-122; S. Bielecki, *Poglądy Paula Tillicha na temat kairos a współczesne opracowania teologii pastoralnej*, "Roczniki Teologiczne" 2000, Vol. 47(6), pp. 143-162.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. S. Bielecki, *Poglądy Paula Tillicha na temat kairos...*, p. 146.

<sup>21</sup> G. Barth, *Czas w teologii. Myśląc z Josephem Ratzingerem*, "Verbum Vitae" 2020, Vol. 38/1, p. 381.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. B. Tóth, *Eternity in Time – Time in Eternity: Temporality and the Human Self in the Eschaton*, "Irish Theological Quarterly" 2019, Vol. 84/4, pp. 373-391;

time, also including free time, is always associated with experiencing the sense of life. Pastoral proposals will probably need to be increasingly filled with offers concerning organisation of free time.

## Research methodology

The article is aimed at diagnosing the opinions of Polish theologians on the possibilities of parishes as regards organisation of free time of the faithful in order to consolidate societal security. The analysis of the results of empirical studies presented in this article, which is an essential stage in achieving the research objective, has allowed to answer the following research questions:

- What characteristics and functions of free time are identified by theologians in their opinions?
- What factors influence contemporary people's decisions on how to spend their free time?
- How are the features of free time activities offered by parishes defined?
- What forms of free time activities are organised by parishes, and what is their impact on the parishioners?
- How does the nature of free time activities offered by parishes affect the faithful?

To diagnose the opinions of the respondents on the possibilities of organising free time of the faithful by parishes in order to consolidate societal security the test method a diagnostic survey, the technique – a questionnaire, and the research tool – a questionnaire form were used.<sup>23</sup> The conducted research was quantitative in nature. The questions included in the survey questionnaire were closed-ended, with an option for respondents to select 'other' in some instances and indicate their own opinions.

The survey was carried out between 12 and 14 September 2022 and interviewed were 64 members of the Dogmatic Theologians Society.<sup>24</sup>

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K. Gózdź, *Czas a wieczność według Josepha Ratzingera/Benedykta XVI*, "Studia Nauk Teologicznych PAN" 2017, Vol. 12, pp. 155-171; V. Lomuscio, *From Temporality to Eternity: Three Philosophical Approaches*, "Religious Inquiries" 2015, Vol. 7/4, pp. 17-30; A. Jackelén, *Time and Eternity. The Question of Time in Church, Science, and Theology*, Philadelphia-London 2005; J. Barbour, *The End of Time. The Next Revolution in Physics*, Oxford 1999; Cz.S. Bartnik, *Teologia historii*, Lublin 1999.

<sup>23</sup> J. Sztumski, *Wstęp do metodologii i technik badań społecznych*, Katowice 2010, pp. 190-192.

<sup>24</sup> Hereafter: DTS.

It is an organisation that affiliates (as at the time of the survey) 239 scholars occupied in their scientific and didactic work with dogmatic theology. Looking at this group from the scientific point of view, it is made up of 87 professors, 133 doctors, 19 masters (doctoral students). They represent diocesan and monastic seminaries as well as the following scientific centres: John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin, Adam Mickiewicz University (Poznań), Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University (Warsaw), Nicolaus Copernicus University (Toruń), University of Opole, John Paul II Pontifical University in Krakow, University of Szczecin, University of Silesia in Katowice, University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn, University of Białystok, University of Warsaw, Catholic Academy in Warsaw, Pontifical Faculty of Theology in Wrocław, Thomistic Institute of the Polish Dominican Province, College of Philosophy and Theology of the Polish Dominican Province. DTS members work at all theological faculties, are lecturers, and often also formateurs, in all theological seminaries in Poland. The majority of the members are priests – 198, and there are also 14 bishops who are members of the Society. As regards lay members, there are 27 people – 12 women (including 2 nuns) and 15 men.<sup>25</sup>

At its 335<sup>th</sup> Plenary Meeting, which took place in Warsaw on 8-9 March 2006, the Polish Episcopal Conference endowed DTS, as a private association of the faithful operating in Poland, with ecclesiastical juridical personality as defined by Can. 322 of the Code of Canon Law. The DTA articles provide that the Society is scientifically oriented<sup>26</sup> and its objectives are as follows:

- analysing the situation of man, world and Church in light of Divine Revelation;
- promoting theology in ecclesial and academic communities;
- supporting doctrinal works of the Polish Episcopal Conference;
- organising scientific seminars and symposia;
- concern for teaching dogmatic theology.

Those objectives are attained in particular through:

- promoting contacts between theologians and ecumenical dialogue, interreligious dialogue and dialogue between theology and culture;
- issuing own magazine and other publications;
- cooperation with theological societies, also from other countries;

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<sup>25</sup> Cf. *Wykaz członków (wrzesień 2022) TTD*, Archiwum Towarzystwa Teologów Dogmatyków.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. *Statut Towarzystwa Teologów Dogmatyków*, Chapter 1, § 1, p. 2, Archiwum Konferencji Episkopatu Polski.

- cooperation with scientific and ecclesiastical institutions;
- a scientific session organised at least once a year.<sup>27</sup>

It was at such a scientific session, held in the form of a scientific conference in Legnica on 12-14 September 2022, the survey the results of which have been published in this article was conducted. The event took place at the House of the Word Evangelising Formation Centre. 64 DTS members took part in the survey. According to the data contained in the DTS Archive, over the last six years, 60 to 70 people attended scientific conferences organised by the Society annually.<sup>28</sup> This indicates that the 64 survey participants are actively engaged in the Catholic Church's activities. Therefore, their insights regarding the parishes' abilities to utilize the free time of the faithful in enhancing societal security are deemed to be significant. The study's findings gain further importance due to the influential role of the research group within the church community, which contributes to forming opinions.

The selection of respondents was purposeful with a view to their profession and knowledge about the subject of the study. The largest group of respondents were people aged 41 to 70, as well as those from a town of over 100,000 inhabitants (see Table 1).

Table 1. Characteristics of respondents with a view to age and place of residence

Variable		n	%	Statistical test result*
Age	Less than 40	15	23.4	$\chi^2(3) = 22.25$ ; $p < 0.001$
	41-55	23	35.9	
	56-70	25	39.1	
	> 70	1	1.6	
Place of residence	Village	3	4.7	$\chi^2(3) = 80.88$ ; $p < 0.001$
	Small town (from 20 to 50 thou.) inhabitants	6	9.4	
	Medium town (from 50 to 100 thou.) inhabitants	8	12.5	
	Large city (over 100 thou. inhabitants)	47	73.4	

\*chi-square

Source: own research.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. *ibidem*, Chapter 2, § 5.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. Archiwum Towarzystwa Teologów Dogmatyków.

The IBM SPSS Statistics 25 package was used for statistical analysis of the results. The analysis with the chi-square test made it possible to check whether the compared groups of people are equal in number, as well as whether there is a statistically significant relationship between nominal variables. The effect was measured using the Cramer's V factor. On the other hand, using Spearman correlation analysis it was checked whether there was a statistically significant relationship between the analysed variables. The value of  $p < 0.05$  was adopted as a statistically significant level.

## Results of empirical research

### Characteristics of free time and its functions

The analysis of the research results made it possible to determine the characteristics of free time in the opinion of the theologians surveyed, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Characteristics of free time in the opinion of the priests surveyed

Statement	Fully agree		Rather agree		No opinion		Rather disagree		Fully disagree		Statistical test result*
	N	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	
A characteristic feature of free time is that it is not spent for money but for pleasure	12	18.8	24	37.5	13	20.3	9	14.1	6	9.4	$\chi^2(4) = 14.59$ ; $p = 0.006$
Free time means there is no haste; there is peace, contemplation, freeing oneself from duties and pressures	26	40.6	24	37.5	5	7.8	7	10.9	2	3.1	$\chi^2(4) = 39.91$ ; $p < 0.001$
Free time may be filled with rest, play and social, sports, artistic and other activities taken up on one's own, for self-development, self-education	43	67.2	20	31.1	0	0	1	1.6	0	0	$\chi^2(2) = 41.47$ ; $p < 0.001$



Statement	Fully agree		Rather agree		No opinion		Rather disagree		Fully disagree		Statistical test result*
	N	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	
Free time may be used for family or social life	48	75	15	23.4	1	1.6	0	0	0	0	$\chi^2(2) = 54.59$ ; $p < 0.001$
Free time may be used for activities that bring immediate benefits	23	35.9	25	39.1	5	7.8	8	12.5	3	4.7	$\chi^2(4) = 33.81$ ; $p < 0.001$
Nowadays free time is used for consumption	16	25	33	51.6	10	15.6	3	4.7	2	3.1	$\chi^2(4) = 49.91$ ; $p < 0.001$
Alcoholism, hooliganism, crime, drug addiction and other pathologies result from inability to spend quality free time	18	28.1	25	39.1	7	10.9	12	18.8	2	3.1	$\chi^2(4) = 25.53$ ; $p < 0.001$

\*chi-square

Source: own research.

The conducted survey shows that the majority of respondents agree with three features of free time, namely:

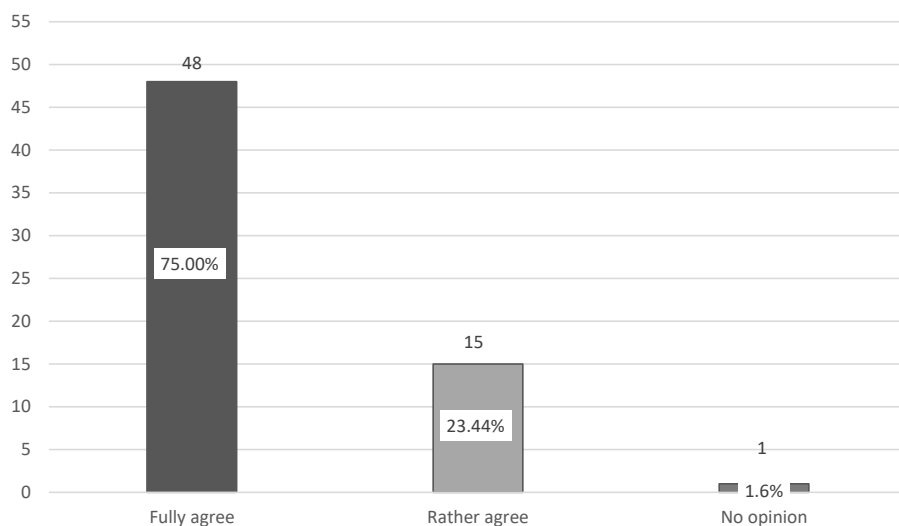
- free time means there is no haste; there is peace, contemplation, freeing oneself from duties and pressures;
- free time may be filled with rest, play and social, sports, artistic and other activities taken up on one's own, for self-development, self-education;
- free time may be used for family or social life.

As regards the other definitions of free time, most of the respondents said they rather agreed with them. However, in the case of two statements, a small, though slightly larger group of respondents in relation to the other definitions expressed the opinion that they rather disagreed with them. It concerns statements indicating that:

- alcoholism, hooliganism, crime, drug addiction and other pathologies result from inability to spend quality free time;
- a characteristic feature of free time is that it is not spent for money but for pleasure.

Out of the statements listed in Table 2, the utmost compliance is that free time can be used for family or social life (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Opinions of the respondents concerning the fact that free time may be used for family or social life.



Source: own research.

In addition, out of the subsequent statements concerning free time, there are also two that show a statistically significant relationship with the age of the surveyed people. The older the person, the more they agree that alcoholism, hooliganism, crime, drug addiction and other pathologies result from inability to spend quality free time. The opposite situation, i.e. a positive relationship concerns the statement indicating that free time can be used for activities that brings immediate benefits (Table 3).

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Table 3. Relationship between the age of the respondents and their opinion on the selected statements concerning free time

Statement	$r_s$	p
A characteristic feature of free time is that it is not spent for money but for pleasure	-0.23	0.07
Free time means there is no haste; there is peace, contemplation, freeing oneself from duties and pressures	-0.16	0.21
Free time may be filled with rest, play and social, sports, artistic and other activities taken up on one's own, for self-development, self-education	-0.08	0.54

Free time may be used for family or social life	-0.15	0.23
Free time may be used for activities that bring immediate benefits	0.27	0.03
Nowadays free time is used for consumption	-0.1	0.42
Alcoholism, hooliganism, crime, drug addiction and other pathologies result from inability to spend quality free time	-0.34	0.007

Source: own research.

## Factors influencing the decisions regarding spending free time by contemporary people

The factors that, according to most of the theologians surveyed, statistically significantly affect the decisions regarding spending free time by contemporary people include: friends, peers, and the Internet. As regards television and personal decisions, contradictory answers were given. The respondents' opinions as regards the factors influencing the decisions regarding spending free time by contemporary people are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Respondents' opinions as regards the factors influencing the decisions regarding spending free time by contemporary people

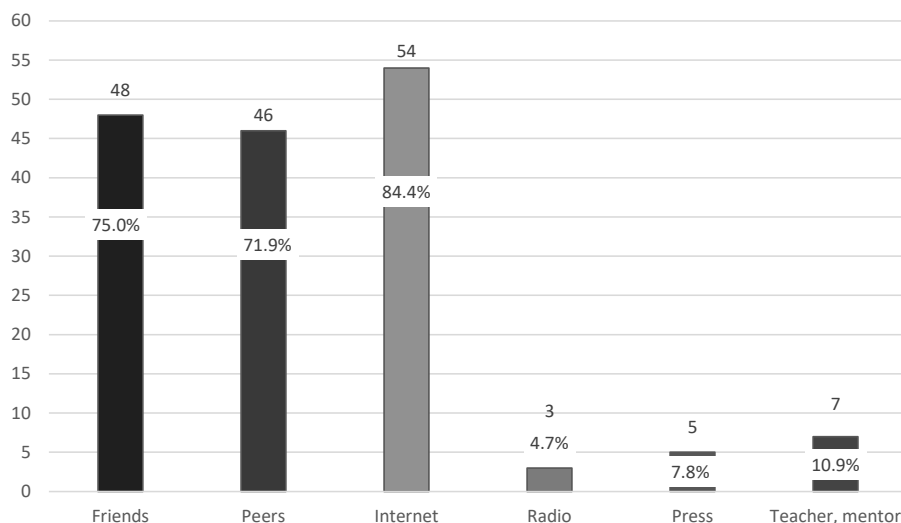
Factors influencing the decisions regarding spending free time by contemporary people	-		+		Statistical test result*
	n	%	n	%	
Friends	16	25	48	75	$\chi^2(1) = 16$ ; $p < 0.001$
Peers	18	28.1	46	71.9	$\chi^2(1) = 12.25$ ; $p < 0.001$
Books	56	87.5	8	12.5	$\chi^2(1) = 36$ ; $p < 0.001$
Press	59	92.2	5	7.8	$\chi^2(1) = 45.56$ ; $p < 0.001$
Teacher, mentor	57	89.1	7	10.9	$\chi^2(1) = 39.06$ ; $p < 0.001$
Radio	61	95.3	3	4.7	$\chi^2(1) = 52.56$ ; $p < 0.001$
Internet	10	15.6	54	84.4	$\chi^2(1) = 30.25$ ; $p < 0.001$
Family member	44	68.8	20	31.2	$\chi^2(1) = 9$ ; $p = 0.003$
Religion, priest, catechist	52	81.3	12	18.7	$\chi^2(1) = 25$ ; $p < 0.001$
Television	38	59.4	26	40.6	$\chi^2(1) = 2.25$ ; $p = 0.13$
Parents	51	79.7	13	20.3	$\chi^2(1) = 22.56$ ; $p < 0.001$
Personal decision	39	60.9	25	39.1	$\chi^2(1) = 3.06$ ; $p = 0.08$

\*chi-square

Source: own research.

Figure 2 represents three main factors influencing the decisions regarding spending free time by contemporary people and factors selected by the least number of respondents.

Figure 2. Respondents' opinions on factors influencing the decisions regarding spending free time by contemporary people.



Source: own research.

Figure 2 represents three main and selected by the least number of respondents factors influencing the decisions regarding spending free time by contemporary people. A smaller percentage of the oldest respondents indicated television, whereas in the case of a personal decision, it was indicated primarily by the youngest people (see Table 5).

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Table 5. Relationship between the respondents' age and their opinions as regards the factors influencing the decisions regarding spending free time by contemporary people

Who/what is influencing the decisions regarding spending free time by contemporary people	Less than 40 years				41-55 years				>55 years				Statistical test result*
	-		+		-		+		-		+		
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	
Friends	3	20	12	80	6	26.1	17	73.9	7	26.9	19	73.1	$\chi^2(2) = 2.66$ ; p = 0.88
Peers	2	13.3	13	86.7	7	30.4	16	69.6	9	34.6	17	65.4	$\chi^2(2) = 2.23$ ; p = 0.33

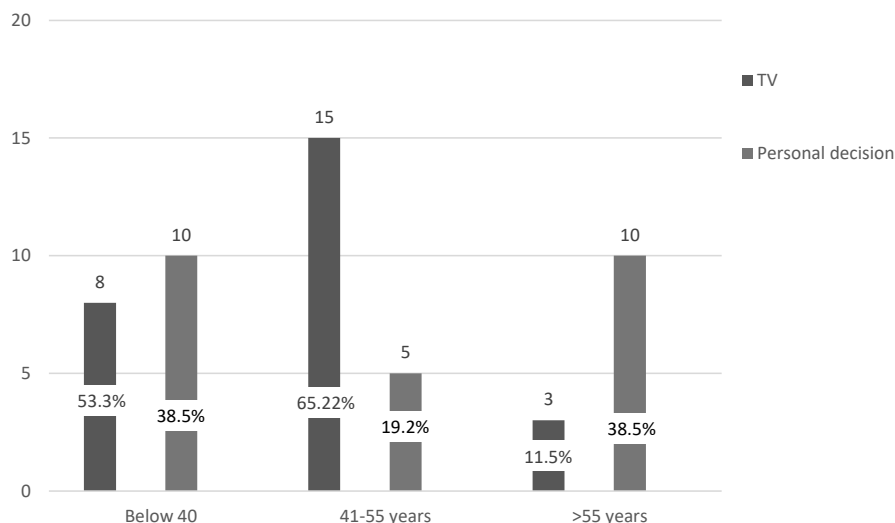
Who/what is influencing the decisions regarding spending free time by contemporary people	Less than 40 years				41-55 years				>55 years				Statistical test result*
	-		+		-		+		-		+		
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	
Books	12	80	3	20	20	87	3	13	24	92.3	2	7.7	$\chi^2(2) = 1.33$ ; p = 0.52
Press	15	100	0	0	20	87	3	13	24	92.3	2	7.7	$\chi^2(2) = 2.15$ ; p = 0.34
Teacher, mentor	13	86.7	2	13.3	20	87	3	13	24	92.3	2	7.7	$\chi^2(2) = 0.47$ ; p = 0.79
Radio	15	100	0	0	21	91.3	2	8.7	25	96.2	1	3.8	$\chi^2(2) = 1.61$ ; p = 0.45
Internet	2	13.3	13	86.7	3	13	20	87	5	19.2	21	80.8	$\chi^2(2) = 0.43$ ; p = 0.81
Family member	8	53.3	7	46.7	16	69.6	7	30.4	20	76.9	6	23.1	$\chi^2(2) = 2.48$ ; p = 0.29
Religion, priest, catechist	13	86.7	2	13.3	19	82.6	4	17.4	20	76.9	6	23.1	$\chi^2(2) = 0.64$ ; p = 0.73
Television	7	46.7	8	53.3	8	34.8	15	65.2	23	88.5	3	11.5	$\chi^2(2) = 15.89$ ; p < 0.001; Vcr = 0.5
Parents	11	73.3	4	26.7	17	73.9	6	26.1	23	88.5	3	11.5	$\chi^2(2) = 2.09$ ; p = 0.35
Personal decision	5	33.3	10	66.7	18	78.3	5	21.7	16	61.5	10	38.5	$\chi^2(2) = 7.71$ ; p = 0.02; Vcr = 0.35

\*chi-square

Source: own research.

It should be pointed out that a stronger relationship is characteristic of television (see Figure 3).

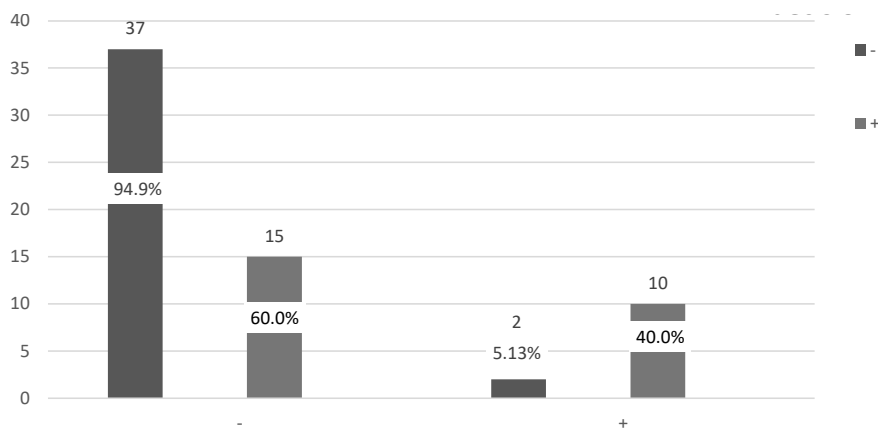
Figure 3. Relationship between the age of respondents and their opinions that it is television and personal decision that influence the decisions regarding spending free time by contemporary people.



Source: own research.

Subsequent statistically significant relationships regarding factors influencing decisions made in connection with spending free time by contemporary people relate to the correlation of the response “personal decision” with the response “religion, priest and catechist”, where:  $\chi^2(1) = 12.16$ ;  $p = 0.001$ ;  $V_{cr} = 0.44$ . In the group of theologians indicating a personal decision, fewer of them chose religion, priest and catechist (see Figure 4).

Figure 4. Relationship between factors indicated by respondents as influencing the decision how to spend free time, i.e. religion, priest and catechist and a personal decision.

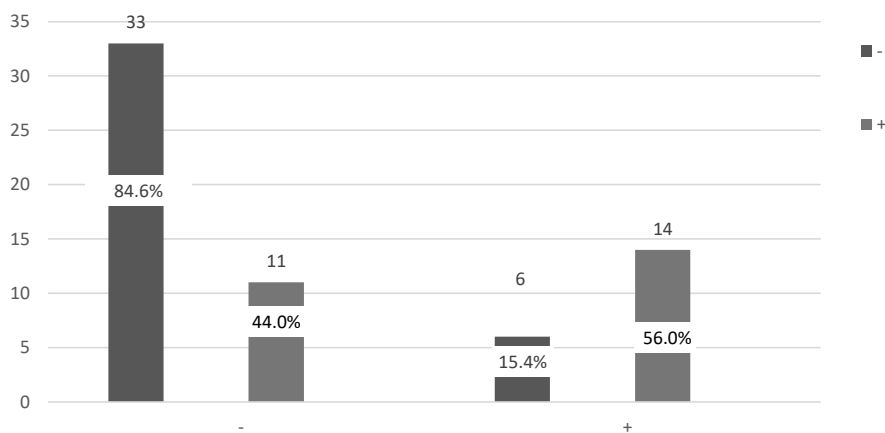


Source: own research.

A statistically significant relationship also applies to the response “a family member”, where:  $\chi^2(1) 11.7$ ;  $p = 0.001$ ;  $V_{cr} = 0.43$ . In the group of respondents indicating such factors as a personal decision, a larger percentage of them also chose a family member (see Figure 5).

Figure 5. Relationship between factors indicated by respondents as influencing the decision how to spend free time, i.e. a family member and a personal decision.

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Source: own research.



## Characteristics of free time organised by parishes

A statistically significant majority of the theologians surveyed indicated such features that characterise free time activities organised by parishes as self-improvement, rest, development of personal talents and formation of community leaders (see Table 6).

Table 6. Characteristics of free time organised by parishes

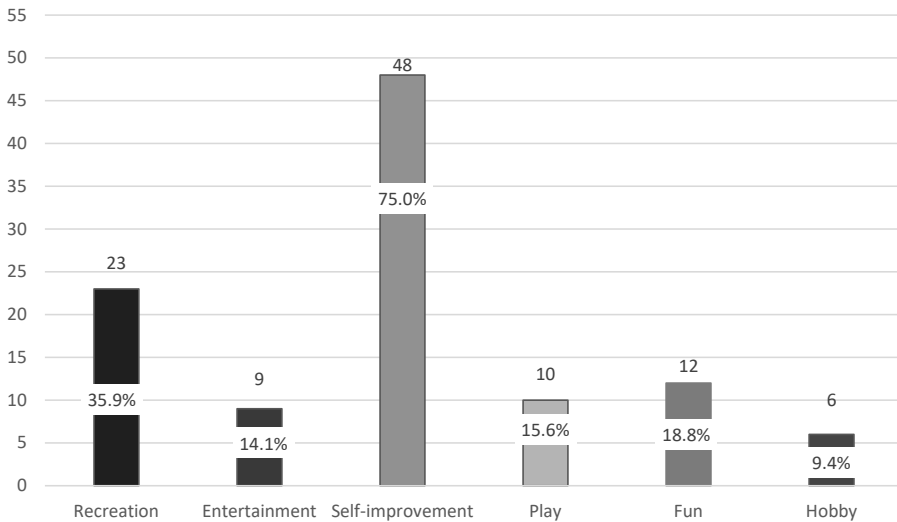
Characteristic of free time	-		+		Statistical test result*
	n	%	n	%	
Recreation	41	64.1	23	35.9	$\chi^2(1) = 5.06$ ; $p = 0.02$
Entertainment	55	85.9	9	14.1	$\chi^2(1) = 33.06$ ; $p < 0.001$
Self-improvement	16	25	48	75	$\chi^2(1) = 16$ ; $p < 0.001$
Rest	37	57.8	27	42.2	$\chi^2(1) = 1.56$ ; $p = 0.21$
Play	54	84.4	10	15.6	$\chi^2(1) = 30.25$ ; $p < 0.001$
Development of personal talents	39	60.9	25	39.1	$\chi^2(1) = 3.06$ ; $p = 0.08$
Fun	52	81.3	12	18.8	$\chi^2(1) = 25$ ; $p < 0.001$
Hobby	58	90.6	6	9.4	$\chi^2(1) = 42.25$ ; $p < 0.001$
Formation of community leaders	31	48.4	33	51.6	$\chi^2(1) = 0.06$ ; $p = 0.8$

\*chi-square

Source: own research.

The variables for which there were statistically significant differences in the number of analysed characteristics of free time organised by parishes are illustrated in Figure 6.

Figure 6. Percentage of the respondents indicating selected characteristics of free time organised by parishes.



Source: own research.

As regards the characteristics of free time activities organised by parishes, one statistically significant relationship was observed. It concerns rest. It is quite strong. This category was indicated mostly by the youngest people (see Table 7) and is most applicable to rest (see Figure 7).

Table 7. Relationship between the age of the respondents and their opinions concerning the characteristics of free time activities organised by parishes

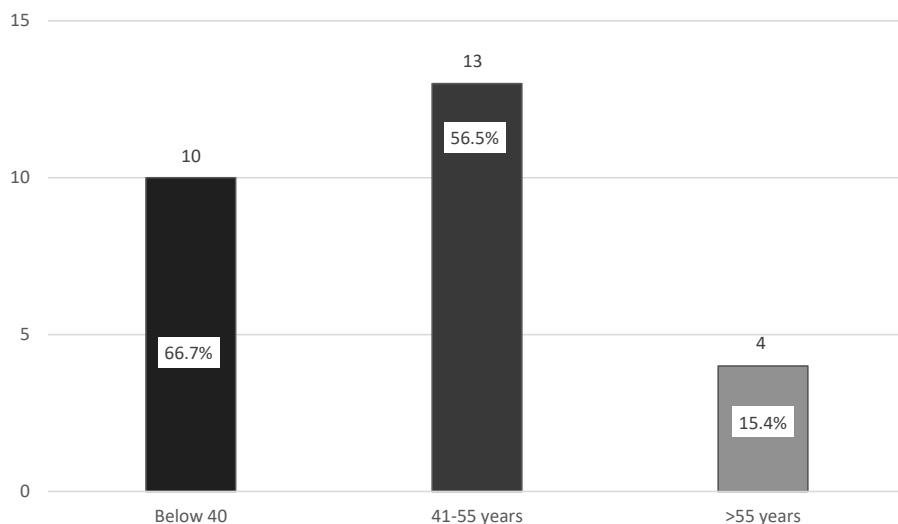
Characteristics of free time activities organised by parishes	Less than 40 years				41-55 years				>55 years				Statistical test result*
	-		+		-		+		-		+		
	N	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	
Recreation	6	40	9	60	16	69.6	7	30.4	19	73.1	7	26.9	$\chi^2(2) = 4.99$ ; p = 0.08
Entertainment	11	73.3	4	26.7	21	91.3	2	8.7	23	88.5	3	11.5	$\chi^2(2) = 2.66$ ; p = 0.27
Self-improvement	4	26.7	11	73.3	7	30.4	16	69.6	5	19.2	21	80.8	$\chi^2(2) = 0.85$ ; p = 0.66
Rest	5	33.3	10	66.7	10	43.5	13	56.5	22	84.6	4	15.4	$\chi^2(2) = 13.28$ ; p = 0.001; Vcr = 0.46

Characteristics of free time activities organised by parishes	Less than 40 years				41-55 years				>55 years				Statistical test result*
	-		+		-		+		-		+		
	N	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	
Play	13	86.7	2	13.3	19	82.6	4	17.4	22	84.6	4	15.4	$\chi^2(2) = 0.12$ ; p = 0.94
Development of personal talents	9	60	6	40	17	73.9	6	26.1	13	50	13	50	$\chi^2(2) = 2.94$ ; p = 0.23
Fun	10	66.7	5	33.3	20	87	3	13	22	84.6	4	15.4	$\chi^2(2) = 2.78$ ; p = 0.25
Hobby	14	93.3	1	6.7	22	95.7	1	4.3	22	84.6	4	15.4	$\chi^2(2) = 1.92$ ; p = 0.38
Formation of community leaders	9	60	6	40	12	52.2	11	47.8	10	38.5	16	61.5	$\chi^2(2) = 1.97$ ; p = 0.37

\*chi-square

Source: own research.

Figure 7. Relationship between the age of the respondents and their opinions that rest is the characteristic of free time activities organised by parishes.



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Source: own research.

### Free time activities organised by parishes

Among the forms of spending free time organised by parishes, a statistically significant majority of the theologians surveyed indicated

meetings of rosary circles and meetings of altar boys. Answers are different in connection with meetings developing personal talents, meetings of girl servants to Mary, organisation of day camps or winter camps, and sports activities. As regards other forms, the answers given by the respondents are characterized by variance. They include: meetings of parish choirs, organisation of summer for children, picnics, family meetings and meetings connected with the functioning of Caritas (see Table 8).

Table 8. Respondents' opinions concerning free time activities organised by parishes

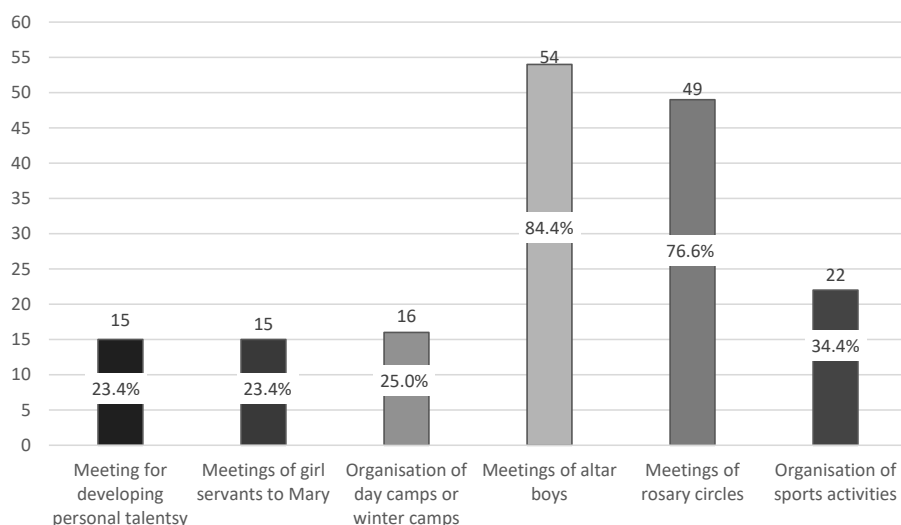
Free time activities organised by parishes	-		+		Statistical test result*
	n	%	N	%	
Meetings of parish choir	32	50	32	50	$\chi^2(1) = 0$ ; $p = 1$
Organisation of summer camps for children	39	60.9	25	39.1	$\chi^2(1) = 3.06$ ; $p = 0.08$
Meetings for developing personal talents	49	76.6	15	23.4	$\chi^2(1) = 18.06$ ; $p < 0.001$
Meetings connected with the functioning of Caritas	32	50	32	50	$\chi^2(1) = 0$ ; $p = 1$
Meetings of girl servants to Mary	49	76.6	15	23.4	$\chi^2(1) = 18.06$ ; $p < 0.001$
Organisation of day camps or winter camps	48	75	16	25	$\chi^2(1) = 16$ ; $p < 0.001$
Organisation of picnics, family meetings	32	50	32	50	$\chi^2(1) = 0$ ; $p = 1$
Meetings of altar boys	10	15.6	54	84.4	$\chi^2(1) = 30.25$ ; $p < 0.001$
Meetings of rosary circles	15	23.4	49	76.6	$\chi^2(1) = 18.06$ ; $p < 0.001$
Organisation of sports activities	42	65.6	22	34.4	$\chi^2(1) = 6.25$ ; $p = 0.01$

\*chi-square

Source: own research.

Free time spending forms for which statistically significant differences in numbers were found are shown in Figure 8.

Figure 8. Respondents' opinions concerning some of free time activities organised by parishes.



Source: own research.

As regards free time activities organised by parishes, no statistically significant relationship were observed. Also in terms of percentages the number of people among respondents from individual age groups who indicated the forms of free time activities presented in the table below is similar (see Table 9).

Table 9. Relationship between the age of the respondents and their opinions concerning free time activities organised by parishes

Free time activities organised by parishes	Less than 40 years				41-55 years				>55 years				Statistical test result*
	-		+		-		+		-		+		
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	
Meetings of parish choir	5	33.3	10	66.7	11	47.8	12	52.2	16	61.5	10	38.5	$\chi^2(2) = 3.1$ ; p = 0.21
Organisation of summer camps for children	9	60	6	40	14	60.9	9	39.1	16	61.5	10	38.5	$\chi^2(2) = 0.01$ ; p = 1
Meetings for developing personal talents	12	80	3	20	20	87	3	13	17	65.4	9	34.6	$\chi^2(2) = 3.29$ ; p = 0.19

Free time activities organised by parishes	Less than 40 years				41-55 years				>55 years				Statistical test result*
	-		+		-		+		-		+		
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	
Meetings connected with the functioning of Caritas	10	66.7	5	33.3	13	56.5	10	43.5	9	34.6	17	65.4	$\chi^2(2) = 4.52$ ; p = 0.1
Meetings of girl servants to Mary	12	80	3	20	14	60.9	9	39.1	23	88.5	3	11.5	$\chi^2(2) = 5.31$ ; p = 0.07
Organisation of day camps or winter camps	10	66.7	5	33.31	15	65.2	8	34.8	23	88.5	3	11.5	$\chi^2(2) = 4.24$ ; p = 0.12
Organisation of picnics, family meetings	8	53.3	7	46.7	9	39.1	14	60.9	15	57.7	11	42.3	$\chi^2(2) = 1.77$ ; p = 0.41
Meetings of altar boys	3	13	12	87	3	13	20	87	4	15.4	22	84.6	$\chi^2(2) = 0.34$ ; p = 0.85
Meetings of rosary circles	5	33.3	10	66.7	4	17.4	19	82.6	6	23.1	20	76.9	$\chi^2(2) = 1.29$ ; p = 0.53
Organisation of sports activities	11	73.3	4	26.7	12	52.2	11	47.8	19	73.1	7	26.9	$\chi^2(2) = 2.88$ ; p = 0.24

\*chi-square

Source: own research.

## Impact on the faithful of free time activities proposed by parishes

The conducted surveys allows to determine the impact of the forms of spending free time offered by parishes on the faithful. In this context, a statistically significant majority of the theologians surveyed indicated: courteousness, responsibility, dedication to others, selflessness as well as kindness, doing good for others. The opposite situation is characteristic of courage in life, patience, thrift, knowledge, competence and concern for nature. The discrepancy in the answers given concerns discipline, reliability, strong will, industriousness, patriotism and responding to injustice (see Table 10).

Table 10. Respondents' opinions concerning the impact on the faithful of free time activities proposed by parishes

Parishioners' characteristics that are influenced by free time activities proposed by parishes	-		+		Statistical test result*
	n	%	n	%	
Courteousness	17	26.6	47	73.4	$\chi^2(1) = 14.06$ ; $p < 0.001$
Responsibility	20	31.3	44	68.2	$\chi^2(1) = 9$ ; $p = 0.003$
Discipline, reliability	30	46.9	34	53.1	$\chi^2(1) = 0.25$ ; $p = 0.62$
Strong will	33	51.6	31	48.4	$\chi^2(1) = 0.06$ ; $p = 0.8$
Courage in life	40	62.5	24	37.5	$\chi^2(1) = 4$ ; $p = 0.046$
Industriousness	34	53.1	30	46.9	$\chi^2(1) = 0.25$ ; $p = 0.62$
Patience	40	62.5	24	37.5	$\chi^2(1) = 4$ ; $p = 0.046$
Dedication to others	15	23.4	49	76.6	$\chi^2(1) = 18.06$ ; $p < 0.001$
Thrift	51	79.7	13	20.3	$\chi^2(1) = 22.56$ ; $p < 0.001$
Knowledge, competence	40	62.5	24	37.5	$\chi^2(1) = 4$ ; $p = 0.046$
Selflessness	14	21.9	50	78.1	$\chi^2(1) = 20.25$ ; $p < 0.001$
Concern for nature	46	71.9	18	28.1	$\chi^2(1) = 12.25$ ; $p < 0.001$
Kindness, doing good for others	16	25	48	75	$\chi^2(1) = 16$ ; $p < 0.001$
Patriotism	30	46.9	34	53.1	$\chi^2(1) = 0.25$ ; $p = 0.62$
Responding to injustice	30	46.9	34	53.1	$\chi^2(1) = 0.25$ ; $p = 0.62$

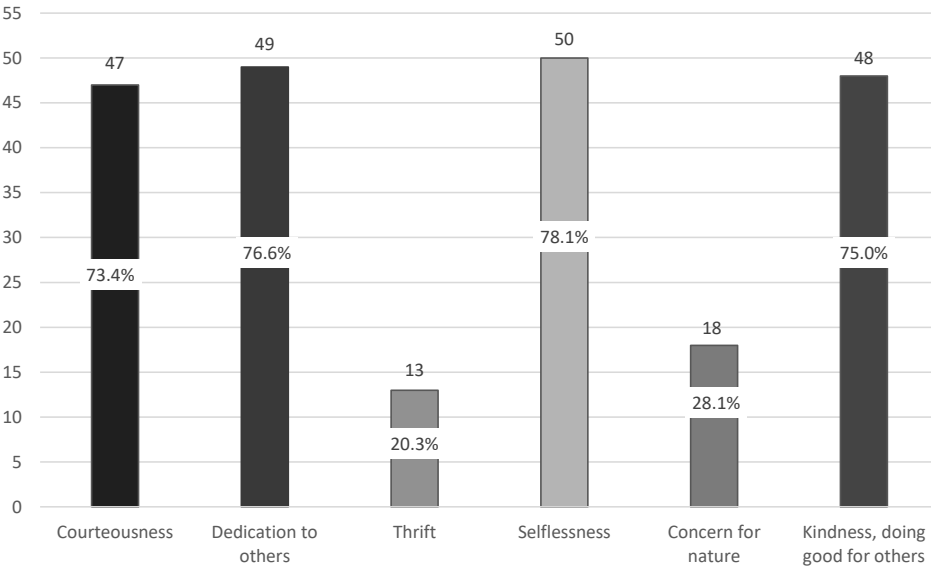
\*chi-square

Source: own research.

Variables for which statistically significant differences in numbers were found are shown in Figure 9.



Figure 9. Respondents’ opinions concerning certain characteristics of parishioners influenced by free time activities proposed by parishes.



Source: own research.

A statistically significant relationship concerns two from among parishioners’ characteristics that are influenced by free time activities proposed by parishes. Courteousness and patriotism were indicated primarily by older people (see Table 11).

Table 11. Relationship between the respondents’ age and their opinions concerning the characteristics of the faithful influenced by free time activities proposed by parishes

Characteristics influenced by free time activities proposed by parishes	Less than 40 years				41-55 years				>55 years				Statistical test result*
	-		+		-		+		-		+		
	N	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	
Courteousness	8	53.3	7	46.7	6	26.1	17	73.9	3	11.5	23	88.5	$\chi^2(2) = 8.52$ ; p = 0.02; Vcr = 0.37
Responsibility	4	26.7	11	73.3	11	47.8	12	52.2	5	19.2	21	80.8	$\chi^2(2) = 4.84$ ; p = 0.09
Discipline, reliability	8	53.3	7	46.7	11	47.8	12	52.2	11	42.3	15	57.7	$\chi^2(2) = 0.48$ ; p = 0.79

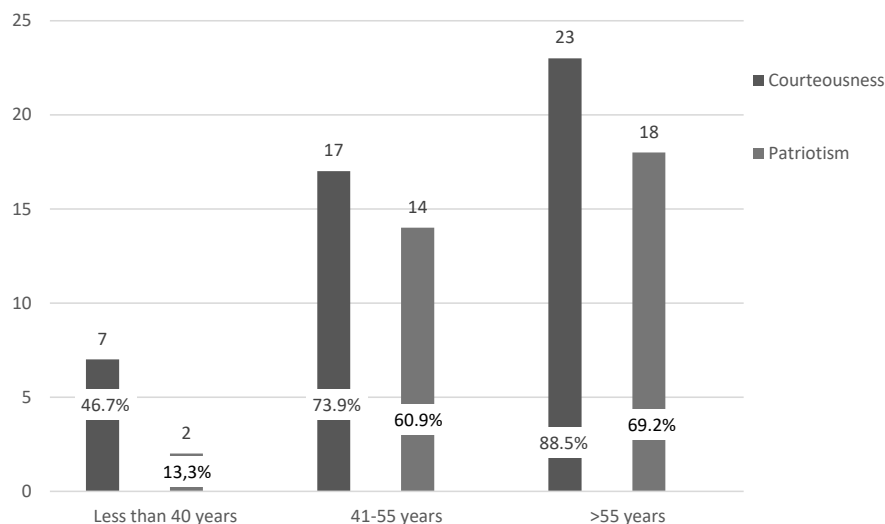
Characteristics influenced by free time activities proposed by parishes	Less than 40 years				41-55 years				>55 years				Statistical test result*
	-		+		-		+		-		+		
	N	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	
Strong will	9	60	6	40	14	60.9	9	39.1	10	38.5	16	61.5	$\chi^2(2) = 3.01$ ; p = 0.22
Courage in life	11	73.3	4	26.7	14	60.9	9	39.1	15	57.7	11	42.3	$\chi^2(2) = 1.03$ ; p = 0.6
Industriousness	9	60	6	40	14	60.9	9	39.1	11	42.3	15	57.7	$\chi^2(2) = 2.06$ ; p = 0.36
Patience	13	86.7	2	13.3	14	60.9	9	39.1	13	50	13	50	$\chi^2(2) = 5.5$ ; p = 0.06
Dedication to others	4	26.7	11	73.3	6	26.1	17	73.9	5	19.2	21	80.8	$\chi^2(2) = 0.43$ ; p = 0.81
Thrift	14	93.3	1	6.7	19	82.6	4	17.4	18	69.2	8	30.8	$\chi^2(2) = 3.6$ ; p = 0.17
Knowledge, competence	12	80	3	20	14	60.9	9	39.1	14	53.8	12	46.2	$\chi^2(2) = 2.82$ ; p = 0.25
Selflessness	4	26.7	11	73.3	4	17.4	19	82.6	6	23.1	20	76.9	$\chi^2(2) = 0.49$ ; p = 0.78
Concern for nature	13	86.7	2	13.3	16	69.6	7	30.4	17	65.4	9	34.6	$\chi^2(2) = 2.23$ ; p = 0.33
Kindness, doing good for others	6	40	9	60	5	21.7	18	78.3	5	19.2	21	80.8	$\chi^2(2) = 2.39$ ; p = 0.3
Patriotism	13	86.7	2	13.3	9	39.1	14	60.9	8	30.8	18	69.2	$\chi^2(2) = 12.8$ ; p = 0.002; Vcr = 0.45
Responding to injustice	10	66.7	5	33.3	10	43.5	13	56.5	10	38.5	16	61.5	$\chi^2(2) = 3.21$ ; p = 0.2

\*chi-square

Source: own research.

It should be pointed out that a stronger relationship concerns patriotism (see Figure 10).

Figure 10. Relationship between the respondents' age and their opinions concerning the influence of free time activities proposed by parishes on courteousness and patriotism.

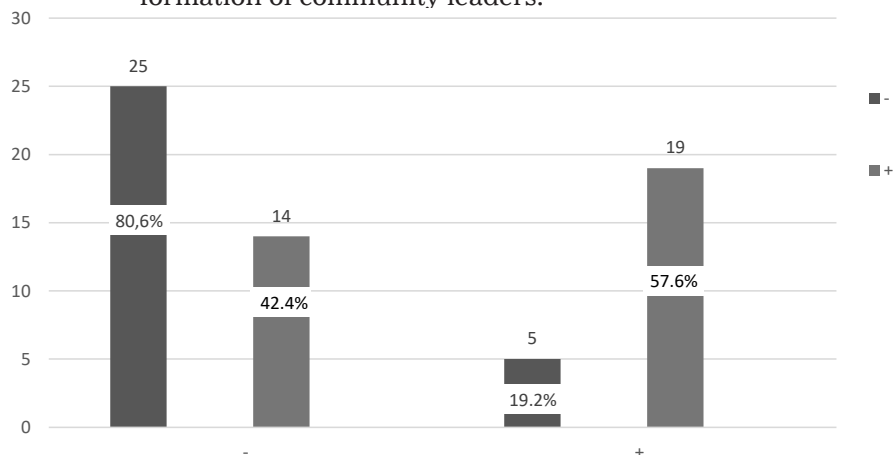


Source: own research.

Another statistically significant relationship concerns the categories characterising free time activities organised by parishes, namely formation of community leaders and development of personal talents, where:  $\chi^2(1) = 9.81$ ;  $p = 0.002$ ;  $V_{cr} = 0.39$ . In the group of theologians indicating one of these forms, the majority also chose the other (see Figure 11).

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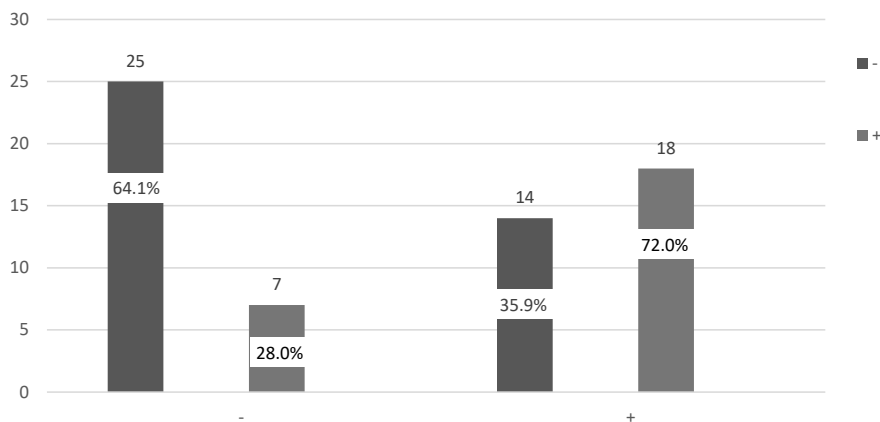
Figure 11. Relationship between the free time activities indicated by respondents consisting in development of personal talents and formation of community leaders.



Source: own research.

As regards free time activities organised by parishes, there was one statistically significant relationship between the variable for which divergent answers were given. This concerns meetings of parish choir and organisation of summer camps for children, where:  $\chi^2(1) = 7.94$ ;  $p = 0.01$ ;  $V_{cr} = 0.35$  (see Figure 12).

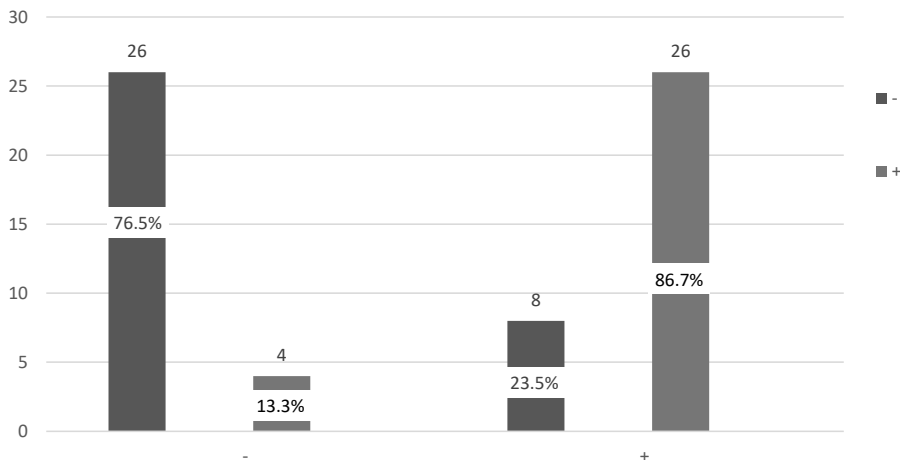
Figure 12. Relationship between the forms of spending free time organised by parishes indicated by respondents, namely meetings of parish choir and organisation of summer camps for children.



Source: own research.

Divergent responses (yes/no) also concerned certain factors influenced by the activities proposed by parishes. A strong, statistically significant relationship between responsibility, reliability and industriousness was observed, where:  $\chi^2(1) = 25.51$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ;  $V_{cr} = 0.63$  (see Figure 13).

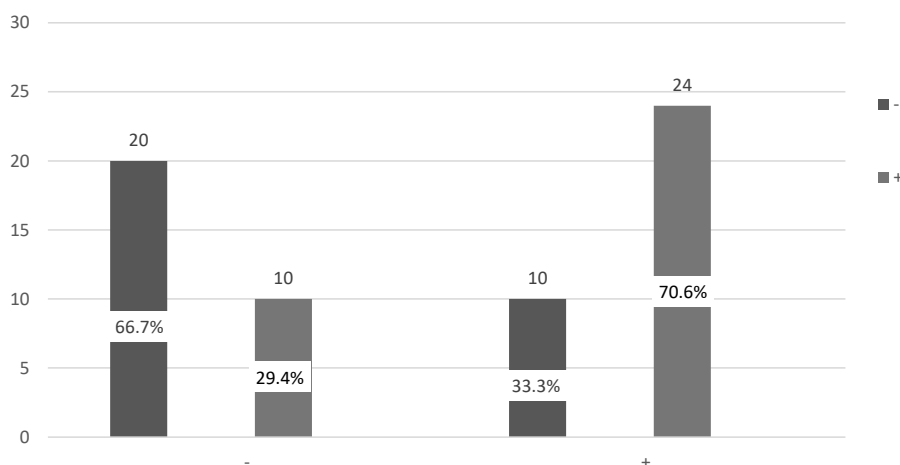
Figure 13. Relationship between discipline, reliability and industriousness influenced by free time activities proposed by parishes.



Source: own research.

An additional statistically significant relationship concerns connection of patriotism and responding to injustice, where  $\chi^2(1) 8.88$ ;  $p = 0.005$ ;  $V_{cr} = 0.37$ . In the case of theologians who indicated one factor, the majority also chose the other (see Figure 14).

Figure 14. Relationship between patriotism and responding to injustice influenced by free time activities proposed by parishes.



Source: own research.

## Conclusion

The purpose of the analysis carried out in this article was to diagnose the opinions of Polish theologians on the possibilities of parishes as regards organisation of free time of the faithful in order to consolidate societal security. Basing on the analysis of the results presented, the following conclusions have been formulated:

The thinking of theologians surveyed about free time corresponds with the intuitive understanding of the term. In light of the analysed answers, on the one hand, it is time free from duties and pressures, on the other – time of peace and no haste. As a significant percentage of them are priests, it is significant that contemplation was also indicated among the attributes of spending free time. If one looks at their professional life from the viewpoint of celebrating mass, for instance, one could venture a conclusion that both in the course of performing ministry and spending free time they are involved in activities directed towards the same goal, even if achieved in different ways. Further characteristics of free time are complemented by theologians' indication of how to fill it in such ways as: rest, fun, activities undertaken out of their own need for development and self-education, social activities,

sports, and artistic activities. What is particularly important from the perspective of thinking about societal security, free time can also be used for social life and life of the social unit to which researchers attribute considerable importance from the viewpoint of security – namely family.<sup>29</sup>

A conclusion of particularly eloquent importance is that the functions of spending free time indicated by theologians – building social bonds and teaching the principles of social morality – can be read as creating intangible dimensions of societal security. On the other hand, a smaller group of respondents indicated functions related to the implementation of its material aspect – organisation of free time for young people, support for societal security and organisation of support for victims of domestic violence. Perhaps those results could be explained in the context of the specificity of theology itself, i.e. a science mostly focused on intangible issues, and the characteristics of the Catholic Social Teaching, which is particularly concerned about community life.

According to most of theologians surveyed the factors that affect the decisions regarding spending free time by contemporary people include mainly: friends, peers, and the Internet. Attributing little importance to teachers and catechists should be considered symptomatic in this context. It may suggest that respondents are aware of ideological changes manifesting themselves in Polish society, especially within the younger generation of Poles. We are talking about a break with the tradition that is taking place today, which is manifested in the loss of social authority by such institutions as the school and the Church.

The research proves that features characterising free time activities organised by parishes are, in particular: self-improvement, rest, development of personal talents and formation of community leaders. Looking at these attributes integrally, one could therefore be tempted to conclude that participation in the activities they offer is aimed at ensuring the development of individuals in such a way that they could lead the social groups they belong to.

In the opinion of the majority of respondents the forms of spending free time organised by parishes are meetings of rosary circles and meetings of altar boys. Much less frequently they offer the faithful such meeting that would favour developing individual talents, day camps or winter camps, and sports activities.

Social  
Teaching of  
the Church

<sup>29</sup> M. Jankiewicz, *Family – Nation – State. The Triad of Creating Poland's National Security*, "Polish Journal of Political Science" 2021, Vol. 7(3), pp. 35-55.

The analysis of research results indicates that the forms of spending free time proposed by parishes have a positive impact on shaping among the faithful such qualities that are of an overwhelming importance from the perspective of interpersonal relations, and even more broadly – from the perspective of the proper functioning of society. These are: courteousness, responsibility, dedication to others, selflessness as well as kindness, doing good for others. A different choice refers to features that have a value especially for individual existence or those related to ecological security: courage in life, patience, thrift, knowledge, competence and concern for nature. This result may provoke a conclusion that theologians' thinking is guided by a community perspective, although most probably understood in accord with the premises of Christian personalism. In this context, it is worth noting that community and the primary importance of relationships should be seen in reference to their theological source – the Holy Trinity.


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## A New Beginning: On the Power and Powerlessness (*Macht und Ohnmacht*) of Thinking and Believing

Thinking Incarnation as a New Beginning (*ein neuer Anfang*) is a challenging hermeneutic task. The power of God's self-manifestation *in* and *through* the divine Word calls for considering Logos as the principle of life. In the task of understanding, what is most difficult is to bring together the beginning (*ἀρχή*) and the end (*ἔσχατον*): Protology and eschatology belong together (*zueiandergehören*). This task of thinking together is addressed not only to dogmatic theologians but to every human being encountered by the mystery of the Incarnation. As with every mystery, our human responsibility is to face divine self-epiphany not as a problem to be answered and solved in formal statements but as a genuine call for thinking (*Denkauftrag*).

**Key words:** incarnation, new beginning, *locus revelations*, hermeneutics, revelation, hermeneutics of hospitality.

God leads his people to himself through his self-revelation and self-manifestation and forms and transforms human history into the history of salvation (*salutis historia*). Divine care was remarkably pronounced in the prophets' complex life stories and destinies. The culmination of the prophecies was the proclamation of the promised Messiah within whom all the promises are fulfilled: "For no matter how many promises God has made, they are 'Yes' in Christ," ὅσαι γὰρ ἐπαγγελίαι Θεοῦ, ἐν αὐτῷ τὸ Ναί (2 Cor 1:20). John the Baptist, the greatest of the prophets, experiences the actual fulfilment of the promise. However, even he has to undertake the task of discernment, and only in faith recognizes the long-expected Savior of the world. Human outlooks and expectations prove to be constantly challenged by God's unique

engagements. John risks everything to identify and accept the Messiah. The most demanding aspect is to understand and experience that in meeting the Messiah, he meets God. God lets him discover himself most intimately through a personal encounter. Thus, God confirms in a new way that the history of salvation as the history of humanity walking humbly with him (Mic 6:8).

Incarnation is a genuinely new beginning. The newness of this beginning reminds us of the event of creation. It brings us back to the primordial horizon of a paradise-like relationship between God and human beings. This newness proclaims the possibility of returning to this original covenant, the first love, by turning to God. The prophetic voices come now together and join the voice of the Incarnated Logos: Repent and believe in the Gospel: μετανοεῖτε καὶ πιστεύετε ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ (Mk 1:12). As a pivotal point in history, Incarnation is a permanent invitation to conversion and communion with God. In this respect, it marks a new beginning and transforms the meaning of newness. Each time a human being meets God, it is a new beginning since it expresses the human answer to God's continual invitation to live with him.

The Prophets remind us that we always learn anew and always from the beginning. If education is self-education as a genuine care for the self, then there is no other way of learning to discern the permanent presence of the Divine in our life. The wise person (φρόνιμος) is able to listen carefully and responsibly to the disclosure of the Divine. The phronimos always answers differently since it requires the wisdom of the whole life to respond to the call that each time comes in a particular personal calling (vocation is God's calling) and can be discerned by the concrete human being in the specificity of their individual historical situatedness.

We do not discover God step by step, but rather always anew, and learn to be with him anew and from the very beginning. Only in such a way can we trust that our relationship will always be fresh, full of initial enthusiasm and fascination, like falling in love for the first time. Here, falling in love is not a matter of being overwhelmed by powerful feelings and fleeting attraction but as the art of love, the way of being with the Other in the life-giving and life-receiving relationship. One of the most crucial experiences is the ability to wonder (θαυμάζω), which inspires us in the true sense of filling us with the spirit of amazement and admiration. This new beginning of our love with God is the deepest desire of the human heart, which does not calculate and decide what serves specific purposes. To begin afresh means to work out many new and always different possibilities to develop as a human being every

time in this unique relationship. Discovering God is an experience of life and love, and thus cannot be reduced to any stagnated formula. The openness to the mystery is a condition *sine qua non* of faith. As such, it situates us in the horizon of infinite uncertainty, even the dark night of the soul (*la noche oscura del alma*). But it is also incomparable and everlasting fascination. It is, in itself, the journey toward union with God, when the experience of awakening and rejoicing in the presence of the Lord is the way (μέθοδος) toward and with God, and thus, the art of love.

The birth of Jesus brings the experience of the new into the world. A newborn child turns our vision to the beginning. Therefore, this beginning is a return to the very beginning: Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ Λόγος (J 1:1). This return is also a turn (*Kehre*) that cannot exclude the previous history. As such, it is a new turn to the ἀρχή happening in the life of the concrete human being. This turn is a matter of renewing the human mind, moreover, the whole human being, which is, in essence, the work of God and can be equated with the “regeneration by the Holy Spirit.” (ἔσωσεν ἡμᾶς διὰ λουτροῦ παλινγενεσίας καὶ ἀνακαινώσεως Πνεύματος Ἁγίου, Tit 3:5).

The new beginning brings joy to the world. Its source is the experience of closeness to the Lord, fulfilling the prophetic foretelling. In the historical darkness, God does not abandon his people. But his people need to want to listen, see, and understand. The Prophets, and now the Incarnated Word (*verbum caro*, ὁ Λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο, J 1:14) proclaim God News that God is with his people (Ἐμμανουήλ= Μεθ’ ἡμῶν ὁ Θεός, Mt 1:23). We can trust that God’s promises are fulfilled in our very eyes. They are truly being fulfilled. God speaks to us and tells us that he is always faithful to his promises. He calls us to understand that experiencing the fulfilment of the promise does not end the history with God but always opens it up and marks a new beginning. It is an opening toward God, an opening that prepares for meeting God and constantly accompanies it. After all, this is the meaning of life with God and the fulfilment of the most important of God’s promises that He, as “I am who I am” (אֶהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה Ex 3:14) is not only with us sometimes, but is with us always, even, and maybe especially when we do not realize it. An engagement with the living God opens up possibilities for action and understanding that promote human development not only as an individual but as a member of the community.

The Good News is a salvific message to individuals in their incomunicability, irreplaceability, and uniqueness. However, it embraces its universal call to salvation in its singularity. Incarnation is a culmination of divine self-manifestation as Love that calls for love as

an act of human freedom to a new beginning. This new beginning is the *communio*, an ἐκκλησία of people loving each other because God loved us first (1 J 4:19: Ἡμεῖς ἀγαπῶμεν, ὅτι αὐτὸς πρῶτος ἠγάπησεν ἡμᾶς). Therefore, the human response is summarized as letting God love us (*Liebenlassen*). It is a dynamic and creative fusion of passivity and activity requiring the highest concentration of attention to allow love to happen. Thus, love is an event of encountering God, in which the divine presence does not only come to our consciousness (that is more *Sein* than *Bewusstsein*) but effectively inspires (*in-spiro*) us in our being human beings.

The Incarnated God is *locus revelationis*. In Jesus, God discloses the mystery of his trinitarian life and love. Becoming a human being, Jesus is fully in God, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, and they share their love in the dynamic conversation. This new proximity of God and human beings finds its perfect image in the Incarnated. With the Incarnation, the meaning of home has essentially changed. Jesus's true home is God (heaven) and earth. By being a gift that gives himself, Jesus is the Son of Man (ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου), whose closeness to human beings does not diminish the depth of his active participation in the divine love. Thus, the Son of Man is the fulfilment of divine revelation. Becoming the Incarnated Word of God, Logos, Jesus is the fullest disclosure of God. He has the ultimate authority (ἐξουσία) to unfold the mystery of God and the divine plan of salvation despite the horrific refusal of his revelation culminated in the Crucifixion: "His own people did not accept him. But to those who did accept him, he gave the power to become children of God" (J 1:11-12). The Incarnated Logos is the revelation of Revelation, which, as empowered by the divine grace, we can hear (*gnadengewirkte Hörenkönnen der Offenbarung der Offenbarung*). As *locus revelationis*, he is one with God (ὁ Λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν Θεόν, καὶ Θεὸς ἦν ὁ Λόγος, J 1:1-2). He is also indeed a human being, born of Mary, who dwells among us (ὁ Λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο καὶ ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν, J 1:14). The first chapter of John's Gospel is a congenial narration on Jesus's revelation that makes God visible. John's poetic creation represents a privileged place for the revelation of the truth. It makes God visible in the dialectics of divine invisibility and the emanation of divinity in the Incarnated Logos. Only in Jesus is this dialectic fully transparent and receives its extreme dramaturgy.

Since the Incarnated is God and remains in loving union with God, he is empowered to disclose the Divine to us. "In the days of his flesh" (Heb 5:7), this authority was given to him by the Father (καθὼς ἔδωκας αὐτῷ ἐξουσίαν, J 17:2). In the Incarnated, God's presence is among us.

This is the most profound meaning of Divine Revelation: Not to tell us about God, but to disclose his mystery by bringing him into our lives. As *locus revelationis*, the Incarnated unveils what God does in and through him for us and, thus, for our salvation. The unveiling is the self-emptying (κένωσις) of Jesus, which is also his glorification (*Herlichkeit des Verherrlichten*), in which God is glorified. The Incarnated glorifies God by having a clear image of God and sharing this image with us. In this sense, the Greek word for glorifying, δοξάζω, translated by Vulgate as *clarifico*, unearths the educational aspect of the Incarnation by making God renowned and prominent for us.

Thinking of Incarnation as the Divine Word becoming Flesh (*Fleischwerdung des Wortes*) as a human being (*Menschwerdung des Geistes*) makes us aware of the mystery of language. We meet the Incarnated in person and his speaking (*Wortlaut*). The Word of God (דְּבָרִי Gen 15:1, *Wort und Ereignis*) does not only communicate something, however essential about God. It speaks himself (*Mitteilung*). God's self-disclosure is mediation through the Word, in which God shares with a human being his own mystery of life that is love as the dynamically lived reality. This sharing has a lingual character: It happens (*ereignet sich*) in the Word and through the Word. *Verbum Dei* is the very beginning of every language that allows human beings, after the confusion of languages at the Tower of Babel, to find their own expression in the plurivocity of meaning and variety of languages. Since the experience of the Pentecost leads to the understanding of different languages, we can see that the divine plan does not lead to the return to only one language from the time before the human attempt to dominate and control the world and be self-sufficient. God builds up on the variety of languages and blesses people with the ability to understand each other in the richness of the diverse languages. *Verbum Dei* came into our common world to encourage us to live together in our being different.

The mystery of the Incarnation discloses the essential aspect of understanding language. *Verbum Dei*, as the second person of the Trinity, is the unspoken word, λόγος ἐνδιάθετος, *verbum interius*, the word of the actual creative power that can put something into existence. *Verbum Dei* is also λόγος προφορικός, the spoken word, which is expressed in a variety of human languages. This spoken word of God is identical with the Incarnated Word, i.e., a historical Jesus. A dynamic living word that sounds outwardly is the sign of the word that gives light inwardly: "*verbum quod foris sonat signum est verbi quod intus lucet*" (Augustinus, *De Trinitate* 15, 11, 20). The significance of προφορά, as the manner of pronouncing the sounds, expresses the possibility of exploring the



meaning of thinking that constitutes internal speech (*verbum cordis*). Therefore, understanding something means being attuned to the voice that speaks to us. What we hear is language that calls us to be ready to give an answer (*Antwort*) to the word addressed to us (*Wort, Ruf*). In this being addressed, we are called by our own name (*Rufname*). This familiar name allows us to recognize unambiguously that we are called (*Angesprochensein*). To participate actively and creatively in the dynamics of being addressed and giving an answer, we need to be always attentive (*Wachsein*) to the voices we hear and keep ourselves responsive (*Wachhalten*) to being in the world in the concretization of the way of being in the world (*das Da des Seins*).

*Verbum Dei* discloses the nature of language that shows itself in the conversation between divine persons. Language belongs to this divine conversation happening while being together in a permanently different constellation (περιχώρησις). It finds its concrete expression in speaking to each other. Incarnation opens up a new possibility to discover the world that is a human world. *Verbum Dei* is unapologetic about the reason for the Incarnation: To seek and to save that which was lost, ἦλθεν γὰρ ὁ Υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ζητῆσαι καὶ σῶσαι τὸ ἀπολωλός (Lk 19:10). Language and the world are the horizons of human beings' being in the world with Others. Our task is to understand ourselves in language and in the world. This language and this world are always ours. The existential challenge is to understand ourselves in our language and in our world, not against Others but with them. The call to solidarity comes from an understanding that the Other has the right to be understood in their language and in their world. It will remain the task of our whole life to find a way to the Other by translating our language and our world into the language and the world that will make our conversation possible. *Verbum Dei* translates the mystery of divine life and love in a way that it speaks to us and becomes a word that forms and transforms us. This word challenges us to see ourselves in Divine Revelation.

Incarnation renews (*re-novo*) the world and us *in* the world and *with* the world. It empowers understanding ourselves anew in this new world. The encounter with God always happens in the uniqueness of the conversation. Coming together within diversity means an art of listening to the Other, having a new ear, and an open heart for the needs of the Other. It challenges us to let the Other say something to us (*Sagenlassen*). Since God revealed himself to us as the Incarnated Word, we can take this as the indication that the "how" of this disclosure tells us something essential about God: He is a conversation of



the divine persons with each other. In and through the Incarnated Word, we can hear God's voice. We are invited to this never-ending conversation to participate in the dynamics of speaking and responding. Incarnation makes us aware of the importance of listening as the art of preparing ourselves for God's speaking to us. Since *Verbum Dei* discloses the conversational nature of God, our task is to learn the conversation with ourselves, with each other, and with God. This is the primary meaning of education. *Bildung* as self-education is the fundamental care for the self while living in the world with Others.

In Mt 24:42 Jesus invites his followers to be always ready to meet him when he comes, especially when he comes again at the end of time: "Keep awake, therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming": γρηγορεῖτε οὖν, ὅτι οὐκ οἴδατε ποία ἡμέρα ὁ κύριος ὑμῶν ἔρχεται. The verb γρηγορέω describes the state of being awake, watchful, vigilant, and on alert. It is the state of mind of people awaiting the coming of the Lord (παρουσία). This mode of being in the world with Others is characterized by living in the constant presence of God while awaiting his final visible appearance. It is about living the Advent (*ad-venio*) in the concentration of attention on the arrival of him, who always was, is now, and forever be. Being vigilant is not about neurotic derangement and panic fear but a humble (*humilis*, χαμαλός) and, therefore, prudent (σώφρων, *prudens-providens*, foreseeing) discernment on the way to self-knowledge. Listening to each other and understanding each other is a difficult task. It requires focused awareness of what the Other is conveying to us. *Mitteilen* also means *teilen*, sharing our lifeworld and inviting us into the otherwise inaccessible horizons. The willingness to listen to each other and understand each other expresses the most profound meaning of human solidarity that is so much needed in our world, sparked and ravaged by wars, natural disasters, famines, epidemics, and other crises.

St. Augustine worried, "*Timeo enim Iesum transeuntem et manentem: et ideo tacere non possum*" (*Sermo* 88): "I fear God's passing by and remain forever; therefore, I cannot keep silent." He expresses his worries (*timor filialis*) about not being attentive enough in his life. It is not a matter of the paralyzing anxiety but the dedication to the moment of grace, an insight into the true self that can be experienced in the presence of the Divine, an opportune time, καιρός (*Augenblick* is a moment of vision). Augustine wishes not to miss any opportunity to be touched by the hand of the Lord and listen to his voice that forms and transforms his life. In listening to this voice, we recognize that the voice perishes. Still, the word carried by the voice reaches the

heart of the Other and remains in the heart of the speaker: “*verbum autem quod ad te sonus perduxit, iam est in corde tuo, nec recéssit a meo*” (Augustínus, *Sermo* 293). Following Augustine, we cannot only keep worrying about the atomic bomb or other mass destruction. We should rather be concerned with our ability to think (*Besinnung*) and live together in solidarity, justice, and recognition of each other. The primary task of education is to awaken and encourage people to think. The power of thought consists of permanently rediscovering the need for reflection and contemplation. The crucial mission of thinking is to gain a new meaning than that of the natural sciences by reflecting on the Tradition of Western thinking. The main feature of humankind’s history can only be discovered in a radical openness to the beginning and a confident orientation toward the apocalyptic end. In the dramatically creative tension between this no longer of the past and not yet of the future (*iam and nondum*, the already and the not-yet, something that has always been here and something that is not yet), we can recognize the historical necessity of the atomic age with its entanglement in technocracy. The responsibility for our future is our responsibility. Walking together (σύν-όδοϛ), we will discover the pathways to the genuinely human future. The event of Incarnation is an invitation and an opportunity to embrace a new beginning by rethinking the oldest of the old (ἀρχή, ἀλήθεια) if we do not wish to perish or live in a world of palliative care. The attempts to overcome the pain with our technocratic motions and potions do not remove it but bring it back to abiding. A new modesty and decency are required, something to see and behold that is bigger than us.

We can expect something that goes beyond us. Thus, this expectation is a rejection of human decisionism. The saving comes to us to explain the meaning of our life. The significance of human fellowship with God is experienced with and in the Incarnated Logos. In this encounter, we continue to await the visionary contemplative greatness of the promised eternal future. Reflecting on the future and listening to the unheard of (*das Unerhörte*), i.e., what can be heard (*das zu Hörende*), helps us to understand people insofar as they stand in the openness to God. Human thinking moves in an original relation to God, which can only happen in Tradition and be understood as Tradition. Language is the way of such understanding and judging (*Urteilen*), which involves sharing (*Teilen*). The thinker must submit to the word that leads to the new of what has already been (*das Neue des Gewesenen*). The Word of Revelation in its history of effects (*Wirkungsgeschichte*) gives meaning to the Incarnation from the end of history.

In St. John's Gospel, Jesus says that he came that we might have life and have it abundantly (ἐγὼ ἦλθον ἵνα ζωὴν ἔχωσιν καὶ περισσὸν ἔχωσιν, J 10:10). Here, *περισσός* means beyond what is anticipated, exceeding expectation; more than enough, having continuously all-around. Renewed love reminds us that trust breeds fidelity. Since God, as supreme Love, became a human being and entered this world, it is worth living in such a world. The sound passes, the Word endures forever (τὸ δὲ ῥῆμα Κυρίου μένει εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα, 1 Pet 1:25).

## On (Not) Welcoming God into the World: Porous Borders and Hardened Hearts

In John 1:11, we read: Εἰς τὰ ἴδια ἦλθεν, καὶ οἱ ἴδιοι αὐτὸν οὐ παρέλαβον. The King James Bible renders it as "He came unto his own, and his own received him not." It is noteworthy (*denkwürdig*) that in the first instance, "his own" is neuter (τὰ ἴδια), which indicates the place where the Messianic hope was expected to be fulfilled. In the second instance, "his own" is masculine (οἱ ἴδιοι) and refers to the dwellers waiting for the Messiah. The Vulgata translation makes the distinction between τὰ ἴδια and οἱ ἴδιοι very perceptive: "In propria venit, et sui eum non receperunt." It indicates strongly that Jesus came into the world that is his, and his are also people to whom he came. The final "received him not" (αὐτὸν οὐ παρέλαβον), literally not took him in, is an unapologetic complaint about being rejected by those who were especially loved and cared for as the people of the covenant. The failing reception will distinctly intensify the Theo-dramatic: The divine offer can only be received by the free act of will of the human being. By coming into the world, God chooses to participate in the drama happening between heaven and earth. He takes this drama upon himself. A human being becomes God's drama.

Re-Newal  
of Theology

The powerful complaint of being rejected by his own people severely overshadows the joy of the first verses of the Good News that the Redeemer has been born and saturates it with an unparalleled sadness. The bigger the love and devotion, the more severe the pain of rejection. However, pain, darkness, and sorrow cannot outshine the absolute novelty in the history of humankind: The mystery of the Incarnation. The Incarnation changed the understanding of the familiar and foreign forever. Did we learn anything from God becoming man (*in carne*, which is a Latin translation of J 1:14: ὁ Λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο) in the 2000 years that separate us from this salvific event? The expression, καὶ ἐγένετο (from γίγνομαι) refers to something that happened. And

here, something unimaginable became visible, something impossible possible. God becomes a human being in the flesh, like us. And he dwells among us (J 1:14 καὶ ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν, et habitavit in nobis). This dwelling determines not only being in the world but also an intimate communion with the human being. The verb σκηνόω, inhabited, suggests an architectural form (tent, tabernacle) that guarantees safety under the watchful eye of God.

Thinking the Incarnation encourages us to stand on firm ground (*Bodenständigkeit*) because the foundation of the world can be seen in the Incarnated Logos. *Verbum Dei* finds its home among human beings and communicates with us the harshness of human destiny. Incarnation teaches us to live and dwell in the world, which is our world, the world of our culture, built with the power of our minds and hands. When Jesus says that in him, the reigning of God came close to us (Ἠγγικεν ἐφ' ὑμᾶς ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ Θεοῦ, Lk 10:9, here ἡ βασιλεία means a dynamic divine reality), then he emphasizes that the common task of humanity is to take responsibility for the human beings being together in the shared world (*polis, res publica*). It is truly a task to live together and learn from each other in an open space that is transformed by the divine spirit into a space of salvation. In that space, everyone is called to search for the right word to participate in the conversation, leading us toward the passion for the Other.

Home is where we are. And nobody can absolve us from the care of our own home. We need to build this home, always remembering nonetheless what we read in the King James's translation, "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it" (Psalm 127:1). The futility of toil is perfectly reflected in the *Vulgatae* translation: "Nisi Dominus aedificaverit domum, in vanum laboraverunt, qui aedificant eam." Any effort to build up becomes nothing but vanity and futility, a deceptive attempt by useless servants. Building and caring for a house is, above all, caring for ourselves. Having a home, we must learn to dwell in it and host and accept ourselves in it. To be ourselves with ourselves in our own home. Otherwise, we will be like migrants searching desperately for a physical place to rest or homeless people who have consciously given up the struggle for their own homes. The Christmas message will leave us untouched.

The Word of God became flesh and chose to be among us as his dwelling place. God has found a way to translate his ineffability into the human language of love and care. The joy of hearing this divine rendering prompts us to translate our belonging to this new κοινή, a new language that we can share with Others. Just as Mary shared with

Elizabeth the joy that things that are happening transgress human capacity, so too can we share what we recognize on the level of faith as the time (καιρός) of witnessing to the fulfilment of God's promises. Instead, we can seal the boundaries to prevent what is most important: a personal encounter with the newborn Jesus. He will be born, but the meeting with him will not occur. As always in life, some people cannot cross borders. Others will never enter what is ours uninvited and unwelcome. Some will inspect for any leaks so that no one enters the territory they consider their own. Regrettably, they forget, "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein," as the King James's edition brilliantly renders the original. "Domini est terra et plenitudo eius orbis et habitatores eius," says the *Vulgatae* translation of Psalm 24:1.

*Eine undichte Grenze, une frontière perméable, una frontiera permeabile, nieszczelna granica*, a porous border! It is not a matter of learning more languages to express the desire to (not)cross the borders, nor about learning techniques and providing the means to build fences to separate or, worse still, tear people apart. It is about awakening our minds and hearts to understand the Christmas event (*Ereignis*) as a call to radical hospitality toward the unknown, the stranger, but also the familiar and one's own. God comes as the one who wants to reconcile us with himself (2 Cor 5:18-19; Col 1:20-22; Gal 2:20) caring as a father for everyone (*omnes*) and everything (*omnia*): "And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation" (Acts 17:26). Developing this land into an inhospitable space is, in itself, a perverse crossing of the boundaries of indifference and insensitivity.

Wisława Szymborska, <i>Psalm</i> (1976)	Wisława Szymborska, <i>Psalm</i> (1976)
O, jakże są nieszczelne granice ludzkich państw! Ile to chmur nad nimi bezkarnie przepływa, ile piasków pustynnych przesypuje się z kraju do kraju, ile górskich kamyków stacza się w cudze włości w wyzywających podskokach!	How porous are the borders of countries and states! Incalculable clouds float liberally over them, how much desert dust travels across the frontiers, and countless mountain pebbles plunge into the foreign land in provocative springs!

<p>Czy muszę tu wymieniać ptaka za ptakiem jak leci, albo jak właśnie przysiadła na opuszczonym szlabanie? Niechby to nawet był wróbel – a już ma ogon ościenny, choć dzióbek jeszcze tutejszy. W dodatku – ależ się wierci!</p>	<p>Do I need to specify every single bird that is flying, or takes rest on the lowered barrier?</p> <p>It might be just a robin – with his tail out in the strange and his beak in familiar quarters. Moreover, tossing and wriggling like crazy!</p>
<p>Z nieprzeliczonych owadów poprzestanę na mrówce, która pomiędzy lewym a prawym butem strażnika na pytanie: skąd dokąd – nie poczuwa się do odpowiedzi.</p>	<p>Out of the innumerable insects, I will single out only the ant between the soldier's left and the right boot she cannot be bothered being asked for the destination.</p>
<p>Och, zobaczyć dokładnie cały ten nieład naraz, na wszystkich kontynentach! Bo czy to nie liguster z przeciwnego brzegu przemycą poprzez rzekę stutysięczny listek? Bo kto, jeśli nie mątwą zuchwale długoramienna, narusza świętą strefę wód terytorialnych?</p>	<p>To see all the chaos at once, on every continent! Is it not a privet on the far bank smuggling the hundred-thousandth leaf across the river? And who but the octopus, with audaciously long arms muddles the sacred zone of provincial waters?</p>
<p>Czy można w ogóle mówić o jakim takim porządku, jeżeli nawet gwiazd nie da się porozsuwać, żeby było wiadomo, która komu świeci?</p>	<p>How to talk of any kind of order when we cannot even rearrange the stars to be sure which one shines for whom?</p>
<p>I jeszcze to naganne rozpościeranie się mgły! I pylenie się stepu na całej przestrzeni, jak gdyby nie był wcale wpół przecięty!</p>	<p>Not to speak of the fog's shameful drifting! And dust blowing all over the steppes as if they hadn't been cut in two halves!</p>
<p>I rozlegnie się głosów na usługach falach powietrza: przywoływawczych pisków i znaczących bulgotów!</p>	<p>And the voices sailing on attentive airwaves: startling squeals and weighty bubbles!</p>



Tylko co ludzkie potrafi być prawdziwie obce. Reszta to lasy mieszane, krecia robota i wiatr.	Only what is human can indeed be foreign. The rest is mixed forests, trickery, and the wind.
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How much do I learn from bumping into what I probably wouldn't have read, at least at this specific point in my life, by different unexpected engagements? I read and write with dedication, passion, and the necessary patience. Here, I will only mention Charles Bukowski, a poet born in Germany with a Slavic surname, almost unpronounceable to Americans, whose turbulent life in Los Angeles is poetry in itself. Seemingly, his writing is not the best choice for thinking Incarnation. How much did Charles Bukowski and Henryk Chinaski, the poet's alter ego, have to struggle to understand anything about homelessness, looking for a home, and coming home? Living always at the edge, always in-between, deceived and seducing, perpetually drunk, in the fumes of cigarette smoke, but never in the service of mediocrity. Only God's elect can write like Buk. Everything is so simple and light that after reading it, you cannot help but read it again, and again, and never enough.

Charles Bukowski, <i>Christmas Poem to a Man in Jail</i>  hello Bill Abbott: I appreciate your passing around my books in jail there, my poems and stories. if I can lighten the load for some of those guys with my books, fine. but literature, you know, is difficult for the average man to assimilate (and for the unaverage man too); I don't like most poetry, for example, so I write mine the way I like to read it.	Charles Bukowski, <i>Wiersz bożonarodzeniowy do mężczyzny w więzieniu</i>  cześć Billu Abbocie: Dzięki, że dzielisz się w więzieniu moimi książkami, wierszami i opowiadaniem. jeśli mogę odciążyć niektórych z tych facetów poprzez moje książki, w porządku. ale literatura, wiesz, jest trudna dla przeciętnego człowieka do zrozumienia (i nieprzeciętnego także); Nie lubię większości poezji, na przykład, więc piszę swoją tak, jak lubię ją czytać.
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<p>poetry does seem to be getting better, more human, the clearing up of the language has something to do with it (w. c. williams came along and asked everybody to clear up the language) then I came along. but writing's one thing, life's another, we seem to have improved the writing a bit but life (ours and theirs) doesn't seem to be improving very much. maybe if we write well enough and live a little better life will improve a bit just out of shame. maybe the artist haven't been powerful enough, maybe the politicians, the generals, the judges, the priests, the police, the pimps, the businessmen have been too strong? I don't like that thought but when I look at our pale and precious artists, past and present, it does seem possible. (people don't like it when I talk this way. Chinaski, get off it, they say, you're not that great. but hell, I'm not talking about being great.)</p>	<p>poezja wydaje się być coraz lepsza, bardziej ludzka, oczyszczenie języka ma z tym coś wspólnego (pojawił się w. c. williams i błagał wszystkich, by oczyścili język) następnie pojawilem się ja. ale pisanie to jedno, życie to co innego, wydaje się, że poprawiliśmy nieco pisanie ale życie (nasze i ich) chyba nie stało się dużo lepsze. może jeśli będziemy pisali wystarczająco dobrze i żyli trochę lepiej życie nieco się poprawi choćby tylko ze wstydu. może artysta nie był wystarczająco genialny, a może politycy, generałowie, sędziowie, księża, policja, sutenerzy, biznesmeni byli za mocni? Nie sądzę tak ale kiedy patrzę na naszych błędnych i drogich artystów, dawnych i dzisiejszych, wydaje się to prawdopodobne. (ludzie nie lubią, kiedy mówię w ten sposób. Chinaski, przestań, proszą, nie jesteś tak wielki. ale do diabła, nie mówię o byciu wielkim.)</p>
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what I'm saying is  
 that art hasn't improved life like it  
 should, maybe because it has been too  
 private? and despite the fact that the  
 old poets  
 and the new poets and myself  
 all seem to have had the same or  
 similar troubles  
 with:  
 women  
 government  
 God  
 love  
 hate  
 penury  
 slavery  
 insomnia  
 transportation  
 weather  
 wives, and so  
 forth.  
 you write me now  
 that the man in the cell next to yours  
 didn't like my punctuation  
 the placement of my commas  
 (especially)  
 and also the way I digress  
 in order to say something precisely.  
 ah, he doesn't realize the intent  
 which is  
 to loosen up, humanize, relax  
 and still make as real as possible  
 the word on the page. the word should  
 be like  
 butter or avocados or  
 steak or hot biscuits, or onion rings or  
 whatever is really  
 needed. it should be almost  
 as if you could pick up the words and  
 eat them.

to co mówię to  
 że sztuka nie polepszyła życia  
 w taki sposób  
 jak powinna, może dlatego, że była  
 zbyt  
 prywatna? i pomimo tego, że dawni  
 poeci  
 nowi poeci i ja  
 wydaje się, że wszyscy mieli takie  
 same lub podobne problemy  
 z:  
 kobietami  
 rządem  
 Panem Bogiem  
 miłością  
 nienawiścią  
 nędzą  
 niewolnictwem  
 bezsennością  
 transportem  
 pogodą  
 żonami, i tym  
 podobnie.  
 pisesz do mnie teraz  
 że mężczyźnie w celi obok  
 nie podoba się moja interpunkcja  
 stawianie przecinków (zwłaszcza)  
 a także sposób w jaki robię dygresje  
 żeby coś dokładnie powiedzieć.  
 ach, on nie zdaje sobie sprawy  
 z zamysłu  
 by  
 rozluźniać, uczłowieczać,  
 relaksować  
 i nadal robić to tak prawdziwie, jak  
 tylko możliwe  
 słowo na stronie. słowo powinno  
 być jak  
 masło lub awokado albo  
 stek czy gorące herbatniki lub  
 cebulowe obwarzanki lub  
 cokolwiek co jest naprawdę  
 potrzebne. powinno być prawie  
 tak, żebyś mógł brać słowa i  
 jeść.

(there is some wise-ass somewhere out there  
 who will say  
 if he ever reads this:  
 "Chinaski, if I want dinner I'll go out and order it!")  
 however  
 an artist can wander and still maintain essential form. Dostoevsky did it. he usually told 3 or 4 stories on the side while telling the one in the center (in his novels, that is).  
 Bach taught us how to lay one melody down on top of another and another melody on top of that and  
 Mahler wandered more than anybody I know  
 and I find great meaning in his so-called formlessness.  
 don't let the form-and-rule boys like that guy in the cell next to you put one over on you. just hand him a copy of Time or Newsweek and he'll be happy.  
 but I'm not defending my work (to you or to him)  
 I'm defending my right to do it in the way that makes me feel best.  
 I always figure if a writer is bored with his work  
 the reader is going to be bored too.

(pewnie gdzieś jest jakiś dupek który powie  
 jeśli kiedykolwiek to przeczyta:  
 „Chinaski, jeśli zechcę zjeść to wyjdę i sobie kupię”)  
 Jednakże  
 artysta może wędrować i nadal utrzymać  
 świetną formę. Dostojewski to robił.  
 zwykle opowiadał 3 lub 4 historie na boku  
 podczas rozwijania jednej fabuły w centrum (to dotyczy jego powieści).  
 Bach uczył nas jak budować jedną melodię  
 nad inną i kolejną melodię nad jeszcze inną  
 i  
 Mahler poruszał się swobodnie bardziej niż ktokolwiek, kogo znam i widzę wielki sens  
 w jego tak zwanym braku formy.  
 nie pozwól chłopcom od formy i władzy  
 jak temu facetowi w celi obok ciebie nałożyć formę na ciebie. tylko daj mu egzemplarz Timesa lub Newsweeka  
 i będzie szczęśliwy.  
 ale nie bronię się (ani przed tobą ani przed nim)  
 Bronię swojego prawa do robienia tego co robię by mi z tym było jak najlepiej.  
 Zawsze wiem, że kiedy pisarz jest znudzony swoją pracą  
 Czytelnik też będzie znudzony.

and I don't believe in  
perfection, I believe in keeping the  
bowels loose  
so I've got to agree with my critics  
when they say I write a lot of shit.  
you're doing 19 and 1/2 years  
I've been writing about 40.  
we all go on with our things.  
we all go on with our lives.  
we all write badly at times  
or live badly at times.  
we all have bad days  
and nights.  
I ought to send the guy in the cell next  
to yours  
The Collected Works of Robert  
Browning for Christmas,  
that'd give him the form he's looking for  
but I need the money for the track,  
Santa Anita is opening on the  
26th, so give him a copy of Newsweek  
(the dead have no future, no past, no  
present,  
they just worry about commas)  
and have I placed the commas here  
properly,  
Abbott?

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i nie wierzę w  
doskonałość, wierzę w niespinanie  
się  
więc muszę się zgodzić z moimi  
krytykami  
kiedy mówią, że piszę dużo gówna.  
Odsiadujesz 19 i 1/2 roku  
Ja piszę około 40 lat.  
wszyscy zajmujemy się własnymi  
sprawami.  
wszyscy żyjemy dalej.  
wszyscy czasami piszemy źle  
albo czasami źle żyjemy.  
wszyscy mamy złe dni  
i noce.  
Powinienem wysłać dla faceta  
w celi obok twojej  
Dzieła zebrane Roberta Browninga  
na Boże Narodzenie,  
to dałoby mu formę, której szuka  
ale potrzebuję pieniędzy na  
samochód,  
Santa Anita rusza  
26go, daj mu więc egzemplarz  
Newsweeka  
(umarli nie mają przyszłości,  
przeszłości, teraźniejszości,  
martwią się tylko przecinkami)  
Umieściłem tu przecinki  
odpowiednio,  
Abbocie?

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I have translated, with considerable satisfaction, Wisława Szymborska into English and Charles Bukowski into Polish. Two different languages, two different locations, Kraków and Los Angeles, two genders, two different kinds of *ars poetica*. Translating helps us see

that understanding is a patient journey from one shore to the other, an attempt to perceive what is known and familiar and the strange and alien from different sides. This movement back and forth, and again from the beginning, is a hermeneutic event of understanding. Translating is a human being's way of living with oneself (*soliloquium*) and the Other. By living, we translate, and by translating, we live. Therefore, each translation affects our self-understanding and is education in its most profound sense. It is also decisive for our relationships with ourselves and with Others. Hence, it is an ethical eventing in the most profound sense of understanding ethics. The paradigm of translation discloses what happens to us and in us when we translate. Linguistic hospitality is not a matter of saying a few nice words in another language. Rather, it is an openness to what this language can contribute to my self-understanding. And how it can enrich others' understanding of themselves. Translation cannot be reduced to the question of perfect word matching or formal linguistic correctness. The question is whether we can exist in different languages and communicate in our essential incommunicability.

Some people may be happy to receive practically anything for Christmas. Perhaps it might be impossible to reach them. Police, soldiers, and border guards can block access to isolated (confined) Others. The Christmas message is not a memorandum of compliance with applicable terms and conditions. It is the message of the Angels who announce great joy. It is a message that God is with us. It is up to us to accept him, rejoice in him, and celebrate with him. Maybe he does come, as he came into the world when there was no political peace and a young girl gave birth wherever she could lay down her head. Today, they may be the river Bug marshes or the Białowieża National Park forests. They may be the borders of Mexico and the USA, both Koreas, Calais, and Dover, Israel and Palestine, and thousands of other sensitive and irritable points on the world map, which for some of us, often for reasons known only to ourselves, are a paradise we would like to reach on our earthly pilgrimage.

Let us not "the boys" who assume to possess power impose their mindsets on us. It is a matter of taste, as Zbigniew Herbert would say. Indeed, taste and decency. "Those boys" might worry about everything leaky, deceive each other, seduce each other, barricade as they believe they must. Christmas reminds us that God enters the world as it is. He does not scream for a majestic bed. He can show his own needs in different ways. And the need for hospitality, too. There is plenty we can learn from him. Isn't it brilliant that the one Christmas event can

reveal so much to us (φαίνεσθαι)? And teach us how to live as guests and hosts, insiders and strangers, friends and foes. What we really need is a hermeneutic eye and a hermeneutic ear. “Only what is human can indeed be foreign. The rest is mixed forests, trickery, and the wind.”

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## Sprawozdanie z działalności Katedry Teologii Katolickiej Uniwersytetu w Białymstoku w roku akademickim 2022/2023

### Kadra Katedry Teologii Katolickiej

W Uniwersytecie w Białymstoku w ramach Katedry Teologii Katolickiej w roku akademickim 2022/2023 zatrudnionych było czterech pracowników. Wśród nich jest trzech pracowników naukowo-dydaktycznych. Na stanowisku profesora nadzwyczajnego zatrudniony był ks. dr hab. Andrzej Proniewski na całym etacie, który pełni także obowiązki kierownika KTK. Ks. dr Tadeusz Kasabuła był zatrudniony na stanowisku adiunkta w wymiarze ½ etatu, zaś ks. dr Marek Kowalczyk na stanowisku asystenta – również w wymiarze ½ etatu. Oprócz pracowników naukowo-dydaktycznych na stanowisku pracownika administracyjnego w Katedrze Teologii Katolickiej był zatrudniony ks. mgr lic. Leszek M. Jakoniuk na całym etacie.

W związku z rozwiązaniem przez Archidiecezję Białostocką umowy o wynajem pomieszczeń dla Katedry Teologii Katolickiej UwB, siedziba jednostki po wielu latach uległa zmianie. Od września 2023 roku Katedra Teologii Katolickiej mieści się przy ul. Zamenhofs 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 (180 godzin)**

– Seminarium magisterskie (120 godz.), Wydział Nauk o Edukacji;



- Seminarium magisterskie (60 godz.), Instytut Studiów Kulturowych.

**Ks. dr Tadeusz Kasabuła, adiunkt (30 godzin)**

- *Historia kultury* (wykład – 30 godz.), Instytut Studiów Kulturowych.

**Ks. dr Marek Kowalczyk, asystent (70 godzin)**

- *Ciało i dusza w historii* (wykład – 2 grupy po 15 godzin), Wydział Nauk o Edukacji;
- *Ciało i dusza w historii* (wykład – 10 godzin, studia niestacjonarne), Wydział Nauk o Edukacji;
- *Spotkanie kultur: judaizm, chrześcijaństwo pierwotne i świat grecko-rzymski* (wykład – 30 godzin), Instytut Studiów Kulturowych.

## Konferencje naukowe

Katedra Teologii Katolickiej UwB w okresie sprawozdawczym była współorganizatorem konferencji naukowych:

- *Wierzę w Kościół – perspektywa duszpasterska* (Białystok, 7 stycznia 2023);
- *Sztuka głoszenia kazań* (Białystok, 14-15 lutego 2023);
- *Współczesne wyzwania związane z sakramentem pokuty* (Białystok, 15 kwietnia 2023).

## Działalność naukowo-badawcza

Pracownicy Katedry Teologii Katolickiej Uniwersytetu w Białymstoku w roku akademickim 2022/2023 opublikowali następujące artykuły naukowe:

**Ks. dr hab. Andrzej Proniewski, prof. UwB**

Monografie:

- A. Proniewski, D. Steć, J. Jabłoński (red.), *Rodzina w myśli bł. ks. Michała Sopočki na podstawie pracy doktorskiej ks. Michała Sopočki z 1926 roku: Rodzina w prawodawstwie na ziemiach polskich (Studium etyczno-prawne)*, Białystok 2022, ss. 102.

Rozdziały książek:

- A. Proniewski, *Rektor i wychowawca*, w: M. Ozorowski (red.), *W trosce o Kościół i rodzinę*, Warszawa 2022, s. 99-104.

Artykuły naukowe:

- A. Proniewski, *Epistemological bases of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception of Mary*, „Rocznik Teologii Katolickiej” 2022, t. 21, s. 33-52.

- A. Proniewski, *Teologia laikatu i synodalność jako droga realizacji powszechnego powołania do świętości*, „Teologia w Polsce” 2022, t. 16(2), s. 136-156;
- A. Proniewski, *Synodalność Kościoła – czy na dzisiejsze czasy?*, „Społeczeństwo” 2022, nr 1(157), s. 40-53;
- A. Proniewski, *Okiem teologa na dialog fizyki z wiarą*, „Studia Teologii Dogmatycznej” 2022, t. 8, s. 78-86.

### **Ks. dr Tadeusz Kasabuła**

Rozdziały w książkach:

- T. Kasabuła, *Ksiądz Adam Skreczko jako pracownik Katedry Teologii Katolickiej Uniwersytetu w Białymstoku (1999-2012)*, w: *W trosce o Kościół i rodzinę*, red. M. Ozorowski, Warszawa 2022, s. 105-121.

Artykuły naukowe:

- T. Kasabuła, *Archiwum Archidiecezjalne w Białymstoku. Powstanie i ewolucja zasobu*, w: *Archiwalne źródła badań filologicznych. Studia*, red. A. Janicka i in., Lublin 2022, s. 293-304.

### **Ks. dr Marek Kowalczuk**

Artykuły naukowe:

- M. Kowalczuk, *Honor i wstyd w pieśniach stopni (Ps 120-134)*, „Studia Teologii Dogmatycznej” 2022, t. 8.

### **Ks. mgr lic. Leszek M. Jakoniuk**

Monografie:

- *Odkrywać źródła wiary w Biblii. Wskazania do katechezy dorosłych*, Kielce 2023, ss. 406 (redaktor naukowy i konsultacje językowe).

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

W roku akademickim 2022/2023 pracownicy Katedry Teologii Katolickiej oprócz uczestniczenia w wydarzeniach współorganizowanych przez KTK wzięli udział w sympozjach, zjazdach, wernisażach, wystawach:

### **Ks. dr hab. Andrzej Proniewski, prof. UwB**

- Ogólnopolskie Forum Duszpasterskie (Poznań, 16 września 2023), referat: *Ruchy, stowarzyszenia i wspólnoty odnowy eklezjalnej w budowaniu parafii jako „wspólnoty wspólnot”*;
- Konferencja naukowa Towarzystwa Teologów Dogmatyków i Akademii Katolickiej w Warszawie „Jak być Kościołem synodalnym”

(Konstancin Jeziorna, 11-13 września 2023), referat: *Synod w Kościele katolickim w Polsce*;

- Continental Assembly of the Synod (Prague, 5-12 lutego 2023), warsztaty i praca w grupach, wystąpienie nt. *Synodalność Kościoła w Polsce*.

### **Ks. dr Tadeusz Kasabuła**

- Wernisaż wystawy „Bo przeszliście przez ogień i wodę... Ikony artystów ukraińskich” (Białystok, 10 października 2022), organizacja wystawy;
- Wernisaż wystawy „«NieDomknięty rozdział» – doświadczenie tworzenia pamięci” (Białystok, 23 listopada 2022), współorganizacja wystawy;
- Wernisaż wystawy „«Piękno (nie)utracone». Krzyże kowalskie ze zbiorów Muzeum Archidiecezjalnego w Białymstoku” (Białystok, 21 lutego 2023), organizacja wystawy;
- Wystawa „«Woń świętości». Motywy roślinne na paramentach liturgicznych (Białystok, 26-31 kwietnia 2023), organizacja wystawy;
- Noc Muzeów, wystawa „Dziedzictwo do życia przywrócone, cz. 3, Wszystko co najpiękniejsze” (Białystok, 13 maja 2023), organizacja wystawy;
- Wystawa „«Światłość w ciemności świeci». Lichtarze i kandelabry ze zbiorów Muzeum Archidiecezjalnego w Białymstoku” (Białystok, lipiec-wrzesień 2023), organizacja wystawy;
- Wystawa „«Ta co w Ostrej świeci bramie w białostockiej katedrze czczona». Prezentacja fotografii Jana Bułhaka z albumu *Ostra Brama*” (Białystok, wrzesień-październik 2023), organizacja wystawy;
- Konferencja „Ochrona i konserwacja zabytkowych obiektów sakralnych” (Malbork, 26-28 września 2023), udział, głos w dyskusji.

### **Ks. mgr lic. Leszek M. Jakoniuk**

- Ogólnopolska Konferencja Naukowa „Próby ożywienia katechezy parafialnej” (Kodeń, 30 maja – 1 czerwca 2023);
- Ogólnopolska Konferencja Naukowa „Lekcje religii w społeczeństwie wielokulturowym” (Skorzeszyce–Kielce, 11-13 września 2023);
- „Parafia jutra” II Kongres Teologii Pastoralnej (Licheń, 19-21 września 2023).

## Wydawnictwo

Nakładem Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu w Białymstoku w ramach działalności KTK ukazały się w roku akademickim 2022/2023 następujące pozycje:

- „Rocznik Teologii Katolickiej”, Białystok 2022, t. 21 (40 punktów);
- „Studia Teologii Dogmatycznej”, Białystok 2022, t. 8 (5 punktów).

Staraniem redakcji czasopisma „Rocznik Teologii Katolickiej” został poddany ewaluacji i włączony w grudniu 2022 roku do międzynarodowej bazy SCOPUS.

W dniu 17 lipca 2023 roku decyzją Ministra Edukacji i Nauki czasopismo naukowe „Rocznik Teologii Katolickiej” otrzymało 200 punktów, a „Studia Teologii Dogmatycznej” 40 punktów. Niewątpliwie jest to wyróżnienie dla Redakcji czasopism, Wydawnictwa UwB, jak i dla całej społeczności Uniwersytetu w Białymstoku.

## Projekty

### **Ks. dr Tadeusz Kasabuła**

- Projekt nr WND-RPPD.08.03.00-209048116 pod nazwą „Ochrona i cyfrowe udostępnienie obiektów dziedzictwa kulturowego znajdujących się w zasobach Archiwum i Muzeum Archidiecezjalnego w Białymstoku” realizowanego w ramach Regionalnego Programu Operacyjnego Województwa Podlaskiego na lata 2014-2020 (w okresie trwałości do 2025 r.) – kierownik projektu;
- „Konserwacja księgi chrztów parafii w Krynkach z lat 1605-1668 ze zbiorów Archiwum i Muzeum Archidiecezjalnego w Białymstoku”. Projekt współfinansowany przez Naczelną Dyрекcję Archiwów Państwowych (90%). Czas realizacji – 12 miesięcy (2023 r.) – koordynator projektu.

## Authors

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## General Rules for Submission and Publication of Articles

1. *The Annual of Catholic Theology* [Rocznik Teologii Katolickiej] is an English-language magazine promoting theological sciences published by the Chair of Catholic Theology.
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3. Articles should be sent along with author's affiliation, a short up-to-date biography in both Polish and English (maximum 400 characters with spaces each) as well as with an up-to-date email address.
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5. Article's length including tables, charts etc., should not exceed 30 000 characters with spaces. The article should also include the so-called publication bibliography.
6. Each article should be proofread before sending to the Editorial Board. The spelling should comply with English language standards. If the language of the article is not the author's mother tongue, please make sure that a native speaker of the target language corrects the text. This person's data should be sent along with the article.
7. The text attached should be saved in one of the following formats: \* .doc, \* .docx; all figures, charts, graphic symbols in PDF format.
8. Each article is reviewed by two reliable reviewers from national or foreign scientific centres. The reviewers shall evaluate the items as confidential and anonymous according to the model which assumes that the author (s) and reviewers do not know their identities (double-blind review process).
9. Articles should be submitted until March 31 using the OJS online system. Only articles sent within the deadline and meeting the above editorial requirements as well as those which receive positive reviews will be taken into account in editorial process of the Annual of Catholic Theology volume. The editor-in-chief of the magazine takes the final decision whether to publish the article in the Annual of Catholic Theology.
10. More information on article's main text, related footnotes and the practices of peer review can be found on the following website: [www.rtk.uwb.edu.pl](http://www.rtk.uwb.edu.pl).



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