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## Contents

Rev. Prof. Czesław Parzyszek SAC <b>The Conditions and Means of Introducing the New Evangelization.....</b>	4
Rev. Prof. Jan Przybyłowski <b>The Rearing process in catholic community the path of freedom, faith and love.....</b>	15
Rev. Prof. Edmund Robek SAC <b>Lay Apostolate of today: Spirituality or Activity? Inspirational Thoughts from the writings of St. Vincent Pallotti and contemporary theologians.....</b>	23
Rev. Dr Henryk Szeloch <b>Educative curriculum of the association of catholic schools friends (SPSK) as an answer attempt to church magistry education concerning Christian upbringing in a catholic school.....</b>	32
Dr Błażej Szostek <b>Religiousness and anxiety of the Neocatechumenates.....</b>	41
Rev. Dr Marek Tatar <b>Spirituality of suffering in the face of chosen aspects of psychology.....</b>	47
Dr Marzena Zakrzewska <b>Education in the family.....</b>	64
Dr Paweł M. Zakrzewski <b>Stereotyping and labeling in school education.....</b>	70
Rev. Prof. Paul M. Zulehner, Dr Petra Steinmair-Posel <b>Mass as a Transformation of the World.....</b>	83
Prof. Dariusz Adamczyk <b>Jacob's warnings against the sin.....</b>	98
Rev. Leszek Pachuta <b>Priest as an extraordinary minister Of the sacrament of confirmation in the light of provisions of the code of Canon Law of 1917.....</b>	111
Zofia Bańdur <b>„Man to the junk yard” – is there a need for his reestablishment as a Father? ....</b>	120

## **The Conditions and Means of Introducing the New Evangelization**

First and foremost, the new evangelization represents the attitude of a Christian – it is an act of trust in Christ who makes all things new. It is a joyful testimony of Christians that the Gospel is always in contemporary, yet it must be proclaimed with renewed zeal and fervour, with new methods and means as well as taking into account the new areas of human life.<sup>1</sup> The work of the new evangelization is work which is proud and extremely important for the renewal of the modern world. It is the work of the whole Church. Doing the work of the world's renewal is the duty of all its states: bishops, presbyters, consecrated persons and the lay faithful, in co ordinance with the capabilities of particular member of the Church. Since all states of the Church are responsible for the introduction of the work of renewal through the new evangelization, a legitimate question about the conditions arises, conditions which need to be met to reach the goal which is the world's renewal, as well as about the means required to effectively complete the task.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Exhortation of Pope Paul VI, *Evangelii nuntiandi* and a number of addresses of Pope John Paul II on the new evangelization have contributed to the publishing of new theological publications. There are many of them in Polish, too. These include: J. Salić, *Ewangelizacja: uwagi elementarne (Evangelization: Elementary Remarks)*, Znak 10 (1992), pp. 4-16; *Nowa ewangelizacja (The New Evangelization)*, "Communio" collection, vol. 8, ed. L. Balter, S. Dusza, F. Mickiewicz, S. Stancel, Poznań 1993; *Nowa ewangelizacja odpowiedzią na wyzwania obecnego czasu (The New Evangelization as an Answer to the Challenges of the Present Times)*, ed. by K. Gózdź, Lublin 1993; A. Lewek, *Nowa ewangelizacja w duchu Soboru Watykańskiego II (The New Evangelization in the Spirit of the Secondo Vatican Council)*, vol. I, Katowice 1995; K. Pawlina, *Nowa ewangelizacja i jej realizacja w Polsce po 1989 roku (The New Evangelization and Its Execution in Poland after 1989)*, Warsaw 1995; W. Seremak, *Miłosierdzie Boże a nowa ewangelizacja. Znaki czasu (The Divine Mercy and the New Evangelization. The Signs of the Times)*, Lublin 2001, pp. 15-38; J. Przybyłowski, *Znaczenie nowej ewangelizacji dla duszpasterstwa młodzieży (The Significance of the New Evangelization for the Ministry of the Youth)*, Lublin 2001; W. Przyczyna, *Teologia ewangelizacji (The Theology of Evangelization)*, Kraków 1992; K. Jeżyna, *Moralne przesłanie nowej ewangelizacji. Wezwanie do odnowy Kościoła i świata (The Moral Message of the New Evangelization. A Call for the Church and World's Renewal)*, Lublin 2002; *Ibid.*, *Maryjny wymiar nowej ewangelizacji w nauczaniu Jana Pawła II (Marian Dimension of the New Evangelization in the Teaching of John Paul II)*, *Salvatoris Mater* 5 (2003), pp. 278-298; Cz. Parzyszek, *Nowa ewangelizacja – drogą Kościoła do nadziei. Refleksje w oparciu o nauczanie Jana Pawła II (The New Evangelization – the Church's Road to Hope. Reflections Based on John Paul II's Teaching)*, Ząbki 2010; *Ewangelizacja odpowiedzią Kościoła w Polsce na wyzwania współczesności (Evangelization as an Answer of the Church in Poland to the Challenges of the Modern Day)*, ed. by W. Przygoda, E. Robek, Sandomierz 2011.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. W. Seremak, *Miłosierdzie Boże a nowa ewangelizacja. Znaki czasu*, op. cit., pp. 237-246.

During his numerous meetings with bishops, John Paul II spoke that the New evangelization will bear the expected fruit provided that the Church's shepherds give testimony to love and Christian unity as well as being witnesses to faith, love and hope, particularly towards young people.<sup>3</sup> The testimony of Christian life, in particular, personal holiness, should precede the delivery of the preached word (cf. *Veritatis splendor* 107). The shepherds should experience in their life a real transformation as a result of a personal meeting with Jesus Christ. They should bring themselves to make the special effort of cleansing and sanctifying, acquire limitless love from God and people as well as gain the skills of sharing the experience with other people.<sup>4</sup>

### **The Conditions of Introducing the New Evangelization**

The Holy Father John Paul II reminded us that the fruitfulness of the new evangelization depends on whether the bishops are people of deep faith, hope, ardent love and unshaken faithfulness to Christ and the truth revealed by Him as well as of unity with St. Peter's successor, without "parallel teaching".<sup>5</sup> The unity of the shepherds is supposed to constitute a fundament of the work of the new evangelization. It becomes a model and a visible reason of the Church's unity.<sup>6</sup> A condition the bishops should fulfil in undertaking the work of the new evangelization is to run it in a decisive way, to proclaim the Good News with such methods and express the revealed truths in a language and in a way that the preaching is clear and understandable for everyone.<sup>7</sup> They should also connect the preaching with concern for the advancement of man, namely, the elevation, development and liberation from evil from those who evangelize.<sup>8</sup> Also, the fruitfulness of the work depends on the bishops' concern for the formation of presbyters, consecrated persons and the lay faithful. This is with regards to the

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<sup>3</sup> Cf. John Paul II, *Sekularyzacja i ewangelizacja w dzisiejszej Europie*, Osservatore Romano [dalej: OR] 6(1985), nr 10-12, s. 15; id., *Nowa ewangelizacja, postęp człowieka, kultura chrześcijańska*, OR 13(1992), nr 12, s. 31; id., *Nowa ewangelizacja musi owocować świętością*, OR 14(1993), nr 8-9, s. 24; id., *Trzy priorytety aktywnej nadziei*, OR 7(1986), nr 7, s. 9.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. id., *Każdy Kościół lokalny czerpie swoje życie z Kościoła powszechnego*, OR 14(1993), nr 3, s. 22; tenże, *Kierunki działalności ewangelizacyjnej Kościoła*, OR 14(1993), nr 8-9, s. 17; tenże, *Nowa ewangelizacja musi owocować świętością*, OR 14(1993), nr 8-9, s. 24.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. id., *Macie być krytycznym sumieniem moralnym społeczeństwa*, OR 6(1985), nr 1, s. 18-19; tenże, *Nowa ewangelizacja, postęp człowieka, kultura chrześcijańska*, OR 13(1992), nr 12, s. 24-25.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. id., *Jak Jezus, Dobry Pasterz, który umiłował do końca*, OR 8(1987), nr 6, s. 30; tenże, *Wierni Duchowi, Słowu, Kościołowi i człowiekowi*, OR 7(1986), nr 7, s. 11.

<sup>7</sup> Id. *Przemówienie Ojca Świętego Jan Pawła II do Rady Konferencji Episkopatów Ameryki Łacińskiej (CELAM)*, OR 4(1983), nr 4, s. 29; tenże, *Nowa ewangelizacja, postęp człowieka, kultura chrześcijańska*, OR 13(1992), nr 12, s. 24-25.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. id., *Misja biskupów w Indiach*, OR 7(1986), nr 1, s. 18-19.

readiness of the bishops to cooperate with these people and also if bishops are able to instil in them the commitment to the realization of the new evangelization.<sup>9</sup>

As far as presbyters are concerned, John Paul II revealed that the fruitfulness of the new evangelization, first and foremost, depends on the participation in the work of the new evangelization and whether they will embark on the task with true zeal and whether they will be ready to realize the work from the spiritual side as well as the doctrinal and pastoral ones.<sup>10</sup> The Holy Father pointed out, in particular to the necessity of their learning of the Good News and the transmitting the Church's doctrine of faith in an integrated way with due care for the proclamation to shine with doctrinal and moral purity.<sup>11</sup> The goals set before the new evangelization will be attained when presbyters proclaim the Person of Christ.<sup>12</sup> The new evangelization assigns them a duty of providing a consequent testimony to the love of Christ the Redeemer and preserving unity with bishops, with whom they cooperate with as well as other clergymen.<sup>13</sup>

For the work of the new evangelization to bear fruit is also necessary to gain an increase in the number of presbyters, which should be taken care of by all presbyters. There is also a need that they adopt a new attitude as well as developing a new way of acting. They should make a new effort and devise a new plan of action as part of the undertaking so that it would preserve the teachings of John Paul II in this respect.<sup>14</sup>

Also, an important task lying before presbyters is the establishment of authentic Christian communities – following the model of the original Church present in the Apostles' teachings – through which the whole contemporary order and other achieved goals of the new evangelization would be transformed in accordance with the evangelical principles.<sup>15</sup>

John Paul II set a number of tasks before consecrated persons in order to make the fruitfulness of the work of the new evangelization as considerable as possible. The fundamental condition they need to meet is to always be in communion with Jesus Christ and

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<sup>9</sup> Cf. id., *Rozwój Kościoła zależy nie tylko od warunków historycznych i politycznych*, OR 8(1987), nr 9-10, s. 7.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. id., *Misja biskupów w Indiach*, OR 7(1986), nr 1, s. 19; tenże, *Nauczajcie z głęboką wiarą i umacniajcie nadzieję*, OR 13(1992), nr 12, s. 10-12.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. id., *Tożsamość i odpowiedzialność*, OR 4(1983), nr 4, s. 15; tenże, *Sekularyzacja i ewangelizacja w dzisiejszej Europie*, OR 6(1985), nr 10-12, s. 16.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. id., *Nowa ewangelizacja, postęp człowieka, kultura chrześcijańska*, OR 13(1992), nr 12, s. 24-25.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. id., s. 30-31; tenże, *Nowa ewangelizacja owocem miłości*, OR 14(1993), nr 4, s. 16.

<sup>14</sup> Id., *Nowa ewangelizacja owocem miłości*, OR 14(1993), nr 4, s. 17; tenże, *Nowa ewangelizacja, postęp człowieka, kultura chrześcijańska*, OR 13(1992), nr 12, s. 25.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. id., *W świątłach Fatimy nowa ewangelizacja Europy*, OR 12(1991), nr 7, s. 24; A. Pietrzak, *Eklezjalne wspólnoty podstawowe w Ameryce Łacińskiej modelem nowej ewangelizacji*, w: *Nowa ewangelizacja odpowiedzią na wyzwania obecnego czasu*, dz. cyt., s. 88-93; M. Pelino Domingues, *Parafia jako miejsce ewangelizacji*, w: *Nowa ewangelizacja*, kolekcja „Communio”, t. 8, dz. cyt., s. 305-312.

one another, thus, to reflect in their own personal and communal life the life of the original Church dominated by the spirit of deep Christian love.<sup>16</sup> Consecrated persons should remember that since the internal life is the spirit of apostleship it becomes necessary that they keep on learning Jesus Christ through the Gospel and meet Him – personally and communally – during prayer and the holy sacraments and imitate Him in a life of obedience, poverty and purity.<sup>17</sup>

The testimony of consecrated life will be fruitful in the undertaking of the new evangelization when consecrated persons will not transgress the particular character of a consecrated person's life, and the institute they belong to will protect its own charism so that the founder's will is respected. Apart from that, the brotherly love within the community of consecrated life should be experienced in an authentic way. The Holy Father pointed out that the consecrated person should be a clear sign to the world of sacrificing everything to God.

Consecrated persons should be living images depicting Christ's poverty, and their attitude, whilst living according to the evangelical guidelines, should stem from the internal devotion to the Saviour.<sup>18</sup> It is connected with their concern for the poor which in turn enables the poor to feel brotherly solidarity with them; the lonely and the derelict can feel their closeness; the voiceless can learn that someone wants to listen to them; and that all people affected by distress can recognize the sign of the presence and love of Christ.<sup>19</sup>

Such a life program requires, from consecrated persons an involvement and an unceasing faithfulness to the grace of vocation and the monastic profession. It requires a constantly undertaken spiritual renewal consisting of striving to follow in Jesus Christ's footsteps as closely as possible. Also, consecrated persons should keep on deepening their faith and care for the development and increase in the number of callings to the consecrated life. Finally, John Paul II added that as preachers of the teachings of Jesus Christ they should proclaim them with a Word full of life and devote all their time and powers to this activity.<sup>20</sup>

John Paul II said to the secular evangelizers that the fruitfulness of the new evangelization will depend whether they will expressly testify to the Christian life, whether they

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<sup>16</sup> Id. Jan Paweł II, *Świadectwo modlitwy, wspólnoty i całkowitego poświęcenia*, OR 4(1983), nr 9, s. 20; J. Górski, *Nowa wiosna Ewangelii. Z zagadnień misyjnych*, Kraków 1993.

<sup>17</sup> Id. Jan Paweł II, *Życie wewnętrzne duszą apostołstwa*, OR 6(1985), nr 2, s. 13; tenże, *Wasze powołanie*, OR 8(1987), nr 2, s. 11.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. id., *Biada nam, gdybyśmy nie umieli ukazywać Ewangelii światu*, OR 8(1987), nr 6, s. 22-23.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. id., *Wasza obecność jest jak światło i sól*, OR 9(1988), nr 5, s. 23; Ł.M. Neves, *Życie zakonne widzialnym znakiem miłości Jezusa do ludzi*, w: *Apostolskie posłannictwo zakonów* (Powołanie człowieka, t. 8), red. L. Balter, Poznań 1987, s. 239-246.

<sup>20</sup> Id. Jan Paweł II, *Nauczajcie z głęboką wiarą i umacniajcie nadzieję*, OR 13(1992), nr 12, s. 10; tenże, *Nowa ewangelizacja, postęp człowieka, kultura chrześcijańska*, OR 13(1992), nr 12, s. 25, 30; tenże, *Biada nam, gdybyśmy nie umieli ukazywać Ewangelii światu*, OR 8(1987), nr 6, s. 22-23.

can testify to the Christian truth without shallowing it, whether they will set themselves as Apostles as witnesses to Christ's Cross and Resurrection, as well as salvific love of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.<sup>21</sup>

In introducing the new evangelization it is necessary that secular Christians desire the holiness of life and achieve it in a heroic manner.<sup>22</sup> Secular evangelizers should also know the voice of the Master, Jesus Christ, and stay faithful to His teachings, proclaiming the Good News in a full manner, without obliterating the clarity and strength so as not to impoverish or falsify it. The message of Christ should be delivered to all with the desire that it can become life for others, and with regards to the apostolic dialogue, they should take a position corresponding to their faith without losing awareness of their Christian identity. Their unique quality should be the loving of Christ's truth and love of fellow man.<sup>23</sup> Secular Christians should overcome their own indifference and discouragement, learn wisely and use the natural goods and gifts of God responsibly. They should also overcome the obstacles and difficulties emerging on the road of proclamation of the Good News.<sup>24</sup>

The fruitfulness of the work of secular evangelizers also depends on whether they will cooperate in the undertaking of the work with the Church's hierarchy and other secular persons. It is also dependant on how they will be prepared for executing the task by their shepherds and their own personal extension of knowledge of the revealed truth. Other important factors are the renewal of their apostolic zeal through trusting in Jesus Christ again as well as opening themselves to the voice and activity of the Holy Spirit who dwells in believers' hearts.<sup>25</sup>

The work of the new evangelization undertaken by secular evangelizers will be fruitful only if they are convinced that in Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Son of God, the Redeemer of Man, the salvation given to people is a gift from god, a grace of God's Mercy.<sup>26</sup> First of all, secular Christians should proclaim the truth in their families and strive to make other families

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<sup>21</sup> Cf. id., *Program ewangelicznej odnowy świata, ludzi i struktur*, OR 4(1983), nr 5-6, s. 9; tenże, *Dzieło ewangelizacji wymaga udziału wszystkich*, OR 7(1986), nr 2, s. 9.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. id., *Spotkanie z nowożytnymi kulturami i inkulturacja*, OR 8(1987), nr 1, s. 13; tenże, *Ewangelizacja kultur*, OR 13(1992), nr 1, s. 60.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. id., *Ewangelizacja*, OR 6(1985), nr 3, s. 24; tenże, *Pole działania jest ogromne*, OR 6(1985), nr nadzw, II, s. 34-35; tenże, *O dostrzegalną obecność w społeczeństwie i kulturze*, OR 7(1986), nr 4, s. 27.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. id., *Niech każdy będzie misjonarzem Chrystusowego pokoju i pojednania*, OR 8(1987), nr 3, s. 27; tenże, *W przededniu pięćsetlecia ewangelizacji*, OR 8(1987), nr 6, s. 14.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. id., *Synod i nowa ewangelizacja Europy*, OR 8(1987), nr 7, s. 21; tenże, *Miłość do ubogich nie jest ideologią*, OR 11(1990), nr 6, s. 19; tenże, *Pole działania jest ogromne*, OR 6(1985), nr nadzw, II, s. 34-35; tenże, *Nowa ewangelizacja*. [Salto, 9 V 1988], OR 9(1988), nr 5, s. 20; tenże, *Kościół patrzy na Maryję z nadzieją*, OR 13(1992), nr 2, s. 31.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. id., *Dzięki wam zbawcza nowina Krzyża rozprzestrzeniła się aż po krańce ziemi*, OR 5(1984), nr 9, s. 23.



learn the evangelical values so that through families the new evangelization could be proclaimed around the whole world.

Evangelization of families by families is vital. Christian parents should undertake to defend human dignity and the right to life, in which they should be supported by, for example, educators, health service workers and representatives of state authorities.<sup>27</sup> The work of the new evangelization will also bear fruit if secular believers are willing to join in the work of catechesis, in particular, where there are too few priests and monks, and to watch over the faithfulness in truth held by the mass media and to use them to evangelize. In addition, it is important to engage in political life, in the work of preserving peace in the world, to contribute to the economic, social and cultural development, as well as to promote the human person.<sup>28</sup>

John Paul II set tasks for the youth too, so that the work of the new evangelization undertaken by them could be effective. The first one is the call to participate in the work of the new evangelization and prepare to introduce it, which is connected with spiritual revival of young evangelizers and their personal meeting with Jesus Christ.<sup>29</sup> The involvement of young people in the work of the new evangelization requires from them faith, magnanimity and courage as well as earnest fervour and the testimony of paschal joy. The Church should enable them to get to know the Gospel and facilitate the recognition of the field of apostleship.<sup>30</sup>

### **The Means of Introducing the New Evangelization**

Apart from the conditions which need to be met in order to fulfil the objectives of the new evangelization it is necessary to address the question of the means to which such conditions will become achievable. While speaking to the Church's shepherds John Paul II in principle did not specify the means in which they should undertake in order to achieve the desired conditions. The reason for this omission was because applying these almost certainly depends on the place and circumstances under which the proclaiming takes place and on what

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<sup>27</sup> Cf. id., *Matka pełna czułości*, OR 13(1992), nr 12, s. 20; tenże, *Przesłanie Ojca Świętego do uczestników Międzynarodowych Kongresów Mariologicznego i Maryjnego w Huelvie*, OR 14(1993), nr 1, s. 10; tenże, *Ewangelizacja rodziny przez rodzinę*, OR 14(1993), nr 8-9, s. 29; tenże, *Zadania świeckich w porządku doczesnym*, OR 15(1994), nr 8, s. 36.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. id., *Rozpoczęta przed 500 laty ewangelizacja trwa nadal*, OR 11(1990), nr 6, s. 8; tenże, *Wierność prawdzie w środkach społecznego przekazu*, OR 14(1993), nr 3, s. 36-37; tenże, *Ewangelizacja*, OR 6(1985), nr 3, s. 24; tenże, *Zadania świeckich w porządku doczesnym*, OR 15(1994), nr 8, s. 36.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. *Oroędzie Ojca Świętego Jana Pawła II na IX i X Światowy Dzień Młodzieży*, OR 15(1994), nr 2, s. 5.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. *Oroędzie Ojca Świętego Jana Pawła II na VII Światowy Dzień Młodzieży 1992*, OR 13(1992), nr 2, s. 6-7; *Oroędzie Ojca Świętego Jana Pawła II na IX i X Światowy Dzień Młodzieży*, OR 15(1994), nr 2, s. 5; Jan Paweł II, *Kościół młodych*, OR 15(1994), nr 11, s. 37.

means they have at their disposal at a particular time. He definitely indicated homily and catechesis as a significant means of evangelization.<sup>31</sup> It was connected with an attempt at sensitizing bishops to the need of giving the right spiritual, doctrinal and pastoral formation to the presbyter, consecrated persons as well as secular Christians cooperating with Apostles' successors.

A measure to facilitate the work of the new evangelization is everything which serves in the renewal of internal life of whole Church communities. In addition it is also the undertaking of a decisive pastoral and evangelizing activity such as a prayer, a sacramental life, the practice of humble mercy service in favour of all people in need and the realization among the believers of the ideal of holiness manifesting in the testimony of faith and love.<sup>32</sup> Apart from the above, John Paul II also included in the measures to facilitate the new evangelization, the establishment of new Catholic organizations such as the beginning of Catholic Action and inculturation, work aimed at permeating culture with the Gospel.<sup>33</sup>

The Pope stressed that a means of evangelization should be a patient and honest ecumenical dialogue held with due respect for the truth in the spirit of love with clear aim to meet Christ's desire to make all people, in particular, Christians, be one "for the world to believe" (cf. J 17, 21).<sup>34</sup> John Paul II described in more detail the means suitable to realize the work of the new evangelization in the speeches delivered to presbyters, consecrated persons and secular ones.

With regards to presbyters, the Holy Father, in his speeches to bishops pointed to the formation of apostolic groups, holding an ecumenical dialogue, catechisation and catechesis as well as preaching as an important means of realizing the new evangelization.<sup>35</sup> He also mentioned that the means of mass communication should be included in the undertaken work.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Cf. Jan Paweł II, *Możemy ująć w ręce ster naszej historii*, OR 4(1985), nr 3, s. 21-22; tenże, *Pasterz idzie przed trzodą*, OR 6(1985), nr nadzw. I, s. 18; tenże, „*Odwagi, Ja jestem, nie bójcie się*”, OR 8(1987), nr 4, s. 17.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. id., *Kościół wspólnotą ewangelizującą*, OR 14(1993), nr 2, s. 17-18; A. Lewek, *Nowa ewangelizacja w duchu Soboru Watykańskiego II*, t. I, s. 239-262.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. John Paul II, *Wobec nowych potrzeb ewangelizacyjnych*, OR 6(1985), nr nadzw. II, s.25; tenże, *Wyzwanie dla ewangelizacji Europy*, 6(1985), nr10-12, s. 14-15; tenże, *Dialog i ewangelizacja*, OR 7(1986), nr 1, s. 14, 28; tenże, *Spotkanie z nowożytnymi kulturami i inkulturacja*, OR 8(1987), nr 1, s.13; tenże, *Nowa ewangelizacja, postęp człowieka, kultura chrześcijańska*, OR 13(1992), nr 12, s. 28-29.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. id., *Z nową odwagą podejmijmy dzieło głoszenia Ewangelii*, OR 13(1992), nr 2, s.17-20.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. id., *Kościół jest komunią*, OR 10(1989), nr 4, s. 21; tenże, *Odwiedziny Kościoła na „Kontynencie nadziei”*, OR 12(1991), nr 11, s. 4; tenże, *Pięćset lat ewangelizacji Angoli*, OR 13(1992), nr 8-9, s. 33; tenże, *Zapłaciłście wysoką cenę za wierność Chrystusowi*, OR 13(1992), nr 11, s. 14; tenże, *Nauczajcie z głęboką wiarą i umacniajcie nadzieję*, OR 13(1992), nr 12, s. 10-11; tenże, *Nowa ewangelizacja, postęp człowieka, kultura chrześcijańska*, OR 13(1992), nr 12, s. 25; tenże, *By szukać skutecznych dróg reewangelizacji chrześcijańskiej Europy*, OR 12(1991), nr 5, s. 51.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. id., *Pięćset lat ewangelizacji Angoli*, OR 13(1992), nr 8-9, s. 33.

The Pope also gave acknowledgment to the measures needed when considering the protection of human dignity as well as delivering specialized preaching (e.g. among health care service) and a life in simplicity and poverty. He stressed the importance of developing in oneself an attitude of accessibility and courtesy, firstly looking and working on oneself, with concern for the presence of prayer and meditation in one's life as well as a constant deepening of one's understanding of the evangelical message through systematic studying.<sup>37</sup>

As regards to consecrated persons belonging to communities of consecrated life, John Paul II treated the personal and communal testimony given as not only a way of evangelizing but also as a means to which evangelization itself is realized, through devotion to and nuptials with Christ in monastic consecration and communal life. They became a sign pointing to God who is Love and the necessity to answer with one's whole life to the gift which in Jesus Christ was given to people.<sup>38</sup>

The Holy Father also drew attention to the participation of consecrated persons in the first evangelization and expressed a wish that their share in the new evangelization should also be significant, enumerating therewith traditional means used for proclaiming such as catechesis.<sup>39</sup> As a means of realizing the work of the new evangelization, He also mentioned the undertaking of jobs by consecrated persons in kindergartens, educational institutions and health care service as well as the utilization of the means of mass communication.<sup>40</sup> The Holy Father also stressed the importance of having a hidden life by contemplative orders, following by the order's members, humility, hiddenness and an incessant unity with God, the spirit of prayer and sacrifice.

For the secular believers John Paul II emphasized that they should change the world they are living and acting in, becoming the leaven of the new humankind and contributing to the realization of the transformation of the whole contemporary order to suit the evangelical

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<sup>37</sup> Cf. id., *Tożsamość i odpowiedzialność*, OR 4(1983), nr 4, s. 15-16; tenże, *Nauczajcie z głęboką wiarą i umacniajcie nadzieję*, OR 13(1992), nr 12, s. 10-11.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. id., *Życie wewnętrzne duszą apostołstwa*, OR 6(1985), nr 2, s. 13; tenże, *Wasze powołanie*, OR 8(1987), nr 2, s. 11; tenże, *Biada nam, gdybyśmy nie umieli ukazywać Ewangelii światu*, OR 8(1987), nr 6, s. 22-23; tenże, *List do wszystkich osób konsekrowanych we wspólnotach zakonnych oraz instytucjach świeckich z okazji Roku Maryjnego*, OR 9(1988), nr 5, s. 4; tenże, *Nowa ewangelizacja, postęp człowieka, kultura chrześcijańska*, OR 13(1992), nr 12, s. 30.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. id., *I wy macie swój udział w Ewangelii*, OR 6(1985), nr 3, s. 29; tenże, „*Odwagi, Ja jestem, nie bójcie się*”, OR 8(1987), nr 4, s. 17; tenże, *Biada nam, gdybyśmy nie umieli ukazywać Ewangelii światu*, OR 8(1987), nr 6, s. 23; tenże, *Orędzie Papieskie na Światowy Dzień Misyjny [1987]*, OR 8(1987), nr 7, s. 3; tenże, *Kształt nowej ewangelizacji*, OR 9(1988), nr 7, s. 25; tenże, *W służbie przekazu Ewangelii dzisiejszemu światu*, OR 13(1992), nr 6, s. 48; tenże, *Nowa ewangelizacja, postęp człowieka, kultura chrześcijańska*, OR 13(1992), nr 12, s. 24-25.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. id., *Nauczajcie z głęboką wiarą i umacniajcie nadzieję*, OR 13(1992), nr 12, s. 10; tenże, *W służbie przekazu Ewangelii dzisiejszemu światu*, OR 13(1992), nr 6, s. 48.

principles. They are supposed to do so with the testimony they give through the proclamation of the Good News in such a way that the Gospel permeates the whole culture.<sup>41</sup>

The means of evangelizing all social, political and economic structures is supposed to be their testimony of faith (faith and its professing as well as a genuine Christian life expressed in the love for neighbours, care for the common good, bringing and strengthening peace and introducing unity).<sup>42</sup> A means of realization of the new evangelization available to secular Christians is also the evangelization of culture and catechesis as well as organizing and conducting religion classes (catechumenate) at schools.<sup>43</sup>

John Paul II also called suffering an important tool of the evangelization, through which numerous masses of secular people might join in the work of the new evangelization, as well as through prayer and penance.<sup>44</sup> The Holy Father showed secular Christians the means of mass communication as a tool which they should use to realize the work of the new evangelization.<sup>45</sup> Such a means is the membership of the secular pious societies, “associations”, the movements as well as the faithfulness to traditional initiatives and signs of folk devotion connected with the celebrations of religious holidays.<sup>46</sup>

A valuable means of realising the new evangelization are also the activities by fathers and mothers aimed at the formation of their families in accordance with evangelical principles as well as their care for families in general. This is expressed in contributing to the prosperity of evangelical values so that the truly Christian families would become a tool of the new evangelization.<sup>46</sup> A highly helpful tool, for secular Christians, regarding the realization of the

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<sup>41</sup> Cf. id., *Pole działania jest ogromne*, OR 6(1985), nr nadzw. II, s. 34-35.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. id., *Jesteście tymi, którzy mają kształtować ludzi wolnych*, OR 4(1983), nr 3, s. 27; tenże, *Głoszenie Słowa i świadectwo życia*, OR 4(1983), nr 4, s. 23-24; tenże, *Program ewangelicznej odnowy świata, ludzi i struktur*, OR 4(1983), nr 5-6, s. 6; tenże, *Świadectwo*. [Rzym, 3 XI 1985], OR 6(1985), nr 10-12, s. 25; tenże, *Niech każdy będzie misjonarzem Chrystusowego pokoju i pojednania*, OR 8(1987), nr 3, s. 27; tenże, *Nowa ewangelizacja*. [Salto, 9 V 1988], OR 9(1988), nr 5, s. 19; tenże, *Jak drogę proponuje Kościół?*, OR 11(1990), nr 1, s. 23; tenże, *Kościół patrzy na Maryję z nadzieją*, OR 13(1992), nr 2, s. 31; tenże, *Indywidualny i zespołowy udział świeckich w apostołstwie*, OR 5(1994), nr 8, s. 34-35.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. RMis 46, 97; Jan Paweł II, *Zaproponujcie światu model cywilizacji chrześcijańskiej*, OR 6(1985), nr 2, s. 14; tenże, *O dostrzegalną obecność w społeczeństwie i w kulturze*, OR 7(1986), nr 4, s. 27; tenże, *Jesteście tymi, którzy mają kształtować ludzi wolnych*, OR 4(1983), nr 3, s. 27; tenże, *Głoszenie Słowa i świadectwo życia*, OR 4(1983), nr 4, s. 23-24; tenże, *Różne sposoby służenia Ewangelii*, OR 4(1983), nr 9, s. 12; tenże, „*Jakże uwierzą, skoro nie usłyszeli?*”, OR 5(1984), nr 11-12, s. 9; tenże, *Katecheza - „słowo wiary” pełne i całkowite*, OR 6(1985), nr 1, s. 27; tenże, *Ewangelizacja*, OR 6(1985), nr 3, s. 24; tenże, *By szukać skutecznych dróg reewangelizacji chrześcijańskiej Europy*, OR 12(1991), nr 5, s. 51.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. id., *Misyjna moc cierpienia*, OR 5(1984), nr 6, s. 24; tenże, *W świątlach Fatimy nowa ewangelizacja Europy*, OR 12(1991), nr 7, s. 25.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. id., *Dziedziny apostołstwa świeckich: uczestnictwo w misji Kościoła*, OR 15(1994), nr 8, s.32-33.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. id., *Matka pełna czułości*, OR 13(1992), nr 12, s. 20; tenże, *Przed obchodami Międzynarodowego Roku Rodziny*, OR 14(1993), nr 5-6, s. 37; tenże, *Ewangelizacja rodziny przez rodziny*, OR 14(1993), nr 8-9, s. 29; tenże, *Indywidualny i zespołowy udział świeckich w apostołstwie*, OR 5(1994), nr 8, s. 34-35.

call for the new evangelization, is the new *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.<sup>47</sup> It is vital that this tool should be willingly used.

Benedict XVI pointed out the role of the sacrament of confirmation and the Eucharist, which facilitate and call for the start of the new evangelization. “Confirmation – in the Pope’s opinion – gives us a *special power* to testify to and praise God with all our lives (cf. Rz 12,1). It makes us internally aware of our belonging to the Church, the “Body of Christ”, in which we all are living members and demonstrates solidarity with one another (cf. 1 Kor 12,12-25). Allowing oneself to be led by the Holy Spirit, every baptized person may contribute to the building of the Church thanks to charisms which He gives as “to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the profit of all” (1 Cor. 12.7). When the Spirit is acting He brings His fruits from the heart, which includes “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control” (Ga. 5.22). To those of you who have not received the Sacrament of Confirmation yet, I send a cordial invitation to prepare for receiving it, asking your priests for help. It is a special moment of grace which the Lord offers you: Do not let it go!”<sup>48</sup>

To grow up in the Christian life – continues the Pope – it is necessary to feed on Christ’s Body and Blood: we are truly baptized and confirmed with concern for the Eucharist (cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 1322; *Sacramentum caritatis* 17). “The source and summit” of the Christian life, the Eucharist is an “unceasing Pentecost”. Each time we celebrate the Holy Mass we receive the Holy Spirit who unites us deeply with Christ and transforms us into Him. If you, my dear youth, frequently participate in the celebration of the Eucharist, if you devote part of your time to the adoration of the Holy Sacrament, then, from the source of love which is the Eucharist, you will be given this joyful determination to dedicate your life to following the Gospel. Simultaneously, you will experience that where our forces do not reach, the Holy Spirit reaches. By transforming and filling us with his power, He makes us witnesses, who are full of missionary fervour of Christ the Resurrected.<sup>49</sup>

To sum up the section it is worth quoting Benedict XVI’s words which he said to the participants of the first plenary session of the Pontifical Council for Promoting the New Evangelization (30 May 2011): “The salvific message of Jesus Christ today needs renewed power in order to persuade contemporary man. In connection with this, the new evangelization

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<sup>47</sup> Cf. id., *Nowy katechizm*, OR 14(1993), nr 2, s. 5-6; tenże, *Narzędzie ewangelizacji*, OR 14(1993), nr 2, s. 5-6.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/benedict\\_xvi/messages/youth/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_mes\\_20070720\\_yoth\\_pl.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/messages/youth/documents/hf_ben-xvi_mes_20070720_yoth_pl.html)

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

should take care in finding more effective way of proclaiming salvation without which personal life is embedded in contradictions and is deprived of what is vital".<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Benedict XVI, *Musimy szukać nowych sposobów skutecznego głoszenia Ewangelii. Przemówienie do uczestników pierwszej sesji plenarnej Papieskiej Rady ds. Krzewienia Nowej Ewangelizacji*, OR, wyd. polskie, nr 7(2011), s. 40.

## **The Rearing process in catholic community the path of freedom, faith and love**

The basic objective of the Church is helping man to establish a relation with God. Thus described the sense of the Church's mission is only of general nature, and therefore in theological and pastoral thought the Church's tasks need to be specified in detail. In the human-divine dimension a basic role is to build a community which, on the one hand, is the presence of a God-human relationship, and on the other hand creates interhuman relations. The community relations are personal ones and that is the basis for the next of the Church's tasks: the Church has to be a rearing community. Because upbringing is an interpersonal action, in which two persons become so close to each other that they develop a direct connection. It is a type of personal bond, in which one of the involved persons is devoted to the other on the basis of mutual need. Through this mutual bond certain values are taught, which become the "matter" of personal development. In interpersonal relations, which become community relations, said rearing values are easier to assimilate, are rooted deeper and give better effects.<sup>51</sup>

The form and course of the rearing process are influenced by many factors, including moral-religious, ethical-customary, economical-political ones. Ecclesial pedagogy is achieved in the community of the Church, which is conditioned by the situation within the Church itself as well as outside it. In this case the matter is not about the nature of the Church community, but about the religiousness of its members, which is shaped within the community. Religiousness, in the human sense, is not something separate from the rules of social life and cannot be sterilely extracted from the entirety of worldly life.<sup>52</sup> Thus it is important to say that however deciding the pedagogical purposeful actions and personality factors are in the rearing process in Church community, its state is also influenced by external-environmental conditions. In this case these are understood as external inspiration, whose aim is to create an awareness of mutual relation between human and culture and biophysical surrounding in the pupils, as well as to form an attitude of identifying themselves with their environment. The

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<sup>51</sup> M. Majewski, *Przekaz wiary nowemu pokoleniu, w: W służbie człowiekowi. Studium duszpastersko-katechetyczne*, ed. Z. Marek, Cracow 1991, p.56.

pupils, aware of these relations, can make decisions and perform tasks that lead to developing and improving their environment.<sup>53</sup> In regard to the external influences, it is important to remember the macro scale changes expressed by the European and global civilization. It is more obvious nowadays, when the limitations of time and space are fading away thanks to the media, especially the Internet, and people become closer to each other not thanks to interhuman relations, but thanks to virtual communication. Among these external conditions there are ones that are of positive effects on shaping one's faith, however there are also ones that are a danger to the basic goals of ecclesial pedagogy and hinder accomplishing the rearing-formation tasks that come from it.

A question arises: what paradigms need to be developed in order for the rearing process of shaping faith to be fruitful in conditions unfavorable towards staying true to moral and ethic values and basic rules (general-human values)? It should also be asked: how should pedagogical actions (aims, tasks, methods and means) available to the Church, family, peer environment, school and other organizations be integrated to achieve basic rearing goals?

The answers to these questions demand taking into account first of all the "basics of pedagogy", which is the source of fundamental and fixed rearing principles. However revaluation and using the innovation of the Church's rearing techniques in the field of Christian culture, and one of its goals is to overcome the clear conflict between the message of the evangelic proclamation and the culture of the pluralistic society. Such a statement is utmostly justified. For Christianity, as a religion, is marginalized, or even straight-forwardly attacked. Whereas Christianity is a cultural heritage and, at the same time, has important duties towards culture. First of them is to affirm the human being through accenting human's supernatural vocation, personal freedom, helping him in finding himself as a human, with his destiny and vocation. Next is to subject the world to human, whom as a person is a goal and the proper operator and culture is the tool. Christianity also points at the primacy of moral values, according to the rule that it should be more important for human to "be" and not "have". And finally, Christian religion makes a goal for itself to bring help to human "follow his way to eternity".<sup>54</sup>

The fundamental values in Church community, in the rearing sense, are: faith, freedom, love. These values are gifts, which human develops through dialogue with God as well as through relating with other humans. These values, shaped through personal dialogue,

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<sup>52</sup> J. Mariański, *Religijność w procesie przemian*, Warsaw 1991, p. 304.

<sup>53</sup> W. Okoń, *Słownik pedagogiczny*, Warsaw 1992, p. 235.

<sup>54</sup> F. Adamski, *O integralną koncepcję kultury*, in: *W służbie człowiekowi. Studium duszpastersko-katechetyczne*, op. cit., p. 13.



gain personal and community nature<sup>55</sup> and specify more clearly human dignity. This dignity requires human to act on conscious and free will, which is personally, in tune with his conscience (out of spiritual inspiration), and not on a blind inner urge or because of external pressure. Such freedom is gained by human when he, liberating himself completely of the chains of passion, fulfills his vocation through free choice of love. Human freedom, hurt by sin, can make his turning towards God fully effective only through the gifts of faith and love.<sup>56</sup>

### **PREPARING FOR FREEDOM, FAITH AND LOVE**

Faith preparations are a priority in the Church community. This does not mean that limiting human to the area of religion, but quite the opposite: it promotes human as a person who is free and loving. Humanity, on the existential plane, is shaped by conscious and voluntary actions of human. Thus every human will have to consider his life before God's judgment according to whether he was good or bad.<sup>57</sup>

Human decisions and actions are also influenced by external factors, which are self-contained and independent. The main factor belonging to these is the fight between good and evil, which is responsible for human's internal dilemma. Referring to symbols, it can be said that it is a dramatic fight between light and darkness. In a dangerous situation human discovers his inability to successfully fight the evil which is endangering him, because he feels bound by chains. The only salvation for human is to accept Christ's help, who came to free and strengthen human, renew his inner-self and free him from "the prince of this world" (J 12:31), who has kept human in the captivity of sin.<sup>58</sup>

Another factor influencing human's choice is the struggle between freedom and captivity. The contemporary human being fears two things. The first of these is his freedom, thanks to which human can shape his life himself, plan his future, so as these are not ready-fixed, without the possibility to influence them with own initiative, or destroyed – without the chance for further life. On the other hand are human's worries about the matters of his life, which he occupies himself with, matters he lives for, the balance in his life, in which he lives and functions.<sup>59</sup> These existential situations bear both new dangers for human's identity, and unlimited possibilities of fulfillment for the individual as well as the community.

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<sup>55</sup> M. Majewski, *Przekaz wiary nowemu pokoleniu*, in: *W służbie człowiekowi. Studium duszpastersko-katechetyczne*, ed. Z. Marek, Cracow 1991, p.56.

<sup>56</sup> Second Vatican Council, Pastoral Constitution about the Church in contemporary times *Gaudium et spes*, 17 (thereafter PDCh).

<sup>57</sup> PDCh 17

<sup>58</sup> PDCh 13

<sup>59</sup> K. Hemmerle, *Młodzież a Kościół*, „Communio” 3(1983)4, p. 57.

## 1. Freedom of choice

The greatest danger in shaping the attitude of freedom is human's false conviction that in the meeting between God and human the rule is that human is weak and God is strong. The feeling of weakness blocks the path to satisfy the need for safety and makes human more and more prone to aggression, which can be turned both at the outside world as well as the inner one (self-aggression).

Human, with his freedom limited, confronts God, whom he also imposes a limit on His freedom. The aim of the fight is to take away the freedom from the "opponent". Human fights God for freedom, because of his feeling, or even conviction, that God can limit, or even take away, human's freedom. This fight leaves no place for dialogue – there is only the winner and the loser, no compromise, that is why freedom must be chosen. If human "defeats God" he becomes a practical atheist. If human is "beaten by God", he becomes a "slave", whose main goal is to protect freedom, his own and others', which is based on either slave loyalty to the ethic-moral rules (moralization)<sup>60</sup>, or the relativity of ethic-moral rules (liberalism). Whatever the form, enslavement closes human's road to development, because an enslaved person is unable to create a partner (personal) relation with God that is based on love, as well as the inability to create a relation with another human being.<sup>61</sup>

This situation is a special challenge in rearing to the Church community. In this case it is the supporting role of the members of the Church community in the rearing process. This role consists of engaging faith and love towards other community members, thanks to which a Christian can provoke another Christian to enter the path of realizing their own vocation. However it must be stressed that the invocation of "Come to us, we are the Church" must be articulated in a manner that will not make it seem an order, but an invitation. Being Christian does not imply being forced to reason and think like other members of the Church community. The members of the community have to be on guard from the sin, which is often committed by them against their companions on the road to faith by being excessive concerned and suggesting solutions that are to protect humans seeking faith in avoiding suffering and committing mistakes. Whereas the companion can only create conditions and

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<sup>60</sup> It is worth to quote N. Lobkowicz: „The Church should not moralize. However it is a very delicate matter, because the Gospel contains the proclamation of morality .With the exception that it is not a center of any sort, not is it an equivalent of something far more important. He who loves follows the Beloved and makes miracles; he, who does not love only obeys the norms, and when these norms are ambiguous, especially when they do not fully cater the needs or basic aspirations of human, he will not adapt to them.“ N. Lobkowicz, *Przekazywanie wiary*, in: *Podstawy wiary. Teologia*, Poznań 1991, pp. 209-210 („Communio” collection), t. 6).

<sup>61</sup> Assuming the basic worldview ideas of love, freedom and fighting, three models can be distinguished: Christian, liberal and socialistic. Cf. S. Kunowski, *Podstawy współczesnej pedagogiki*, Łódź 1981, pp. 75-180.

clear the path to opposites, including one's self.<sup>62</sup> Only then will he be ready to a change of heart and mind. While describing his own change of heart and mind, T.M. Anthony shows its "universal" elements. "I was tired physically as well as inside me. Suddenly I felt a Presence. I did not know what it was, but I felt good around it. My mind started having calm and peaceful thoughts. As if talking to someone invisible – You cannot manage by yourself. I felt a tightness on my throat – You need me. Warm tears began flowing down my cheeks. I felt great relief – because it all had followed me for so long. Something in me began crumbling – Open yourself to me. I heard myself say words I had never heard before. Somehow, instinctively, I knew who it was. – Jesus, help me! Take my life – I beg of you – I offer you myself. Everything collapsed inside me. I wept like I had never wept before and with every moment I felt more and more free. Everything let go of me – pain, anger, the feeling of being lost and hopelessness. I felt renewed. I felt loved, I felt I had been forgiven and I was happy I was alive. I felt peace – an undescrivable peace. I was overwhelmed by a complete inner peace and satisfaction. I sang Him songs that had not had sense before, but now sounded as if I was their author. I talked to Him. I ran. I jumped. I smiled so wide my face hurt".<sup>63</sup>

## **2. Freedom in love**

Every Christian, who is shaping his freedom by making choices that are in accordance to his conscience, follows the path of faith, of whose content is God's love. The mission to manifest perfect love is carried out by God's Son, through whom Father God creates a personal relation with human. Through the evangelization of love Christians meet Jesus, God-Human, in which human becomes more and more divine, and God becomes more and more human in the sense that he is closer to humans.<sup>64</sup> God gave the only sign that can be understood by every human being through Jesus of Nazareth – love. Being one with Christ allows for dialogue of love, in which every human is bestowed with love, love that demands being passed forward to others. This dialogue is accomplished when one human loves another human like himself, to which they are bound by the evangelic commandment.

The power of evangelic love comes from the person of God's Son, who released human from the "power of sin" by suffering in freedom and love. Christians, as free people, have the ability to love without the constraints of sin, because they are "immersed" in Christ's love, free of themselves and in the Holy Spirit they are ready to meet the requirements of freedom. However, the power of evangelic love demands that Christians allow the Holy

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<sup>62</sup> A. Binz, *Katecheta: misja, zawód czy powołanie*, in: *W służbie człowiekowi. Studium duszpastersko-katechetyczne*, op. cit, p. 104-105.

<sup>63</sup> T. M. Anthony, *Dlaczego? Samobójstwo i inne zagrożenia wieku dorastania*, Warsaw 1994, pp. 200-201.

<sup>64</sup> Cf. R. Fisichella, *La rivelazione: evento e credibilità*, Bologne 1985, pp. 329-332.

Spirit, who lives in them, to completely control and guide them so they can therefore remain in truth and love. The Holy Spirit, who is God's love, allows Christians to experience as a follower of Christ and human being. Thanks to the Holy Spirit Christians, through loving, show God's love as a gift, that can be shared.<sup>65</sup>

### **3. The fundament and essence of Christian faith**

Jesus Christ is, firstly, the "personal fundament" of Christian faith: "let one be wary of how he builds. For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. If anyone builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, their work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each person's work. If what has been built survives, the builder will receive a reward. If it is burned up, the builder will suffer loss but yet will be saved – even though only as one escaping through the flames"(1 Cor 3:11-15). The Gospel should thus not be the fundament of faith, for that is Jesus Christ, but the rules proclaimed by the Gospel should be considered the "essence" and "binder" of faith in everyday life. The Gospel's truth gives human lives sense, worth, but it also is its integral part. For without the Gospel one cannot build life in freedom, which radically directs human and Christian life towards Love. In Christ "Caritas" animates the rich multiplicity of becoming His student, meaning life under "the law of grace", which overlaps with the perfect law of freedom. Christians do not only accept God's gifts, but should also be act themselves, taking part in the building the Kingdom of God.<sup>66</sup>

### **4. God's gift – human's response**

Human has his own plans and God has His. Rearing in the Church community shows the road towards a relation with God, in which both God's and human plans can be achieved. Human develops in the human plane (creational plan) and spiritual plane (savior plan). God is the author of the savior plan – he establishes goals (eternal life) and gives the means (graces – gifts and blessing), thanks to which human can sanctify himself (improve). God is also the creator of the creational plan: the goal is human maturity, however God gives human unlimited freedom in choosing the means. Thanks to being reared in the Church community human discovers in himself God's summons to make dialogue of faith so he can let God's love overwhelm him and in that way he fulfills the depth of his freedom. For Christians are

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<sup>65</sup> W. Pasierbek, *Człowiek obrazem miłości Trójjedynego Boga*, in: *W służbie człowiekowi. Studium duszpastersko-katechetyczne*, op. cit., p.123; cf. H. Schilier, *Linee fondamentali di una teologia paolina*, Queriniana-Brescia 1985, pp. 160-163.

called to imitate God's freedom, i.e. freedom directed at good;<sup>67</sup> he also has God's Spark in themselves – their own ability to fulfill God's image in themselves.

God also gave human to freedom to fulfill his vocation by fully using his own creative energy. This can also be expressed by saying, that God plants His seed in every human and, on his side and thanks to God's grace, human nurtures God's image in himself.<sup>68</sup> The Second Vatican Council teaches that real freedom is "a special sign of God's image in human. For God wanted human to be on his own, so that he would look for the Creator out of his own will and, keeping close to God, voluntarily achieve full and blessed perfectness."<sup>69</sup>

This way the basic condition of rearing in Church community has been stated, which is forming an attitude of freedom. The Church's rearing activity is about helping human perfecting his "humanitas" (humanity) as a Christian, basing on the freedom created and given to him, which is the base of universal values, especially ethic-moral norms (rights and responsibilities). One of the important hermeneutical tasks of Church rearing is that the freedom of choice and making decisions is not a natural sphere, is no one's and nothing's land and that spiritual rights and moral norms do not in the least mean isolation, any self alienation.<sup>70</sup> In Church rearing, all the "secular" rearing regarding humanity ("humanitas"), especially exploring the world, sense and meaning of life keep their autonomy. Church rearing, thanks to being able to show religious sense and meaning of the explored and discovered by the pupil reality, possesses a wider range and richer motivational possibilities. Whereas whether the process is of religious nature or not is decided by those, who give the rearing process shape.<sup>71</sup> The Christian tutor, directing the rearing process towards evangelic values, gives his pupil a greater idea of the surrounding world. First it is calling to love and responsible service, to enemies as well, as was taught and done by Jesus. Alleging to evangelic values in community rearing leads to full humanity, which religious pedagogy

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<sup>66</sup> Cf. P. Góralczyk, *Powołanie do doskonałości jako zasadniczy rys moralności chrześcijańskiej*, in: *Moralność chrześcijańska*, Poznań-Warsaw 1987, pp. 102-103 („Communio” collection), t. 2); J. Fuchs, *Teologia moralna*, Warsaw 1974, p. 86n.

<sup>67</sup> „Human (...) can only turn to good out of free will” (PDCh 17).

<sup>68</sup> J. van der Vloet, *Obraz człowieka jako fundament pedagogii*, „Communio” 12(1992)3, pp. 6-7; Considering St. Pauls theological categories, it should be Said, that thought the evangelizers “sows” the seed of truth and “waters” it, but its growth is God's own doing (cf. 1 Cor 3;6)

<sup>69</sup> Second Vatican Council, Pastoral Constitution about the Church in contemporary times *Gaudium et spes*, 17

<sup>70</sup> K. Hemmerle, *Młodzież a Kościół*, „Communio” 3(1983)4, p. 54.

<sup>71</sup> Z. Marek, *Wychowanie religijne i rozwój człowieczeństwa*, in: *W służbie człowiekowi. Studium duszpastersko-katechetyczne*, op. cit., p. 81; cf. B. Buschbeck, W. E. Failing, *Religiöse Elementarerziehung*, Gütersloh 1978, p. 100; R. Goldman, *Vorfelder des Glaubens*, Neukirchen-Vluyn 1972, p. 83-84; J. Nieuwenhuis, *Gläubige Erziehung*, Düsseldorf 1974, pp. 124-125.

wants to initiate. Thanks to this ideal human questions about the sense of life and actions, and first of all the meaning of life are fully answered.<sup>72</sup>

Tutors are an irreplaceable element of the process of rearing in Church community, and their forming will be key in shaping ecclesial pedagogy. The parents will play the most crucial role. In this context, finally, Pope John Paul II's teaching should be referred to – he claims God based the child-parents relation on the trust towards parents. “On His trust, especially towards the mother, did Father-God base His child-mother relation. (...) Father-God wanted to secure the child's, his beloved, life that way so that from the very beginning it would be entrusted to the care of the closest neighbor of the child: its own mother. (...) A family is one when it is built on such relations, on mutual trust. Only on such a fundament can the rearing process be raised, which is the basic goal of the family and its foremost task. In fulfilling this task the parents cannot be replaced by anyone and no one can deprive them of their crucial task. At the same time it must not be forgotten that this task is a very significant one. The parents themselves must be well reared, so that they can also rear and must also rear themselves so they can rear themselves. Only under these circumstances, such inner attitude, can the rearing process be successful.”<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Z. Marek, *Wychowanie religijne i rozwój człowieczeństwa*, op. cit., pp. 86-87.

<sup>73</sup> John Paul II, Homily in Wrocław, 21 June 1983, 6.

**Lay Apostolate of today:  
Spirituality or Activity?  
Inspirational Thoughts from the writings of St. Vincent Pallotti  
and contemporary theologians**

The question posted in the title of this article implies a certain difficulty that Christians nowadays face seeking their own identity. Being a spiritual person means in fact to be far from the world. Being close to the world may contradict spirituality in certain perspectives. Is there, then, a possibility for spiritual development of “worldly” people? The answer to this question will determine the nature of the apostolate of the laity.

**1. Apostolic spirituality**

Christian spirituality is only one part because it has only one source which is the life of Jesus Christ. The mysticism of a Christian consists in a profound participation in the life of Jesus Christ and that comes through Baptism. Through this spirituality the process of sanctification tends to make the holiness of God his/her own. A Christian, intensifying his/her spiritual life, enters more and more into a deeper union with God. According to the principle that grace perfects nature, and assumes it, a Christian should take care of the spiritual life with the help of holiness (prayer and the sacraments), both natural and supernatural. Christian spirituality first comes as an ethical perfection, which is a natural realization of renunciation and fulfillment of devotional practices. The moral perfection and faith witnessing (action) were only a consequence of that development along with the experience of holiness and the presence of God<sup>74</sup>.

Spirituality of a lay person should maintain its own specific character. The Pontifical Council for the Laity, in a document issued in 1979, states that “the more duties that a lay minister fulfills within the structures of the Church, the more diligently he/she should watch

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<sup>74</sup> Cf. S. Urbański, Słaby „silny” człowiek, „Miejsca Święte” 15(1998), p. 2.

his/her specific vocation as a lay person in the world, in order to avoid any temptation of a clericalization”<sup>75</sup>.

The spirituality of the laity, therefore, demands a clear highlight of their “laical character” which comes from Baptism and Confirmation (cf. LG 31). Thanks to these sacraments a Christian shares in the universal priesthood of the People of God. The apostolate of the laity has also its own autonomy, based on the participation in the mission of Christ and His Church. The task of the laity is to make present the Church in a world in which they should practise and extend the love of Christ and the Church for the world. The formal value which the laity are to express in their vocation is the love of Christ and the Church, the love that saves to the world by using its resources.

According to St. Vincent Pallotti the first means of fulfilling such apostolic mission is prayer, “which allows to obtain from the Giver of all good a grace for the salvation of others”<sup>76</sup>. Therefore, in the normal rhythm of life we have to give God despite many responsibilities and tasks to fulfill.

AT Queiruga emphasizes the importance of the maturation of the Christian “time”, which is part of a definite consciousness. He believes that such a consciousness exists in so far as it happens, as if someone is able to gradually take possession of it. One becomes a human being in the true and slow self-realization of his/her history. If he/she was created suddenly, without the history of growing and having only his/her final adult consciousness, that person would perceive himself/herself rather as a phantom. Fathers of the Church (especially Irenaeus of Lyons) sensed this truth intuitively and emphasized the need for a pedagogy of the adolescence. Each person experiences this when in a flash he/she sees the true rise of a definite consciousness: someone who appeared suddenly, as an already thinking being, real and happy, would be a chimera, an absurdity, a square circle<sup>77</sup>.

Each person needs time to create his/her own history, and at the same time, must resist the unimportant, silly things, poisons, compromises and resignation, the rites of vanity, pressure of commodity in order to find time for God, time for “elevation of the heart”, a “simple look to the sky”. A real time for God includes all that is saved from – wastage, extravagance, talkativeness, hyperactivity, noise music and television, marketplace of vanity, idolatry – and what is instead devoted to the One Lord Jesus Christ. Prayer is the time for Jesus, sticking to him with all the heart full of love<sup>78</sup>. W. Stinissen emphasizes that is harder

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<sup>75</sup> J. Manzanares, Świeccy i życie liturgiczne, in: Laikat w Kościele katolickim, Warszawa 1992, p. 112.

<sup>76</sup> C. Parzyšek, Duchowość apostołska według św. Wincentego Pallottiego, Ząbki 2004, p. 209.

<sup>77</sup> A. T. Queiruga, Bóg jako Anty-zło, in: Zło w świecie, Poznań 1992, p. 168-169.

<sup>78</sup> S. Cf. Urbański, Modlitwa okrzykiem wdzięczności dla Boga, „Miejsca Święte” 16(1998), p. 5.



to hear God in noisiness than in silence, with no words. He says that generally, "we can meet God in the streets only when they first sought him for a long time in silence. One of the most tangible consequences of sin is that man has become a stranger to its own interior, and therefore escapes from the silence, not to find himself. Only if someone becomes reborn is he/she able to face the noisiness of the world and so to transform it"<sup>79</sup>.

St. Vincent Pallotti used to emphasize that prayer is "a powerful instrument which can provide the apostolic actions for an effective growth and is also an easy and universal means, because God's mercy does not exclude anyone from it, on the contrary, everyone is recommended to pray (cf. Lc 18,1) with the spirit of humility, contrition and a desire of the heart what actually everyone can easily do"<sup>80</sup>. Prayer is thus a process by which a person experiences the highest truths of the faith, namely that God is the Father, that Jesus is the Saviour, that the Holy Spirit sanctifies the human being in which He lives. At the same time through the process of growing in the spirit of prayer a person discovers both the grandeur of being a child of God, and activates the ability to delight with God. All people are called to experience the presence of Christ in themselves – the experience of love. Because of that people can incorporate love into their lives and so become more loving<sup>81</sup>.

A Christian needs the power of the Word and a moral space to fulfill its vocation, that is, a constant progress in the formation of the vocation to a life of love, which is the soul of any apostolic activity. "Being in the Word of God" (John 8: 31) and to "abide in love" (John 15: 9), for St. John the Evangelist are actually two interchangeable realities. They determine the "dwelling of God in a human being" and vice versa (1 John 3: 24), which is an intimate community of life and love with the Father. So the love that permeates every prayer, as its condition and the end<sup>82</sup>, gives to a prayerful dialogue an inner dimension, which is completed in the mystery of God's sonship and communion of life with God (cf. 1 Peter 1: 23). In this context, prayer appears to be a completion and extension of the effectiveness of God's word "everything (...) created is good (...) because it is consecrated by the word of God and prayer" (1Tim 4: 3-5). This divine-human dialogue – which is brought about by the word which God, as the **germ** of the new life He gave to His people – appears in the perspective of the parable of the sower. The parable is first expressed in the hearing and understanding of God's word (cf. Matthew 13: 19, Luke 8: 11), followed by its adoption and acceptance (cf. Matthew 13: 20, Luke 8:13), and finally completed and fruitful in the same words (Matthew

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<sup>79</sup> W. Stinissen, W drodze do transfiguracji, in: *Życie duchowe. Modlitwa w codzienności* 39(2004), p. 82.

<sup>80</sup> C. Parzyszek, *Duchowość apostołska według św. Wincentego Pallottiego*, (...), p. 209.

<sup>81</sup> Cf. S. Urbański, *Modlitwa okrzykiem wdzięczności dla Boga*, (...), p. 5.

<sup>82</sup> Cf. P. Beauchamp, *Modlitwa*, w: *Słownik Teologii Biblijnej*, Poznań-Warszawa 1973, p. 501.

13: 23, Luke 8: 15). Summarizing, the various stages of the analyzed dialogue can be expressed as follows: listening (paying attention to the content of the communication); accepting (accepting the truth that I heard); fulfilling (realizing God's call in words)<sup>83</sup>. The word always calls from among a variety of situations, and for the laity takes place in the history, and personal reception<sup>84</sup>. To the call for a spirit of prayer corresponds the willingness to accept the Word and the subduing to the Word, because God dedicates Himself only to someone who gives to Him everything<sup>85</sup>. On the part of a Christian, a prayer requires the full commitment of all of his/her faculties and abilities, while – at the same time – it becomes a search for God, a joyful obedience to Him and “pulling out of the surface the evangelical nature of humanity”<sup>86</sup>.

“God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him” (1J 4: 16). Love is the source of apostolic holiness (cf. LG 41), because God is spreading his love in the hearts of believers by the Holy Spirit (cf. Romans 5: 5). Love is therefore the first and most necessary gift to witnessing the faith. Thanks to this love a Christian loves God above all things, and the neighbour is loved because of God. Love, as a good seed may grow in the soul and bring abundant fruits when the faithful wants to hear God's word with open attitude, and responds by doing God's will in actions, with the help of His grace, often participates in the sacraments, especially the Eucharist and the sacred actions and constantly practicing prayer, self-denial and helping brothers. Love, in fact, is an excellent node and the fulfillment of the Law (cf. Col 3: 14; Romans 13:10), directs all the means of sanctification, which is formed and leads to the goal. Thus love, both of God and of the neighbour, is the trademark of a true disciple of Christ (cf. LG 42). Also the basic principles of the apostolic actions come from the love of the Gospel, actions whose goal will be to build up the Church in internal and external aspects: 1) do not wait for your neighbour to approach you first, but try to get closer to him and always be open; 2) in the encounters with a fellow neighbour show the highest respect for his conscience (this is more than just a tolerance); 3) do not put any of the prohibitions and do

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<sup>83</sup> Cf. H. Muszyński, *Biblijne korzenie modlitwy*, „Ateneum Kapłańskie” 100(1983), p. 344.

<sup>84</sup> G. Giurisato, A. Monticone, *Być świeckim*, Kraków 1993, p. 170. Michel Quoist defines accurately the prayer in this context, when he says that “praying means gradually introducing ourselves into God's will, instead of doing our will; it means also to letting that the love of God will embrace us. We cannot be self-centred in love. We then can carry it out among people as a part of the plan of the Father and His almighty love”; M. Quoist, *Modlitwa i czyn*, Warszawa 1973, p. 364.

<sup>85</sup> A. M. Besnard, *Myśli o modlitwie*, Paryż 1972, p. 28.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid*, p. 127. Prayer, seen as an expression of the obedience to God's will, is closely connected with the personal struggle and spiritual warfare. Nicholas of Flue used to say that going to pray is like going to a war. Cf. W. Nigg, *O wielkich świętych inaczej*, Poznań 1980, p. 19-62.

not judge your neighbour; 4) give a living testimony of faith which is always more important than words and declarations<sup>87</sup>.

## 2. Apostolic prayer

“Whenever we go to pray, we go to meet God, who is waiting for us”<sup>88</sup>, but also to meet people, especially the brothers from “other” faith traditions. St. Vincent Pallotti, for whom prayer was the most important activity in the way reaching sheepfold of Christ, emphasized the validity of the apostolate of the prayer for Christian unity. Therefore, all Christians should pray for this grace and they should encourage others to do this prayer<sup>89</sup>. Maurice Villain, in the bibliography of a pioneer of the ecumenical movement in France – Fr. Paul Irenaeus Couturier, wrote that on the altar at which he celebrated the Eucharist, there were plenty of cards with names of people from different countries. Fr. Couturier embraced those people his prayer the *memento pro vivis*. He identified himself with the world and used to say: “In these moments I am a crowd”<sup>90</sup>. Thanks to the Apostolic Prayer Christians not only see more fully the mystery of the Living God and continue to stay in His sight<sup>91</sup>, but it also embodies the Church<sup>92</sup>.

Prayer of the Church has a high apostolic value, because it becomes a source of the apostolic fruitfulness<sup>93</sup>. This is confirmed by the Acts of the Apostles. When the apostles were concerned about neglecting the ministry of the word to other matters, they decided to entrust these tasks to others as they said “we devote ourselves to prayer and the ministry of the word” (Acts 6: 4). This decision is inseparably linked with the ministry and the apostolate of prayer. This prayer gave the tangible fruits. It made descend the Holy Spirit upon the gatherings of believers (cf. Acts 4: 31)<sup>94</sup>.

Prayer should be according to the character of vocation of every individual. Christian, living in the world, who needs a word, and thus needs a prayer. Prayer, considered in the aspect of God’s word, is a dialogue. This understanding of prayer confirmed by both direct conversations with God holds with people (cf. Genesis 18, 16-33; Exodus 33: 9; 34: 29.34; 7:89 Numbers, Judges 6:38), as well as the fact that all prayers, without exception, showed in both the Old and the New Testaments, result as a response to the talking or acting God. The

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<sup>87</sup> Cf. F. Greiner, Laik: jego obowiązki i prawa, *Communio* 7(1987)3, p. 47.

<sup>88</sup> J. Loew, *Modlitwa w szkole wielkich przyjaciół Boga*, Warszawa 1977, p. 14.

<sup>89</sup> Cf. C. Parzyszek, *Duchowość apostołska według św. Wincentego Pallottiego* (...), p. 214.

<sup>90</sup> B. Nadolski, *Pastoralny walor Liturgii Godzin*, „Ateneum Kapłańskie” 100(1983), p. 375-376.

<sup>91</sup> Cf. J. Loew, *Modlitwa w szkole wielkich przyjaciół Boga* (...), p. 11-22.

<sup>92</sup> See the General Instruction of the Liturgy of the Hours, 8-9.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

examples of some biblical prayers we can mention the following: Deuteronomy 6: 4-5; 29: 13-15; 1 Samuel 2: 1-10; 2 Sam 7: 18-29; 1 Kings 8: 22-61; 2 Kings 19: 15-19; 1 Chronicles 17: 16 -27, 2 Chronicles 20: 6-12; Nehemiah 1: 5-11; Tobit 8: 4-5; Judith 9: 2-14; 2 Maccabees 1: 24-28; Isaiah 37: 16-20; Acts 4: 24-56; 7: 59-60; Romans 1: 8-10; Philippians 1: 3-11). This dialogue cannot be reduced solely to the dimension of the word. Any act of God is in fact rooted in the will of God and His love for people, so also people's response must include the whole sphere of their aspirations and desires, and above all love<sup>95</sup>.

### 3. Activity – living testimony

The apostolate of the laity applies to all people, especially to those belonging to a local environment, regardless of their attitude toward religion, their nationality, race, social position (cf. II Vatican Council's Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity: AA 14). Apostolate is practiced however, in a special way targeting those, who for various reasons, are not subject to a ordinary ministry of the Church, or to those who the clergy are not able to reach (cf. LG 35). There are areas particularly accessible to lay people such as family, work and rest places where Christians meet every day together and with other people. There are people in these places that always are in need: alienated from the 'official' Church and religion, with all sorts of insurmountable difficulties, seeking a kindred spirit and a helping hand. These people may even be parents, children, spouses, friends, work associates, neighbours, the lonely, the sick, the elderly. Caring for them, coming to their spiritual or material aid, or providing for them with adequate assistance, namely, the concern for unity and love in family, fidelity and indissolubility of marriage, the Christian education of children, children orphaned, abandoned, neglected, especially from dysfunctional families, to respect the rights of the family in society, with honesty and fairness at work, with mutual understanding and harmonious coexistence between human beings - all of these areas apply to the apostolate of the laity<sup>96</sup>. Lay apostolate is associated with the implementation of any possible benefit (cf.

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<sup>94</sup> Cf. B. Nadolski, *Pastoralny walor Liturgii Godzin (...)*, p. 375-376.

<sup>95</sup> Cf. H. Muszyński, *Biblijne korzenie modlitwy (...)*, p. 344.

<sup>96</sup> Lay people, unlike the monks and priests, are in fact concerned about many issues, from the most exalted to the most daily, and they must first provide their love and devotion to their closest family members. Moreover, their mission is focused on the things of this world. An important issue here is whether they can always choose the love God above everything else? Of course, they may come to God directly and immediately just through simple prayers. But the question is: can loving your spouse, children and other people give you a direct access to God? K. Rahner and K. Truhlar believe that Christian love of others is not only a preparation, result or the fruit and the foretaste of God's love, but it is an act of love itself. Love, that a Christian has for others, even though the material object of it is another human being, has God Himself as its formal object, because it was raised by a

AA 13), together with the implementation of brotherhood between people and generally understood love and justice. The specific objective of the apostolate, however, is the transmission of the Gospel to people (cf. AA 31).

People who experienced a genuine conversion, which demands a change, may be witnesses of the Gospel<sup>97</sup>. The lay faithful who neglect the testimony of life become inauthentic, and the word of God they preach is not interiorized and not able to make sacrifices, which are associated with conversion. The lack of the witness in the apostolic activity becomes a cause of concern for the faithful regarding the intentions and objectives of the pastoral activities undertaken by the Church. It is necessary for the lay apostles to include into their action a desire for holiness<sup>98</sup>.

We must also emphasize the relationship between the intensity of the witness of the words and the life witness, both of which they should be in the service of conversion, which began with the acceptance of the Gospel of Christ, and its goal is to introduce a follower of Christ into His Church community. Individual apostolate plays an important role in the process of conversion, which in essence is the meeting and dialogue with a specific person<sup>99</sup>. Saint Vincent Pallotti emphasized this aspect of the apostolic life. He felt impelled to act with love for the salvation of souls. He considered his love inadequate: "My God and everything! All others love You truly, doing great and good acts with the infinite perfection, and I instead,

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supernatural grace, and it may be made only at the level ("formal object") of the supernatural grace; Cf. P.C. Phan, *Możliwość duchowości świeckich (...)*, p. 78-79.

<sup>97</sup> S. Urbanski says that the laity, "can certainly be spiritual directors. But they must acquire adequate knowledge in theology, beside that in piety and the one that come from their own experience, which all of them are required from spiritual directors (the blind cannot lead the blind). Spiritual direction is especially needed for people who live a deep spiritual (mystical) life, but often they lack of discernment on this subject, so they cannot recognize the state of their interior, such as the experience of the dark night of the spirit"; S. Urbański, *Słaby „silny” człowiek (...)* p. 2.

<sup>98</sup> S. Urbanski points out the true issue here: it is "very important as we often hear people saying: how to speak today of the spiritual life when we have so many poor, when there is hunger, pollution of the environment, social injustice? ... Exactly because of these problems we do need to talk about spiritual life! A Christian must rely on the divine strength other than on a purely human one. Experiencing God's presence in the spiritual life of someone consists no longer in his/her own 'ego', but in the 'force' more powerful than his/her own. Christ himself asserted that when He said that without Me you can do nothing (cf. John 15: 5). A Christian is the most active person. Living in a great relationship with God that transforms his/her whole personality, increases his/her ability to be active. Therefore such a person does not want to live on the periphery of life, but he/she wants to experience an authentic human existence"; S. Urbański, *Słaby „silny” człowiek (...)*, p. 3.

<sup>99</sup> G. Miller, stressing the importance of pastoral dialogue, gives as an example of parish retreats. "A great topic for a parish retreat would be a reflection on what we Catholic Christians, regularly attending the church, may hear from those not attending the church, non-Catholics and non-Christians. What would a Gentile say to the Christian, a layman to the theologian, what can an ordinary person entrust to the powerful, a poor to the rich, a young to the adult, children to parents. A parish where there is concern for listening and a real capacity for dialogue is an authentic faith community. It follows that we must renounce our constant lecturing of others"; G. Miller, *Tolerancja cnotą chrześcijańską*, in: *W służbie człowiekowi. Studium duszpastersko-katechetyczne*, Kraków 1991, p. 132.

under the influence of malice without measure, in addition to my crimes and wickedness, I do nothing else”<sup>100</sup>.

A deep life of prayer, therefore, does not remove the difficulties that occur in everyday life. They arise, inter alia, that the prayer has a dimension of mystery to both a human being and God. The human being remains for himself/herself still “unknown creature”, let alone God in His infinity is the “essence of the Unknown”. However we are not here in a helpless cognitional situation. A good example is for us St. Theresa of the Child Jesus. In her life a spiritual struggle along with personal difficulties used to go hand in hand with the desire of holiness of life and that allowed her to develop the “little way” to holiness. Going over her difficulties and searching for union with God meant for St. Theresa the “way of childhood” – the path of a profound prayer. To the contemporary people this way of prayer may seem impossible, and the example of St. Theresa’s difficult to follow. The prayer according to the Saint of Mount Carmel is anyway closely associated with the Christian life. It is by no means an extravagance that only religious, cloistered people can afford. St. Theresa with the greatest conviction shows that prayer belongs to the essence of the spiritual life of every Christian. Being a Christian means to have the grace of divine sonship, to be a child of God, have a real ability to speak to Him “Father”, which comes from the living and personal relationship with Him<sup>101</sup>.

#### 4. Concluding Remarks

The lay faithful, in a sense occupy a central position in the Church: the religious pray for the laity and offer to God the fruits of their labour, the hierarchy leads them to a mature faith<sup>102</sup>. A “lay person” is chosen and fit (sent) to sanctify the Christian life within the world, with which he/she is associated not only due to the fact that he/she lives “in the world” but also because of his/her faculties of the sacramental sanctification through baptism and confirmation. In addition, to fulfill this task a lay person can get his/her own charism from the Holy Spirit, who enables him/her to a Christian action in the world. Every Christian has his/her mission, and this means that he/she is sent by Christ to his/her own business to put his/her living faith into action. A lay person fulfills his/her tasks by submitting to the authority of Christ, maintaining freedom and showing responsibility for own actions. But a lay person does not need any special “orders” nor the mandate from the Church<sup>103</sup>.

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<sup>100</sup> Cf. by C. Parzyszek, *Duchowość apostołska według św. Wincentego Pallottiego (...)*, p. 217.

<sup>101</sup> S. Urbański, *Modlitwa okrzykiem wdzięczności dla Boga (...)*, p. 4.

<sup>102</sup> Cf. H. Urs von Balthasar, *Christlicher Stand, Einsiedeln 1979*, p. 309s.

<sup>103</sup> Cf. H. Urs von Balthasar, *Kim jest laik?*, *Communio* 7(1987)3, p. 38.

K. Rahner says that if the laity in a perfect way fulfill their task in the apostolate area, granted them only seemingly in a “limited way”, the world would become Christian just in half a century<sup>104</sup>. But this is only possible with the help of the apostolate of prayer. The prayer in fact, when it develops, it also embraces the whole person and his life with all the power (cf. Luke 18: 1). The prayer allows “walking in the presence of God”. When a person makes the prayer essential to his/her life, he/she cannot run away “ordinary life” of daily routine. The presence of God in the experience of someone who is praying becomes a reality to such person, even though it still remain a mystery to himself/herself<sup>105</sup>.

The vocation of the lay Christian is to be piece-worker of the world (*tâcheron du monde* - J. Maritain). A lay Christian never abandons his/her place in the world and by God’s appointment he/she has “the noble duty (*praeclarum onus*) of working to extend the divine plan of salvation to all men of each epoch and in every land” (LG 33) . It is mostly by vocation and mission of lay people that the Christianity becomes the animating soul of the world: “Christians must be to the world what the soul is to the body” (LG 38)<sup>106</sup>.

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<sup>104</sup> Cf. K. Rahner, *Schriften zur Theologie*, Einsiedeln 1956, p. 363.

<sup>105</sup> Cf. I. Werbiński, *Obecność Boga w modlitwie*, „Ateneum Kapłańskie” 126(1996), p. 40.

<sup>106</sup> II Vatican Council quotes here Pius XII from his Encyclical letter *Mystici Corporis*, AAS 35 (1943) p. 214s. See also: E. Weron, *Niebezpieczeństwo klerykalizacji laikatu*, *Communio* 7(1987)3, p. 89-90.

## **Educative curriculum of the association of catholic schools friends (SPSK) as an answer attempt to church magistry education concerning Christian upbringing in a catholic school**

### **1. SHORTLY ABOUT SPSK**

The Association of Catholic Schools Friends was established on 11 November 1990. Its main aim is school running. Currently, the Association is running over 100 schools and nursery schools on different levels of education around Poland, in 15 dioceses - 9 voivodships<sup>107</sup>. The Association cooperates with the schools from abroad, e.g. England, Germany, France, Sweden, Scotland, USA, Ireland, all-in 24 countries within such curricula as: Comenius-Socrates, Project Studies, Virgil Projects. In 2000 it received the prestigious award Pro Publico Bono for its thus far activity, which is awarded only to the greatest organizations in Poland in the contest on the Best Civil Initiative. The Association of Catholic Schools Friends was established as the answer on the call of Father St. John Paul II „towards the New Evangelization”. Education posts of the Association stated themselves the aim consistent with the teaching of John Paul II, which is the care of the integral development of human: a teacher and a student. The Charism of the Association can be contained in the words „we educate to bring up”.

„In the 20 years history of the Association in schools establishment and running, we continually experienced the patronage of John Paul II. The schools of SPSK as the communities experience in their history the influencea and pleading of John Paul II as well, who is begging for Gods bless in current difficulties, intentions, taken actions and the everyday work. The communities experienced particular pleading in 2006 and 2007 in the face of difficulties, which the Association and its schools confronted. In those days the thanksgiving pilgrimages to Rome, to Popes tomb started, during which the requests for beatification of John Paul II were sent and the pleading of God for the Association and its schools was trusted. In the 20<sup>th</sup> jubilee of the Association, the year of the SPSK pilgrimage to the Holy Land, the beatification of John Paul II was announced. The Association expressed its joy and thanksgiving to the God for the gift of John Paul II in the prayer, pilgriming for

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<sup>107</sup> <http://www.spsk.iap.pl/>



beatification. On 2th May 2011 the Association took part in a thanksgiving Eucharist for the gift of John Paul II beatification and the gift of the SPSK existence and its schools”<sup>108</sup>.

SPSK still develops and matures in its intense care of the young human, which is expressed in its educational curriculum. In this curriculum the axial place is taken by Gospel and the catholic pedagogy based on it, which extracts its inspiration from the reading of Vatican Council II. The SPSK educational curriculum rightly takes into consideration lots of educational entities, not only directly involved educators, but also parents and mostly students themselves<sup>109</sup>. The form of recruiting new students to the Association schools is predetermined by the statute of a school. It is performed by the head-master of a school, who informs students and parents about the character of a school, its statute, educational curriculum and other important documents. The idea of SPSK premises that educative work first of all should have in mind the help in discovering the full of love presence of God and the help in opening hearts to this Presence<sup>110</sup>.

## 2. THE ROLE OF SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

In the postulate of SPSK a school should be community. Community dimension of a school is demanded by human nature, educational nature, as well as faith nature. Human nature generates and grows in the encounter with the people and communities who live in faith. Not only the postulates, curricula and their contents decide about the Christian character of school environment, but mostly particular members of school community – students, parents, teachers, head-masters. As far as the way of thinking, willing and acting refer to the rules and values of Gospel, the Gospel educational community at school can come into being, in which a student feels invited to faith<sup>111</sup>. The members of SPSK are convinced that from the first day of stay at catholic school a student should have impression he or she is in a new community filled with the light of faith. At school all would feel the real presence of Master Jesus, who walks on the paths of history today and always and who is the only Master and a perfect Man<sup>112</sup>. In the presumption of SPSK the main responsibility for creating authentically christian educational community at school rests on educators – on particular person as well as the entire community. Its they, who constitute educational curriculum of

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<sup>108</sup> Tamże.

<sup>109</sup> Abp S. Nowak, Przedmowa do programu wychowawczego SPSK, [w:] Program wychowawczy SPSK, Częstochowa 2003, s. 7.

<sup>110</sup> Program wychowawczy SPSK, dz. cyt., s. 9.

<sup>111</sup> Sobór Watykański II, Deklaracja o wychowaniu chrześcijańskim, Szczecin – Warszawa 2002, 8

<sup>112</sup> Kongregacja do spraw wychowania katolickiego, Religijny wymiar wychowania w szkole katolickiej, Szczecin – Warszawa 2002, 25

school, and their witness concerning completion of vocation is the particular example for most of students. Teachers, most of all class educators, should be the subject of particular clerical care of school prefect and school itself.

School should care about intellectual and spiritual development. Indispensable role in creating evangelical educational community at school belongs to parents. They are not released from responsibility of growing their children up in Christian faith, when they choose the catholic school for them. They are obliged to actively cooperate with this up growing, This cooperation requires supporting the educational effort of catholic school, and on the other side – watching if the school is faithful to christian morality<sup>113</sup>. By design of SPSK home, family is the community, in which human finds optimal conditions for his or her development. Its needed that school, especially primary school, has virtues of happy home. Spontaneous relations, interbelief, close and warm atmosphere in family community, friendly atmosphere of love and freedom, engagement into Church community, opening to society and its needs. Students, discovering authenticity of school community, will make it their second home. Its particularly important for the pupils who have unhappy families<sup>114</sup>. Catholic schools should create conditions and time to experience the internal life of school community, there should be conditions and time for meetings with other people, not always interested in the life of school. There is time for work at school, so there should be the time for rest, friendly meetings after classes. Good community favours meetings. It is good to provide meeting places at schools. To create proper atmosphere of school community, suitable layout of school objects is necessary. There should be the room for didactic, recreative and sporting activity, as well as prayer. If school buildings are contracted and uncomfortable, it shouldn't be the reason for complaining and pretending. It should be the better encouragement for tutors and parents to create school community rich in spiritual and social values.

In the intention of SPSK school community – if it wants to be believable – must be open to normal life. There must be place for ideas, virtues and positive norms, which wing the youth, generate enthusiasm in them, determine correct growth, let them discover their internal power and acquired from God talents and abilities, make appropriate attitude to life<sup>115</sup>. In the organization and development of catholic school as „home”, the consciousness of the Blessed Virgin, Mother and Master of Church and her presence at school is an extreme help. She has been observing the growth in wisdom and grace of Her Son and has accompanied Church in

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<sup>113</sup> Program wychowawczy SPSK, dz. cyt., s. 14.

<sup>114</sup> Tamże, s. 15 – 16.

<sup>115</sup> Tamże, s. 17.

its saving mission<sup>116</sup>. School community is to pursue to passing life values and clear – based on Gospel – conception of life as well as initiate their members to entertain the suggested style of living. It will realize this effectively as far as it will take care of the attachment with Jesus Christ, who is its foundation. It will also realize, when particular members of school community will renew and deepen the personal communion with Christ by constant confronting his or her actions with the saving God's Word present in Holy Script, Tradition, liturgy, the Holy Sacrament, and also in occurring events<sup>117</sup>.

### **3. TO RESPECT THE PRIMACY OF A PERSON OVER ACTION**

The aim of SPSK, and the teachers of catholic schools is to respect the primacy of a person over action. It's not good, if a teacher is interested more in a student's actions and achievements than his or her person. A tutor should be mostly big on a student, his or her authentic goodness, on his salvation. The primacy of a person over action is the foundation of educative work, and the care about holiness of the pupil – the most important mission<sup>118</sup>. The teachers of catholic schools should respect the uniqueness and individuality of the pupils. They shouldn't interfere into students' life superficially, take the position of a superior, who know everything best, not to command and have ready solutions, project their own experiences, constrain, abuse and ignore. They should prefer their freedom, have insight into the personal path each of them, respect their uniqueness and absolute originality. The calling of educator is to listen in on the mystery, which is hidden in each pupil. Listening is more than technique. It's the embodiment of merciful love of God, which does not judge, but loves human who he is<sup>119</sup>. Catholic schools should take care about individual interaction with pupils in a particular way. Upbringing in its essence tends to shape mature conscience in a man, which will let him or her live in accordance with self, God and other people. That's why care about the presence of externals shaping consciousness in pupils is important such as: retreat, religion teaching, educational lessons, formative meetings, study of national heroes and literary goodys, meetings with conscious people. For secular educators it takes shape of conversation, and for priests it can also take form of confession or guidance. The mission of catholic schools is to individualize and personify education and to state requirements congruous to particular situation of pupil. The entity of education is not a class, but a student, not a group, but a person. That is why the work with class, however good, can never substitute

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<sup>116</sup> Kongregacja do spraw wychowania katolickiego, Religijny wymiar wychowania w szkole katolickiej, dz. cyt., 29.

<sup>117</sup> Program wychowawczy SPSK, dz. cyt., s. 21.

<sup>118</sup> Tamże, s. 42.

<sup>119</sup> Tamże, s. 44.

individual work with a student. Individual interaction with a pupil is the most proper and effective educative means<sup>120</sup>. If the connection with a tutor won't be stressful, won't generate fear, but will give sense of security, it will relieve the atmosphere of sincerity, trust and growing opening. Mistrust of a pupil towards an educator is heavy evil. Mistrust causes deep psychological sound. A human, who doesn't trust, gets into state of threat. He or she treats the the mistrust person as an enemy, the source of potential danger. Feels anxiety to him or her. In this situation each acting of a tutor is deciphered by a pupil as symptom of aggression, and this crosses out the possibility of upgrowing. Trust of a student to a tutor does not generate in one moment. It is always a process, a way, on which a student will repeatedly strain a tutor, sometimes painfully, lastly to convince himself: he is on my side indeed, I am important for him. Welcome of a pupil what he really is, constant and repeated acceptance should be the answer of a tutor to pupil's doubts<sup>121</sup>.

In the opinion of SPSK excessive compliance to pupils as well as excessive severity of an educator does not agree with them. In the educative work the synthesis of gentleness and decisiveness is necessary. The inmost and shortest way to build trust and reach a pupil is to reach present within him or her Jesus and unite with Him. The process of uniting a tutor with Jesus present in pupils reveals the deepest mystery of education. In the conversation with a pupil catholic educators should try to present the issue under consideration in the light of faith, to find its deeper, supernatural sense. To discover in front of a pupil existing in this happening God and resulting from this existence appeals<sup>122</sup>. In the intention of SPSK the role of an educator can be compared to the role of midwife during birth. It's not a midwife who gives birth. She attempts to aid birth. She is a help for a woman in labor. Similarly does a tutor. Although he can't give birth himself, he can create character, atmosphere, conditions and background, which will help to give birth to new life. Quickening the birth of a new human is always wrong. A tutor wishing to elicit the real life too early or challenging a pupil too much, always cramps. Long-term thinking of a tutor allows him to watch events calmly and expect goodness in distant perspective, think positively about future, not loose hope in case of failure. Without the ability of long looking forward for the effects of undertaken efforts, a tutor observing that his work does not bring wanted results, can seize the seduction of despondency and resignation<sup>123</sup>.

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<sup>120</sup> Tamże, s. 59.

<sup>121</sup> Tamże, s. 61.

<sup>122</sup> W. Stinissen, *Terapia duchowa*, Poznań 1998, s. 20.

<sup>123</sup> Program wychowawczy SPSK, dz. cyt., s. 78.

In the opinion of SPSK preaching is always connected with work of christian educator. To „preach” means „to offer and give God to the others”. A wise educator knows that he can't come to a pupil alone. He wants to bring him God. Thus he resigns from his own activity and surrenders direct influence of God. He allows God to enter his own acting in such extent, that it becomes acting of God himself. „People responsible for others' living with faith should strive to that definitely it's Jesus who educates, because it's only Him who can lead people through the paths of sanctification with the absolute godlike patience, despite their continuous despondencies and infidelities<sup>124</sup>. In the educating worship of an educator is beside the question. That's just growth in goodness of pupils that is important. Therefore a tutor conscious of subtle ways, which his egoism can seek for, should continually trust himself and his pupils to God's mercy in the posture of a regretful publican<sup>125</sup>.

#### 4. COMMON MEETING AND ACTIVITIES AFTER CLASSES

The work of SPSK involves a lot of schools of different type and level. Care about commonwealth demands mutual learning and friendly cooperation in each domain. Common gatherings and meetings organized by the Association or the schools themselves serve a purpose. Among them some deserve close attention:

- a day of the unity of Association schools
- a day of the Association schools sport
- the ceremony of Gold Shields presentation
- holiday retreat of school workers, parents and pupils
- head-masters meetings
- workshop for the teachers
- the pilgrimage of high schools graduates
- the pilgrimage to the Bright Hill within Polish Forum of Catholic Schools

Although classes doesn't not constitute the basic form of work with a pupil, they don't exhaust the educational possibilities of a school.

An important constituent in educative work of school is creating room for pupils' initiative in organizing life after school. It allows students, in school community, to improve and develop their hobbies and interests, find personal forms of expression and look for their own identity,

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<sup>124</sup> A. Pronzato, *Rozważania na piasku*, Poznań 1989, s. 69.

<sup>125</sup> Program wychowawczy SPSK, dz. cyt., s. 86.

spend free time, socialize and make friends, learn responsibility and involvement in aid of commonwealth.

School life after classes serves a purpose of living education of students. The communion with culture shows students its ethical dimension. The revelation ethical dimension of culture by the human leads to revival of his or her spiritual life and helps him or her in achieving moral freedom, which can only originate as orientating towards absolute values<sup>126</sup>.

Particular form of association with culture and art is its creation or communion in its creation. Galleries, bands, editorial boards, theatrical groups, arts and others. The communion with nature, its harmony and beauty is for human relaxation and discovering the presence of the Creator. The expression of concern about this issue should be activity of school touristic club, organizing school and class tours, holiday camps etc.

Sport activities, which also can play educative role, favor the hygiene of work and pro healthy actions. It's during sport tournament, when we can din into pupils, that we should win, respecting defeated, that we can loose with dignity and don't break down, that we should confess foul, we can't break the play rules, and that we are obliged to respect the word culture and fellow love, as well an opponent<sup>127</sup>. Catholic educators should take care of the diversity of sport activities at school, preparation and participation of pupils in different sport tournaments and their organization between the Association schools as well as at school itself.

An interesting form of awakening and maintaining cognitive passion of the Association schools pupils are – led by specialists – workshops. Workshops are the chosen by students extracurriculars about studio and practical character. Their subject-matter and choice should depend on the interests and search of students and on the social needs of a given local community. Leeding workshops will enable a school to broaden educational offer and be more attractive for schools. In turn, it will enable teenagers to contact with specialists from different domains, learn their workshop, instantiate their own interests, recognition of different social needs and looking for particular help for the needy, e.g. In cooperation with parish, Caritas, Catholic Action, county and parish authorities.

A workshop is when a pupil involves into such activities as scouting, climbing, musical education or parish formative groups. For a school is concerned with development of its students also out of a school<sup>128</sup>.

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<sup>126</sup> Tamże, s. 92 - 93.

<sup>127</sup> Program wychowawczy Archidiecezjalnego LO im. Ks. R. Archutowskiego w Warszawie, Poznań 1999, s. 74.

<sup>128</sup> Program wychowawczy SPSK, dz. cyt., s. 96.

## 5. THE NEED OF WORK OVER SELF AND CARE OF COMMONWEALTH

The realization of commonwealth requires constantly repeated evangelization from the members of school community. It happens that everyday school life is full of events, which offend commonwealth: neglecting school duties and undertaken tasks, inappropriate behaviour during classes, on the corridor during a brake, disrespectful attitude for a school staff, joking on less clever students, mutual detractions, slander, lies, copying, which in SPSK schools are treated as a mark theft and deceit towards a teacher and classmates. Different subterfuges to evade a rule produce the need of constant work of a pupil over himself and a tutor over a pupil<sup>129</sup>.

Leading social workshops, catholic schools should show students the needs of suffering, lonely, lost, seek, disabled, homeless and poor people to release in them virtuous desire to meet these needs by giving particular help to the people in need. The encouragement to such kind of involvement is the possession of a social activity card by each pupil. Such a card lets a pupil – as well as a tutor – assess involvement in aid of a class, school and the needy. The state of social activity card, according to which a student is obliged to spend 1 hour a week in aid of fellows, has a direct influence on behaviour mark<sup>130</sup>.

Educational curriculum, in all schools of SPSK, is the basis for the origin of the educational plan of school in each year, adapted to current needs of school community members, which is to be recognized by all as common and important mission. With the end of each school year educators, students and parents assume, to what extent its premises have been followed, they analyze the reasons of eventual troubles and consider application of countermeasures. Participating in creation and realization of educational plan of a school is the creation of commonwealth and it makes sensitive to commonwealth in social life.

## 6. SHAPING PATRIOTIC ATTITUDE

A important issue in the education of SPSK schools is patriotic education. In a personal development a human uses material and spiritual heritage of society, in which he or she lives. A human is obliged to respect and increase it with gratefulness. Respect and personal contribution into increasing national heritage is an expression of love to motherland and service for her. Love to motherland is particularly expressed in paying taxes, using voting

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<sup>129</sup> Tamže, s. 99.

<sup>130</sup> Tamže, s. 101.

right and defence of a country<sup>131</sup>. To these problems should be under discussion with students on educational classes, history classes, social studies, Polish and others. Particular opportunity to their popularizing are the meetings at school with senators, ambassadors and government activists.

Patriotism – in times deprived any ideas – becomes precious value, because it teaches living for ideas, and it shapes the love of values in a human. It also helps a young man to exceed oneself, ring of private affairs, his own business or benefits and to go to commonwealth, which is home land. Mature and real love to home land does not close, but opens a human to everything good and beautiful in the cultures of different nations. Love to motherland should be showed in a way of love for the whole human race, that is each person and God, Father of all the people. A huge human family, although it is devided by the historical and political reasons. It has one Father in heaven and one motherland in eternity. Shaping appropriate public manners is mostly carried on by care of national traditions. They are Church festivals and important national anniversaries. The schools of SPSK attempt to make these events important and solemnized<sup>132</sup>. In the life of SPSK schools there are also living problems of international society, such as peace, freedom, justice, brotherly help for the needy, cooperation between nations and appeals of recognized international organizations.

SPSK catholic schools have their own clerical missions to do. Respecting the autonomy and competence of particular sciences, they lead their students to the synthesis of faith, culture and life. The implementation of this plan nt only depends on the choice of subjects or curriculum matters, but also on teachers working at school, who like Christ, the only teacher, are called to pass the truth not only by means of words, but also by means of doing and attitude. In the person of an educator the synthesis of culture, faith and life should be reflected. Only then teaching will become a real school of faith, and the spirit of Gospel will pervade the whole school activity.

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<sup>131</sup> KKK 2239 – 2240.

<sup>132</sup> Program wychowawczy SPSK, dz. cyt., s. 106.



Dr Błażej Szostek

## **Religiousness and anxiety of the Neocatechumenates**

Psychology, as a discipline, over the course of years has dealt with the complex notion of religiousness. Religiousness was understood in many ways, often extremely different from each other by various specializations and scholars. Sigmund Freud considered religiousness as threat for man and compensation of unfulfilled organic desires. Carl Jung and Viktor Frankl's view was that religiousness is a necessary part of the human psyche, which takes part in personality integration. Gordon Allport also wrote about religiousness and personality integration. The mentioned people, and their successors, made the foundations to later, increasingly in-depth, analyses of the phenomenon of religiousness. These analyses were created on two different bases: Marxism and Christianity. The first considered religiousness as a force that slows down and destroys human development, the other based on the phenomenological-humanistic trend, according to which religiousness allows one to experience beauty, good, justice, etc.

A special place in studying religiousness and religious communities belongs to the psychology of religion, which studies the phenomenon of religiousness itself, but also its relation to one's psychological life. Studies from recent years in the field focus on: maturity and immaturity in religiousness, the concept of God in a given type of religiousness, the authenticity of religious beliefs, personal and impersonal religiousness, the community aspect of religiousness and studying the religiousness of specific groups of people as well as the correlations with many personality aspects. This paper will aim at showing how religiousness influences the level of anxiety as a state and feature of Neocatechumenate groups.

The basis for the analysis are the studies conducted by me in 2008 on members of the Neocatechumenate communities of Warsaw. The reason behind studying that particular group was the lively discussion within the Church concerning the Neocatechumenate's place in its structure<sup>133</sup>. Back then, as well as nowadays, some see them as a hope for the Church, some see the Neocatechumenates as a threat, which, they say, can manifest itself in the many changes in the liturgy and dogmatic teachings of the Catholic Church. They describe

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<sup>133</sup> Cf. E. Skotnicki, *Neokatechumenat-szansa czy zagrożenie dla Kościoła?*, Kielce 2000; E. Zoffoli, *Czy „droga” Neokatechumenatu jest prawowierna?*, Komorów 1999; E. Marighetto, *Tajemnice Drogi Neokatechumenalnej*, Warsaw 2006.

communities as heretic formations that pose a threat to the Church and themselves as well. Without trying to depreciate any of the sides of this theological debate, it can be said, that the Neocatechumenates are an entity noticed by the over billion members community of the Catholic Church. The mentioned debate is currently also present in the Church, although less intense, which is the result of the decree of the Holy See which approves the Neocatechumenates<sup>134</sup>. The second reason behind studying the Neocatechumenates is the small amount of already existing empiric studies describing the movement. It is even more surprising when noticing that Neocatechumental communities are present in over 100 countries, and their numbers are rapidly growing, especially in countries where secularization of the society is considerable.

The attempt to study the level of anxiety of members of Neocatechumental groups was not an accidental choice. Anxiety is part of everyone's life from birth to death and plays an important role in it. Anxiety can be one's friend, because it initiates escape and protects them from danger. However, sometimes, excess exposure to anxiety causes anxiety disorders. These disorders afflict 2-5 percent of the population. The presented research describes the level of anxiety as a state as well as its features. The first type of anxiety described as a feature, manifests itself in overreacting and a person whose anxiety level is high, reacts too strong to even, what is objectively, the slightest danger. The second type is most commonly a feeling of fear and tension, accompanied by agitation of the nervous system. The aim of the research was the desire to obtain a full view of the religiousness of members in Neocatechumental communities and, basing on empirical research, an attempt to show the relation between religiousness and level of anxiety as a state and trait. An indirect goal, assumed by me, was also learning the specificity of their religiousness.

At the start a hypothesis was set, stating that religiousness influences the level of anxiety, and Neocatechumenates will show a lower level of anxiety than regular churchgoers, who are not deeply committed to the religious life. The hypothesis was based on the results of a research conducted by two psychologists from the Catholic University of Lublin – Władysław Prężyna and Józef Bazylak. They proved that often religious practice, deep community experiences and a stricter morality results in a lower level of anxiety and vice versa – people who do not commit themselves religiously showed a higher level of anxiety.

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<sup>134</sup> <sup>134</sup> Cf. M. Czerna, *Droga Neokatechumenalna*, at: [http://ekai.pl/wydarzenia/temat\\_dnia/x50529/droga-neokatechumenalna/](http://ekai.pl/wydarzenia/temat_dnia/x50529/droga-neokatechumenalna/) (20.02.2012).

## RESEARCH STRATEGY

- **The characteristic of the research groups**

The research group was composed of members of the Neocatechumental Way, who were after their first scrutiny, which is usually done 2-3 years after joining the Way. The evaluated members practice in congregations in Warsaw. The control group was composed of randomly chosen Catholic churchgoers, who have never been part of the Neocatechumental Way. Both the research and control group were composed of randomly chosen subjects.

The age range was between 20 and 40 years of age. The average age was 30.47. The research and control groups were equal in terms of age.

- **Research methods (research tools)**

Two questionnaires were used: State/Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI), whose main author was Charles D. Spielberger, and Dirk Hutsebaut's Religious Attitudes.

The first of these is a tool used to study anxiety as transitional and situationally conditioned state of an individual and anxiety as a relatively permanent personality trait.

STAI consists of two subscales, one of which (X-1) serves as a tool to measure anxiety as a state, the other (X-2) – anxiety as a trait. The questions from both scales are on both sides of the same sheet. Each of the subscales has 20 questions, to which the respondent chooses one of the four available categorized answers. The reliability of both subscales is high. The theoretical accuracy of both scales has been confirmed in many studies: the STAI results indeed do correlate with the results of research tools measuring theoretical constructs of a nature similar to anxiety; the accuracy of the X-1 scale has additionally been verified and confirmed in many experiments. It is also used in screening and individual diagnoses; the X-1 scale is also useful in experiments that require registering anxiety tension changes.

The Religious Attitudes questionnaire is used to study the specificity of religiousness. It consists of 81 statements, and the subject's task is to answer to what extent do they identify with these statements. The scale goes from 1 to 7, where 1 is "definitely disagree" and 7 "definitely agree". The instructions suggest avoiding the

option “hard to say”. The questionnaire consists of 10 subscales, with each subscale consisting of 8 questions. The subscales measure traits of religiousness such as: dependence, autonomy, rebelliousness, guilt, identification, co-humanity, ethic norms, acceptance of beliefs, centrality of religion, fear of doubt. The content of the scales is as follows: **Dependence** – humans feel the need to receive God’s help, which is essential to human existence. God is perceived as someone who gives existence; **Autonomy** – human responsibility comes from becoming independent of the normative function; **Rebelliousness** – God does not meet some of the human expectations, thus enticing rebellion in the one expecting help; **Guilt** – an individual feels guilty and judged by God; **Identification** – an individual identifies himself with Jesus Christ as the perfect human; **co-humanity** – God-orientation through human-orienting. God is visible and found in human beings; **Ethic norms** – God is the absolute norm; **Acceptance of beliefs** – dogmas, which are the essence of beliefs, are accepted absolutely; **Centrality of religion** – the extent of importance of religious beliefs in everyday life; **Fear of doubt** – search for a greater objective assurance of personal beliefs.

- **Variables and the research procedure**

In the conducted research the following variables were measured: dependant variable, defined as the influence of religiousness on the level of anxiety, as a state and trait, and independent variable, defined as being affiliated to the Neocatechumental Way or not being affiliated to it.

During the research the age and gender of the subjects was monitored. Each test started by the researcher requesting the subject fill in the questionnaire. The request was motivated by the need to gather data for a master’s thesis in psychology. The subjects received an envelope and informed that all instructions were on the first page of the each of the questionnaires. The survey was anonymous, and participation was voluntary. The research was conducted under normal circumstances with no time limit.

## DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS<sup>135</sup>

The initial hypothesis, that members of the Neocatechumental Way would achieve a high score on the scales of religiousness and a low score on the scales of anxiety, was confirmed only partially.

The members of the research group scored significantly lower on the scales of anxiety as a state and trait than the members of the control group. The results confirm J. Bazylak and W. Prężyna's theory. The first one proved that the greater the number of religious practices, religious knowledge, deeper community experiences and stricter morality the smaller the intensity of anxiety<sup>136</sup>. Prężyna's studies show that people who display a high level of anxiety also display a low level of religious commitment.<sup>137</sup>

Neocatechumental groups are a very intensive religious formation, which is manifested in deep experiencing community life through, i.a. a circle of experiences which is about sharing the events from one's own life, that were important in their religious maturation, with others. The members also share their experiences with fighting their weaknesses. It can be said that the circle of experiences possess some traits of group therapy. Another issue that may be of influence on the research results is the intensity of religious practices displayed by very often meetings in the community. The Way also emphasises the intellectual formation conducted by it in the catechesis taught by the Way's catechists as well as readings of theological, and often academic, texts.

The results of the research also show a smaller diversity of the scores on the scale of anxiety in the research group. It may be caused by the fact that the research group was more homogenous than the control group. It may also be influenced by the specificity of the Neocatechumental formation, in which every member, in order to advance to the next stage of the way, undergoes the same processes, ponder upon similar subjects in their weekly Liturgy of the Word and are given the same content during the so-called convivences.

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<sup>135</sup> Due to its extent, the author decided not to include the statistics in the article and went on to discussing the results. Readers who wish to read that part of the research are welcome to contact the author by email at [b.szostek@uksw.edu.pl](mailto:b.szostek@uksw.edu.pl)

<sup>136</sup> J. Bazylak, *Postawy religijne młodzieży i ich związek z wybranymi elementami osobowości*, Warsaw 1984, pp. 152-153.

<sup>137</sup> W. Prężyna, *Funkcja postawy religijnej w osobowości człowieka*, Lublin 1981, pp. 85-88.

On the scales of religiousness measured with the Religious Attitudes Questionnaire the Neocatechumentes achieved higher scores in the “Identification” scale. This means, that the people who were affiliated with the Neocatechumental Way who took part in the research identified themselves with Jesus Christ as the perfect human and a role model more than regular churchgoers, who are not affiliated with the Way. The Neocatechumentes achieved lower scores on the scales of “Co-humanity” and “Centrality of religion”. This means that they were less God-oriented by being human-oriented and do not find and recognize God in humans. They also considered religious beliefs less important in their lives.

The research also showed occurrence of a negative and weak relation between “Rebelliousness” and “Identification” with anxiety as a state and trait. This means that the higher the scores the Neocatechumentes achieved on the scales of the “Rebelliousness” and “Identification” the lower the scores achieved on both scales of anxiety. The scales of “Acceptance of beliefs” and “Fear of doubt” showed that there is a significantly negative and weak relation with anxiety as a state. This means that the higher the results of the research group’s members on the scales of “Acceptance of beliefs” and “Fear of doubt” the lower their results are on the scales of anxiety as a state and trait. On the “Fear of doubt” scale the correlation is weak.

The stated hypothesis is confirmed by empiric results. It is not always confirmed completely, sometimes only partially. It may be an indication of the complexity of the issue. Also, the interpretation of the results has some limitations. An important factor may be the level of social approval to the honesty of answers. Another limitation is the narrowing the studied population to only the Warsaw communities, which in a way limits the perspectives to draw wider conclusions. The results may also be influenced by the past of the subjects, as well as the diversity of the social backgrounds they were born and live in. Another limitation may be the short time (only a few years) the subjects from the research groups had been affiliated with the Way, which in the perspective of the whole formation being over 30 years old may be a confounding variable.

Regardless of the limitations, the results of the research can still be used practically by the Neocatechumental Way’s priests, because they show a spectrum of religious attitudes of this community, as well as showing a correlation between religiousness and anxiety.

## **Spirituality of suffering in the face of chosen aspects of psychology**

In theological discussion there is a constant attempt to find an answer a very important issue regarding the relation between spiritual theology, spirituality in practice and psychology. There have been many attempts to treat each of the above disciplines so that they exclude each other. Numerous publications present Christian spirituality, which does not allow portraying humans in psychological categories, accusing psychology of having a naturalistic vision. There have also been attempts at creating psychological systems ignoring the spiritual sphere and the supernatural. The space, as well as phenomenon, that in a very accurate way presents the mutuality of roles and places between spirituality and psychology is the experience of suffering in its many forms and manifestations. From 02.05.2011 to 05.05.2011 an International Symposium organized by the European Movement for Christian Anthropology, Psychology and Psychotherapy took place in Moscow, in which Polish representatives also took part. The symposium dealt with the experience of suffering and discovering humanity in the face of the Gospel. It was an attempt at handle the challenge which contemporary civilization now faces.

### **1. The phenomenon of suffering.**

Suffering is a general human experience, ie it has a universal nature and it is safe to say it is an occurrence that will not disappear. The history of mankind shows that special consequences, which can be generally described as the first signs of suffering, have been present since the very dramatic beginning of mankind, described by the Old Testament (cf. Gen 3:1-21). The Biblical description very clearly states what are the consequences of disobeying God's will. It should be said that theology

has many achievements in analyzing the consequences of this sin.<sup>138</sup> It is obvious that this sin bore consequences influencing all mankind, thus having a universalistic nature. Disobedience towards God brings a disharmony between the Creator and man (cf. Gen 3:8), in the structure of man himself (cf. Gen 3:10), and next between man other people (cf. Gen 3:16-19) and then between man and the world surrounding him (cf. Gen 3:16-19). The fundamental issue here is the disruption of interpersonal relations. This way the Revelation discovers the origin of suffering and its source. It was the disobedience towards God and attempting to create an order balanced around man. Haughty pride as the nature of sin begins a dialogue with the center of evil, the evil itself – Satan. This explanation seems to be logically linked to the Revelation.<sup>139</sup>

What remains a problem is the issue of the so-called undeserved suffering. In many cases it is hard to say what is cause and source of the suffering. At this point it is worth to refer to Jesus Christ's explanation (cf. Jn 9:3; Lk 13:2-3). He says to search for the meaning of suffering, not its source. Christ ends the Old Testament cause and effect relation. The Old Testament associated suffering as evil that had a source. It should be noted the Old Testament deals with the issue very broadly and suffering is one of its main topics.<sup>140</sup>

As already mentioned, Jesus Christ gives a totally new meaning to suffering in his words and acts, but first and foremost his personal torment and death.<sup>141</sup> An evident text that can be called a supernatural apotheosis of suffering are blessings (cf. Mt 5:3-10; Lk 6:20-21). They do not divinize suffering as such. Christ was not an advocate of religious martyrdom, quite the opposite, by his own acts he releases mankind from pain and suffering (cf. Mt8:16; Mt 14:14; Mk 6:34; Lk 6:18; Lk 7:21; Jn 11:43). Christ, therefore, comments suffering as an experience of a person as well as those, who co-suffering with them. It is a very serious threat to the contemporary understanding of pain, which people try to exclude from social life, or try to overcome it in an inhuman manner, guided by hedonism.

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<sup>138</sup> Cf. Cz. Bartnik, *Dogmatyka* (Eng. *Catholic Dogmatics*), t. I, Lublin 2000 p. 342-360. The author richly describes the achievements of theology in the field of the Original Sin, including the interpretations of its nature. The work also contains a systematic description of non theological points of view, *ibid.*

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 346-347.

<sup>140</sup> Cf. A.J. Najda, *O cierpieniu w Biblii*, in: *Duchowość cierpienia*, col. ed. W. Gałązka, Warsaw 2010, p. 204-208.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.* p. 211-212.



When trying to explain the phenomenon of suffering it is necessary to refer to contemporary psychological achievements. Psychology has its own very important section called the “psychology of suffering”. In this discipline there are scholars such as H. Jarosiewicz<sup>142</sup>, and J. Pastuszka<sup>143</sup>. The latter begins with a very important objection: “Philosophy cannot fully explain the issue of suffering”.<sup>144</sup> However, Pastuszka feels that looking at the matter from a psychological point of view allows people to become more self-aware. He notices a possibility of the human “I”, which mirrors the deepest spiritual levels, to mature through suffering. Pastuszka says that it leads away from focusing on external sensuality and at the same time ennobles the human inside.<sup>145</sup> The same creator of the Philosophical Study, under the name of Philosophical-Psychological Specialization at the Department of Philosophy does not deal with merely the origin of suffering, but rather refers in his own publication to the Biblical-Christian views. Also, in his analysis, the abovementioned H. Jarosiewicz says, that it is necessary to “go deep inside the specific experiences”.<sup>146</sup> Since it is the sphere of knowledge it is necessary to ask the vital question of how does the author understand these words. At this point the anthropologic concept, which is assumed as the basis of analysis, is very important.<sup>147</sup> The author asks about *homo sapiens* or *homo patiens*. His answer is *homo sapiens*. As he claims the goal in psychological study is not to explain the purposefulness of suffering, but its mechanism and what causes suffering. In order to find the answer it is necessary to turn to human rationality. This is a sphere, which separates man from other living beings. It does not mean that animals do not suffer, but that the pain they feel is only based purely on their senses and instincts. This lack of reflexive awareness stimulates behavior dictated by survival instincts, which are developed different in each animal. An effect of this is using self-defense reflexes. At this point Jarosiewicz boldly states that sensibility is the condition of suffering and lies at the basis of its origin.<sup>148</sup> Such a statement seems quite

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<sup>142</sup> Cf. H. Jarosiewicz, *Psychologia cierpienia*, „Cywilizacja 16 (2016), p.46-60.

<sup>143</sup> Cf. J. Pastuszka, *Wierzę w Boga*, Katowice 1984, s.147-153.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid. p. 152.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid. p. 151.

<sup>146</sup> H. Jarosiewicz, *Psychologia cierpienia*, op. cit., p. 55.

<sup>147</sup> Cf. M. Tatar, *Structure of Man In the biblical act of the Creation*, delivered on 03.05.2011 in Moscow during the symposium hosted by the European Movement for Christian Anthropology, Psychology and Psychotherapy.

<sup>148</sup> Cf. H. Jarosiewicz, *Psychologia cierpienia*, op. cit., p. 57.

risky. Admittedly the author bases on the phrase that it is better to be a Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied, but reversing the thesis leads to a complicated dilemma. This allows to ask psychology, who advocates this opinion, the following: does questioning and eliminating human's sensibility also eliminate suffering? Do people whose reasoning is disturbed not suffer? Putting the issue this way is justified and seems to be the basis of contemporary antihuman euthanasic tendencies. Many cases defend themselves by saying that the subject is no longer a human, but a "vegetable". The author is right that the sensibility of a human being allows them to learn the nature of suffering, reach its source, however its sensibility is derivative of suffering itself. Suffering is the object of cognition. Human sensibility also leads to neutralizing both the cause as well as effects of suffering. The human being however remains helpless in the face of the fact that suffering exists. Suffering exists regardless of sensibility. It is a fact that can be noticed and experienced. In his definition of suffering Jarosiewicz referred to the second inner human ruling factor – will. He points at its activity and experiencing the effects of its decisions, which may cause suffering.<sup>149</sup> Will as a ruling factor cooperates with the human mind. The mind imposes the object of choice, while will reciprocates by imposing the object of cognition. Experience shows that often will does not follow mind's judgment. This causes a great rift in a human. However it does not explain the origin of suffering from the point of view of psychology. The contradiction between mind and will are in a way an origin of suffering, but what should be asked is where does the contradiction come from. Here is where psychology describes the mechanisms that cause the actions, or lack of actions, effectively also being the actions of a human being.<sup>150</sup> There have been many attempts to define the nature of suffering that associate it with pain and emotional states. Jarosz and M. Hilger call them a painful feeling, which has many conditions. Adam Cackowski describes it as an expanded

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<sup>149</sup> Ibid.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid. p. 46-55. In his attempt to define suffering the author turns to the sensual sphere, which is the space where contact is made with the external world as well as with external suffering. He also stresses the role of awareness mirroring the human inner world. The function of pain as a means of carrying information regarding suffering. Next he analyzes the fact of passivity and activity in the presence of experienced suffering. Reference to the value and the emotional state regarding it. However it all remains a description that is closed in the area of the human structure.

reality, which exceeds pain.<sup>151</sup> Thus, it can be noticed that at this point by expanding the studies of suffering psychology is doing a great favor to the topic. But the origin of evil and suffering are beyond it.

## **2. Experiencing suffering and the typology of suffering as a means to present the human space.**

Human suffering, as already mentioned, always has a universal nature. Observations of this experience allow not only exploring the phenomenon of suffering, but also attempting to explain it. Suffering as a type of extreme state exposes the human being and his deepest spiritual and mental resources. It is important to note, that the suffering is always in relation to another person, even if today's times try to question that experience, or isolate from it. Bl. Pope John Paul II points out "... in God we find the dignity of a human being, every human being. Physical and mental health does not add or take away anything from a person; what is more, suffering can give us special rights toward our dignity."<sup>152</sup>

Thus the fundamental element allowing to analyze spirituality is humanity, which allows for two fold basis – in the act of being created by God as well as Incarnation and Redemption. The fundamental problem that is shown by a great spiritual disorder of individuals as well as entire ethnic groups and even multicultural is rooted in putting humanity to question. If a person's dignity, regardless of their situation, becomes questioned then we are dealing with a lack of agreement to experience the feeling of suffering, which becomes incomprehensible. Because of this the human image becomes severely twisted. Contemporary media-marketing media promote a "beautiful" human being, but in according to standards that earn them big money. This manifests a utilitarian and hedonistic trend and economized mentality. People who suffer and illness must be marginalized in such a society. Therefore the

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<sup>151</sup> Cf. A. J. Nowak, *Osoba fakt i tajemnica*, Rzeszów 2010, p. 200. Nowak also agrees with the opinion, that sometimes pain and suffering are terms used interchangeably. However pain is a signal sign, a signal of danger within and outside the human body. But only humans ask about the meaning of pain.

<sup>152</sup> John Paul II, *Anioł Pański*, 08.03.1981, In: *Jan Paweł II o cierpieniu*, col. ed. K. Szostkiewicz and T. Żeleźnik 1985, p. 145.

main reasons for the downfall of the value of suffering are dehumanization, instrumentalization of human beings and hedonistic culture.<sup>153</sup>

For psychology and psychotherapy, as well as for spirituality, the human being is the subject of experiencing suffering. It is not suspended in the void, it always dwells in humans. This issue was discussed in the already mentioned Symposium in Moscow. K. Wojcieszek discussed the issue of desperation as a category of suffering of the contemporary people and explained its origin. Desperation as a sign of suffering disintegrates human relations. Wojcieszek listed three elements he considered to be basic in the issue: insecurity, loss of goals in life and expansion of self defense. Wojcieszek stresses that in the context of psychology and Christian psychotherapy it is the loss of faith in God and neighbors instead of goals in life. Not understanding love is not understanding humans. In the state of desperation we think there is no chance for love. Love is an idiosyncratic relation and it may not be ruined without one's own decision. If a decision to reject love is not made that love is still alive in a person. Love is the meaning of life, despite that feelings are unstable. The nature of love is altruistic. It should also be noted that love has a rational character. Therefore materialism is dangerous to humans, because it reduces them and causes a disappearance of love. When that occurs hedonism has to take part in the process and become the goal in life, and that indicates crisis.<sup>154</sup>

As R. Mehler points out, the issue of suffering is a problem of identifying a human being and their identity. He pointed at the broad spectrum of the issue by stressing the 20<sup>th</sup> century theories which introduced socialization to detect the identity (Weber, Durkheim, Talcott – Parsond, Mead, Goffman). Next he stressed the stages of development and conflicts by referring to Erikson's views and Havighurst's views of challenges and goals. These are: time perspective, assertiveness and self-confidence, attempting new roles, sexual identity in the context of bisexuality, indication polarity – authority diffusion, ideological polarity – notion diffusion – loss of illusion. Generally

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<sup>153</sup> Cf. John Paul II, *Przemówienie do uczestników kongresów: Włoskiego Stowarzyszenia Medycyny Wewnętrznej i Włoskiego Stowarzyszenia Chirurgii Ogólnej* 27.10.1980, In: Jan Paweł II o cierpieniu, op. cit. P. 112. No English translation found. The Pope pointed towards a threat in this discipline: „The truth is, that the technological development of our times shows a certain ambiguity: on the one hand it enables people to take their destiny in their own hands, and on the other tempts them to go beyond rational control over nature, endangering life itself and the integrity of the human being.”

<sup>154</sup> Cf. K. Wojcieszek, *Nature of desperation*, EMCAAP symposium, Moscow, 03.05.2011.

according to the author we can talk about the following types of identification: spiritual – connected with God, social – roles and tasks, personal – psycho-physical structure, relations with others – interpellation of identification. This background allows to distinguish the following parameters of Christian identification:

- a. Following Christ – a personal calling, an independent decision based on love;
- b. Freedom – responsibility, independent decision making;
- c. Education – intellectual development.<sup>155</sup>

The above psychological analyses very clearly emphasize a crisis in naturalistic conceptions, indicating clearly that the experience of suffering exceeds rationalistic boundaries and demands reference to the living interpersonal relation between man and the image of God in Jesus Christ. Christian psychology goes beyond the frame of naturalism. This necessity was very clearly stressed by E. Strigo. According to her every human is a reflection of the whole world. At the same time humans are the reflection of God's plan, therefore the whole world meets in mankind. Because of this fact it is important to stress the importance of human integrity. If this integrity is naturalistic it will be a reflection of the structure of the world and its nature is incomplete. To reach full potential the supernatural aspect needs to be implemented. Strigo quotes G. Florovski who used the term "consummated fall" to describe the whole of the process of naturalistic degradation<sup>156</sup>. Pope John Paul II depicted this with the term "misterium iniquitatis", which he used to describe a world without God.<sup>157</sup>

Supernatural acceptance of suffering implies a vision of God as a person and His relation to mankind, which should have a reverse manner. Strigo claims that it seems that assuming a supernatural image of man would contrast with the above, from a psychological point of view. However this implies the fact, that rejecting the supernatural creates a mechanistic way of treating experiences.<sup>158</sup> Because of this we deal with a disruption in identification. This decay of personality can be observed in

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<sup>155</sup> Cf. R. Mehler, *What is a Christian Identity?*, EMCAAP symposium, Moscow, 03.05.2011

<sup>156</sup> E. Strigo, *Christian Anthropology – based Approach to Trauma Therapy*, EMCAAP symposium, Moscow, 04.05.2011.

<sup>157</sup> Cf. John Paul II, Apostolic Letter *Tertio Millenio Adeniente*, Vatican 10.11.1994, 34-36; Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Europa*, Vatican 28.06.2003.

<sup>158</sup> Cf. E. Strigo, *Christian Anthropology – based Approach to Trauma Therapy*, op. cit.

the first parents, who did not ignore God as much as they diminished His meaning – effectively this led to a decrease in their relations. Therefore the effect of these changes has to be noticeable in the whole structure, including the material plane. Rejecting God causes traumatic suffering to destroy the dualistic unity of humans. Destructuring occurs in unity with fragmentation, horizontalism, individualism, hedonism and subjectivism, which intensify the experience of physical, moral, mental, spiritual, suffering.<sup>159</sup>

One's spiritual development needs to lead to an entirety of human integration. However Strigo's claims that this is only a reconstruction of feelings, which in turn are to construct love, cannot be agreed with. This is too big of a simplification and narrows the issue to only the emotional sphere. Especially because the feeling of suffering manifests itself the most in the emotional sphere, but extends beyond it. Emotions do not exist only in themselves, they have their own fundamental basis, therefore the formation of love requires reaching to the human being itself, essential being an effect of love and set on loving. At that moment love is understood as part of development in our way towards fully uniting with God, who is the source and essence of love.

If we read Blessed Pope John Paul II's document *Salvifici Doloris*, we will find there an explanation of a deeply spiritual Christian concept of suffering. John Paul II stresses that while suffering is a personal experience, it does not mean suffering should not be considered in a wider scale, a scale that goes to the extent of trying to learn what the meaning of suffering is. Every field dealing with this issue emphasizes the same aspect. For clarity of analysis a very important is introduced – differentiating between suffering and pain, which can be identified up to a certain point.<sup>160</sup> In this aspect we can refer to a great explanation by A.J. Nowak. From a psychologist's point of view, he claims that identifying these two terms is possible thanks to the so called uncontrolled reflection. Pain should be viewed as “a sign of warning for a living organism is in internal or external danger.”<sup>161</sup> Nowak stresses the difference between human pain and animal pain is elementary. He asks a question about the latter's

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<sup>159</sup> Cf. H. Jarosiewicz, *Psychologia cierpienia*, op. cit., p. 60-61.

<sup>160</sup> Cf. John Paul II, Apostolic letter *Salvifici Doloris* (SD) Rome 11.02.1984, 5.

<sup>161</sup> Cf. A. J. Nowak, *Osoba fakt i tajemnica*, op. cit., p. 209.

suffering.<sup>162</sup> Undoubtedly all animal behaviors clearly point to it. Human suffering goes beyond that. It touches upon deeper human spheres. Fr. Nowak concludes that suffering should be linked with the spiritual sphere, whereas pain with the organic sphere.<sup>163</sup> It is hard to disagree with such an approach, but here we are dealing with a special connection only present in the life of humans. It concerns the question of meaningfulness and purposefulness. This way suffering exposes the physical sphere of humans, which can be controlled, but also a rich, in this aspect, spiritual sphere. The latter one demands to consult spirituality understood as human being one with God.

In his analysis Pope John Paul II refers to the Revelation of supernatural and calls the Bible “The book about suffering”. Such a claim is utmost authorized, however at the same time it should be stressed, that there we will not only find descriptions of great suffering, but also its origin and final result. Blessed Pope John Paul II clearly states that experiencing suffering is experiencing evil. There are differences between the old and new Testament understanding, which he explains. In the first case we deal with identifying evil and suffering, the second one relies on the words “I experience, I receive”, which have caused that this identification no longer exists in its fullness. To answer the question of suffering, according to Pope John Paul II, it is necessary to define evil.<sup>164</sup>

Following Pope John Paul II’s idea we find a distinction between passive and active suffering. This is a “characteristic world”, which is part of every human being, and the human being a part of that world. Therefore, according to Pope John Paul II, we can speak of a specific solidarity of the experience of suffering and experiencing suffering.<sup>165</sup> It is a very important discovery, although it seems very obvious. This way a great extent of perceiving suffering and participating in it becomes exposed. Therefore it cannot be superficial, because it touches upon the essence of the human being and its spirituality. This is just not a type of compassion, but really co-suffering, being fully engaged in someone’s suffering, being part of their life. The path leading to such an demeanor is not just humanity (a serious threat of a mercy based demeanor

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<sup>162</sup> Ibid.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid.

<sup>164</sup> SD 7.

would then emerge), but by crossing that boundary it refers to God suffering in Jesus Christ. The experience of suffering “converts” the one suffering as well as the co-sufferer.<sup>166</sup>

The structure of a suffering human is also defined by the types of suffering experienced. So far the analysis has shown that external suffering (physical) and internal (spiritual) suffering were spoken of in a general manner. A closer look shows a much broader spectrum of the issue. The most noticeable is physical suffering, to which Pope John Paul II refers to as “the pain of the body”.<sup>167</sup> Psychology agrees with this term stressing that suffering cannot be identified literally with only external pain.<sup>168</sup>

Another type of suffering mentioned is moral suffering, described by Pope John Paul II as “the pain of the soul”, which explains the nature of the pain. At this point a very clear distinguishment from the mental aspect of pain is made, as it can accompany both moral and physical pain.<sup>169</sup> H. Jarosiewicz takes a psychological point of view and explains moral suffering as an experience not caused by the one suffering. As well as not being the source. This also concerns relatives.<sup>170</sup> We can observe this manner of treating the issue heads towards suffering related to feeling guilt.

Pope John Paul II clearly stressed the category of spiritual suffering as part of moral suffering, Jarosiewicz distinguishes spiritual suffering separately in the psychology of pain. However his view only concerns a mental feeling of a lack of fulfillment of what is a human’s obligation.<sup>171</sup> Taking into account an understanding of spirituality as a process of a human being striving to achieve unity with God, and with

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<sup>165</sup> SD 8.

<sup>166</sup> Cf. John Paul II, *Do chorych w czasie Apelu Jasnogórskiego* 04.06.1979, In: *Jan Paweł II o cierpieniu*, op. cit., p. 36. Those are very important words: „There still remains a plane, that one reality, in which the suffering of man undergoes a vital transformation. That plane, that reality, is Christ’s cross. On his cross, the son of God redeemed the world. And through that mystery every cross carried by a human gains dignity beyond human comprehension”; M. Tatar, *Duchowo-formacyjny charakter doświadczenia cierpienia w ujęciu Jana Pawła II*, in: *Duchowość cierpienia*, op. cit., p. 194-198;

<sup>167</sup> SD 5.

<sup>168</sup> Cf. H. Jarosiewicz, *Psychologia cierpienia*, op. cit., p. 60; A.J. Nowak, *Osoba fakt i tajemnica*, op. cit., p. 208-212.

<sup>169</sup> SD 5.

<sup>170</sup> Cf. H. Jarosiewicz, *Psychologia cierpienia*, op. cit., p. 61.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid.



it making his life similar to God in the person of Jesus Christ's, it is important to notice that this psychological view concerns only some human acts.<sup>172</sup>

Psychology mentions one more type of suffering – social suffering. Social suffering is considered a situation in which a member of the society does not receive what is rightfully theirs. So this is a case of social injustice.<sup>173</sup> From the point of view of spirituality lack of justice means lack of love. Contesting the basic law concerning the love of God and neighbor (cf. Matthew 22:37; Luke 10:27; Mark 12, 28:31) Sin as turning away from God is not only an individual experience. Sin has its own dimension and social consequences, therefore it can lead to a disorder in the social love system. This is the source of social suffering. Every sin has its social nature.

We can thus say, that in the process of describing and identification of suffering the achievements of psychology are helpful. Possessing adequate tools for learning it allows to explore spheres touched by suffering and how human beings react to it. However psychology still only describes it and attempts a therapy to treat the human psyche. In the physical sphere this role is occupied by medicine. In these spheres the cooperation of psychology and Christian spirituality is very adequate and in many cases necessary. However these two views on suffering cannot be treated in an exclusivity demanding way. Psychology cannot replace spirituality while being only a manner of explaining and solving the problems of suffering. In many cases it does not have the proper tools and does not the deepest depths of the human soul. The symposium in Moscow as well as the European Movement for Christian Anthropology, Psychology and Psychotherapy attempt to unite the two.

### **3. Spirituality and psychology in the face of the meaning of pain.**

Both disciplines, although confronting each other, ask a very vital question regarding the meaning and ultimate purpose of suffering. Of course, as it has already been said, the fundamental idea here is how the human being is perceived. The problem is in the anthropological vision of the human being. This kind of

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<sup>172</sup> Cf. A. J. Nowak, *Osoba fakt i tajemnica*, op. cit. P. 212-214.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid. p. 60.

psychology, which rests on a naturalistic-materialistic vision of human life, due to obvious reasons, has to limit its research to the material realm of human.<sup>174</sup>

Following Pope John Paul II's thoughts on the meaning of suffering, we can say that it emphasizes the humane-personal character of suffering. But in the case of human beings we arrive at one question: "why?". This question leads one to thinking about the relationship to one's self, other people and God. An especially important question is the one about God. The answer to it can be found in the Old Testament, for example in Job. Suffering cannot be limited in only the categories of cause and effect, ie sin and consequences. The answer lies in the apogee of love, expressed by God in the person of Jesus Christ. He became every human and fully identified himself with every of these humans, also in suffering and death.<sup>175</sup>

The explanation of the already mentioned A.J. Nowak is very significant. He emphasizes that suffering bases on human helplessness, but also craving for hope. In his anthropology Nowak emphasizes a very important, from the point of view of the issue of human suffering, problem that we are dealing with a personal hope. Ideological hope does not satisfy the craving for hope. Therefore he claims, basing on St. Augustine and D. Wassercug, that suffering cannot be identified as evil.<sup>176</sup> In his argumentation Nowak refers to K. Dąbrowski, who created development psychology through Positive Desintegration. Dąbrowski claimed suffering was one of the elements of development. It indicates a break in a person, but at the same time leads to working on reintegrating to a greater level.<sup>177</sup> There is an answer that simplifies the issue, eg H Jarosiewicz claimed that touching upon the function of suffering clearly indicates identifying suffering as evil. Jarosiewicz's claim is that suffering indicates a loss of

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<sup>174</sup> In this context it is worth to stress prof. Zbigniew Religa's (an outstanding Polish heart surgeon) views on religion, who died on 08.03.2009. In one of his last interviews he told journalists Renata Kim and Barbara Kasprzycka that he identified himself as a tolerant atheist. He claimed he was not a militant atheist. In the face of his death due to cancer he contemplated his life and the suffering of other people, which he had seen, he said that "The observations of life and my experience as a doctor confirm to me that there is no God. I am becoming an atheist even more". When asked about the ultimate meaning of human existence he said: "My thoughts are simple: there is no human that will not die. Even the Pope. Since it is inevitable and irreversible there is nothing to fear. Everyone has to die. Even you, ladies. To me death is nothing, only a dream"; "... I know where I will be. Buried in the ground." Whereas asked what he thinks is on the other side he said: "I know there will be nothing there". Cf. Z. Religa, *Jestem dumny z mojego życia*, [http://www.przeszczep.pl/print/do\\_druku\\_pl.php?id=1258](http://www.przeszczep.pl/print/do_druku_pl.php?id=1258), 27.09.2011.

<sup>175</sup> Cf. SD 14-18.

<sup>176</sup> Cf. A. J. Nowak, *Osoba fakt i tajemnica*, op. cit., p. 211-212.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid., p. 210.

good. It is important to point out, that interchangeably use of the terms suffering and evil introduces a certain disorder. However it shows that on the grounds of psychology as a discipline of empiric studies the experiences of evil and suffering, especially undeserved, stays an unsolvable problem. Among other issues, it concerns the problem of internment camps.<sup>178</sup>

From the theological point of view we are dealing with treating suffering as a means to identify with Jesus Christ, expiation, testimony, or merit for the Church, world and neighbors.<sup>179</sup> However suffering has a special place in human spiritual development. Theology speaks of the specificity of the spiritual aspect of suffering. It should not be linked in any way with glorifying suffering. As already said, suffering is not a value on its own. One cannot suffer just to suffer. Because of this, accusations of a peculiar masochism addressed to Catholics who experience suffering very spiritually, are a sign of lack of understanding for catholic spirituality, as well as the meaning of pain from the anthropological point of view. In this field a pioneer from the Warsaw center of spirituality, Fr. prof. S. Urbański, has conducted very important studies. According to him the spirituality of suffering concentrates on a Christocentric fundament. The center of sanctifying life constitutes personal meeting of human and Jesus Christ and trying to unite. Basing on evangelic events in which Christ identifies himself with suffering people, and ultimately becomes the redeeming sufferer,

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<sup>178</sup> Cf. H Jarosiewicz, *Psychologia cierpienia*, 59-60. In this context it is worth quoting the words Pope Benedict XVI said on 28.05.2006 in the Auschwitz concentration camp. His unusual awareness and courage while being in that situation are very noteworthy. These qualities can be found in his words: "To speak of this place, this death house where uncountable numbers of crimes against God and mankind had been done, never has a bigger crime been committed, is nearly impossible – especially hard and saddening for a Christian, a Pope who is a German.", and "I could not have not come here. I had to come here. It was and still is an obligation towards truth, towards the rights of those who had suffered here, an obligation towards God; so that I, as John Paul II's successor and a son of the German nation – son of the nation, who was led by a group of criminals who gained power by false promises of a great nation, regaining its former honor and meaning, deceived with images of prosperity, but also used terror and intimidation, to use the nation as the tool of their lust for destruction and reign. Indeed, I could not have not come here." However some other important words should also be stressed: "How many questions emerge in such a place! But one always comes back: 'Where was God? Why was he silent? How could he have allowed for such great destruction, for evil to triumph?'" In his answer he said: "we cannot learn God's secrets – we only see fragments of it and are only mistaken when we try to judge God and history. We would not defend mankind, quite the opposite, we would lead to his fall. (...). Our cry towards God should also touch our hearts, to awaken the hidden presence of God in each one of us – so that His power, which He laid in our hearts, is not buried by egoism, fear of other people, indifference and opportunism.", cf. [http://www.opoka.org.pl/biblioteka/W/WP/benedykt\\_xvi/przemowienia/pl\\_auschwitz\\_28052006.html](http://www.opoka.org.pl/biblioteka/W/WP/benedykt_xvi/przemowienia/pl_auschwitz_28052006.html), 27.09.2011.

<sup>179</sup> Cf. J. Pastuszka, *Wierzę w Boga*, op. cit., p. 149-151; *John Paul II, Audiencja środowa 27.12.1978*, In: *Jan Paweł II o cierpieniu*, op. cit., p. 14; *Anioł Pański* 11.02.1979, p. 22; *w bazylice św. Piotra podczas Mszy świętej*

Fr. Urbański points toward an elementary evangelic rule, which is the basis of the development of human spiritual life: "Whosoever will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me." (Mk 8:34). A Christian's spiritual life imitates Jesus Christ's and takes part in it. Fr. Urbański motivates his idea using the words of St. Paul (cf. Heb. 12:1; 2 Cor 1:4-7; Gal 6:17).<sup>180</sup> In his analysis Urbański creates a bald thesis that suffering is the basis of spiritual life.<sup>181</sup> Taking into account the inalienability of pain in one's life, ie it is an inherent attribute of human existence, which is treated in an universalistic manner in terms of time and space, a very disturbing issue emerges, which he takes up. Is the meaning of suffering to partly assimilate it in human life? This would mean passively agreeing on it, as it cannot be excluded. A possible solution might be to accustom one's self to suffering, which would lead to minimalizing its effects. Such an approach often characterizes the non-Christian world. However in both cases there is an "unproductivity" of suffering towards the human being and the surrounding reality.

In searching for an answer Fr. Urbański based his studies on American scientist and journalist in the field of psychiatry and psychology of religion S. M. Peck (a member of the Episcopal Church). Thus a possibility of incorporating some theses and views from the disciplines of Psychology and psychiatry into Christian spirituality can be expected. Peck referred to asceticism in life experiences, but eventually, Urbański stresses, induced towards perceiving suffering as a supernatural item. Peck's original source was assuming sloth in a broad sense and fear of suffering as the means to solve the problem.<sup>182</sup> Peck lists three rules, which describe the way human beings react to suffering in the context of experiencing faith, ie open one's mind to Christ, recognize God's love, devote to love. Eventually, however, the culminating point is freedom of human in the face of God and God's endless love towards humans.<sup>183</sup>

To Fr. Urbański, a theologian of mysticism, the turning point in understanding suffering is love. To show this he uses two very clear examples of mystics. The first

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*dla chorych* 11.02.1979, p. 22-24; M. Tatar, *Duchowo-formacyjny charakter doświadczenia cierpienia*, op. cit., p. 194-202.

<sup>180</sup> Cf. S. Urbański, *Cierpienia moralno-fizyczne w rozwoju życia mistycznego chrześcijanina*, in: *Duchowość cierpienia*, op. cit., p.16-17.

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18.

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20-21.

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23.

one was bl. Aniela Salawa (09.09.1881 – 12.03.1922), who experienced deep physical and moral suffering. Her surrounding and even confessor did not understand her. Her suffering was accepting sacrifices and renunciation. She kept a diary (called *Dziennik* in Polish), in which, Urbański says, a suffering caused directly by Satan. However her developing love for Jesus Christ causes her suffering to become a powerful means of mystic life.<sup>184</sup>

The other mystic referred to by Urbański is St. Faustyna Kowalska (25.08.1905 – 05.10.1938). She is a very characteristic figure of the Polish mysticism and special case of Urbański's studies. She exemplifies the wholeness of spiritual suffering (she also experienced many instances of physical suffering, including serious illness). In her spiritual heritage, her diary (*Dzienniczek*), Fr. Urbański says, a complete path to mystical unity can be found. Especially important is the passive purification of the spirit, which is the core of mystical experience.<sup>185</sup>

Short as they were, these examples however show that in Christian spirituality suffering has a sanctifying character, as long as experiencing it is in unity with Jesus Christ. Fr. Nowak claims that what Dąbrowski described as Positive Desintegration, in the development of spiritual life should be examined as individual steps in purifying a human, who is preparing to fully unite with God.<sup>186</sup> The full outline can be found in a classical figure, John of the Cross.<sup>187</sup> There are attempts to describe the Christian sanctifying path, put in an outline of purification, sanctification and union. It is important to note, that it is necessary to know both the terminology regarding mysticism and some basics about mystic theology. Without these two items, some serious mistakes can be made, because the terminology and language of psychology becomes inadequate in the face of mystical experience.

An attempt to make an analysis of the sanctifying path was taken up by B.J. Groeschel, lecturer and director of the Office for Spiritual Development in the archdiocese of New York. In his work he says that psychology is helpful in the whole process of spiritual development. Psychology does not try to claim the role of

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<sup>184</sup> Ibid., p. 25-29.

<sup>185</sup> Cf. S. Urbański, *Cierpienie duchowe św. Faustyny*, In: *Duchowość cierpienia*, op. cit., p. 31-52.

<sup>186</sup> Cf. A.J. Nowak, *Osoba fakt i tajemnica*, op. cit., p.210.

<sup>187</sup> Cf. *Święty Jan od Krzyża Doktor Kościoła – Dzieła*, translated by B. Smyrak, Cracow 1995, DGK III, 16-45; NC II, 1; 11-25.

interpreter in the interpersonal relation that develops between human and God. That is why Groeschel is very careful in using psychology, seeing as it can lead to a great threat. He says that in a discipline such as spirituality the most important place is taken by development psychology allowing to identify faith with the adequate stage of human development.<sup>188</sup>

It can thus be said, that suffering, a harsh experience in human life, in spiritual theology can be described as a “harsh grace” of a spirit forming character. It does not go down to the level of religious masochism, whose point remains unsolved and human acceptance. In view of the secret of life, death and Jesus Christ’s resurrection suffering becomes a means to unite with Him. The essential goal of historical-supernatural revelation of God in His Son is reconciliation of human with himself, which process is perpetually made through suffering. Thus it can be said that a fundamental factor in God’s relation to humans is everlasting love. Following Nowak’s terminology it can be said that the whole christocentric-christoformative process is made in the experience of suffering and searching for its meaning.<sup>189</sup> In his theology of suffering Pope John Paul II describes this process as a “bridge between divine transcendence and the form of human”.<sup>190</sup> Christ fully sympathizes with humans through two ways, ie sending a message to the ones most suffering in all aspects (cf. Lk 5:31-32) and, as already said, fully identifying with suffering (cf. Mt 10:33-34; 16:23; 1 Cor 8:11-14, 2 Cor 1:5). In this context it can be said, that suffering of a spirit-forming nature is part of the human vocation. It concerns not just the meaning of an individual’s life, but also their path. A true Christian, in whom Christ fully identifies himself, becomes a witness for the believers and through their suffering expands the richness of the Church (cf. Col 1:24).<sup>191</sup>

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<sup>188</sup> Cf. B. J. Groeschel, *Duchowy rozwój. Psychologia a mistyka*, translated by E. Czerwińska, Warsaw 1998, p. 163-298. The author is very critical of using psychology as a constitutive element of formation, by seculars as well as priests and consecrated. He openly states: “Perhaps no other discipline has introduced so much information and confusion into the contemporary Church, as the mysterious studies of inductive statistics, Every conference of bishops and order superiors, every order, diocese, department of education has in some way been confronted with the complicated set of computer prints, rarely even understood by one.”, p. 143.

<sup>189</sup> Cf. M. Tatar, *Duchowow-formacyjny charakter doświadczenia cierpienia*, In: *Duchowość cierpienia*, op. cit. P. 190-194.

<sup>190</sup> John Paul II, *Orędzie na VI Światowy Dzień Chorego*, Rome, 29.06.1979, 2.

<sup>191</sup> Cf. John Paul II, *Audiencja śródowa* 21.03.1979, In: *Jan Paweł II o cierpieniu*, op. cit., p. 29; *Do Chorych w krakowskim kościele Ojców Franciszkanów* 09.06.1979, In: *Jan Paweł II o cierpieniu*, op. cit., p. 38; *Przed odmówieniem różańca z chorymi w sanktuarium Matki Bożej w Pompei* 21.10.1979, In: *Jan Paweł II o cierpieniu*, op. cit., p. 52-54.

The gospel incessantly proclaimed by Jesus Christ in the Church is spread by the Church to the whole world. This is one of the main aims of the Church. That is why it can be said that all of the Church's works are in a way repeated material. This is why the proclamation of "The Gospel of Suffering", as well as suffering itself, have a special, universalistic meaning in the Church, ie addressed to the whole world. Through suffering the Church and its message become the most legible sign and evidence. This way, using Pope John Paul II's manner of speech, it can be said, is how a true "civilization of love" is built. Because of this, in his opinion the words "Hospitals, an institution for the ill and elderly, and all places, where people who are suffering are accepted, are privileged environment of new evangelism, which should strive to proclaim the hope bringing message of the Gospel" are very important.<sup>192</sup> Thus suffering is the sanctifying element, that changes the ill one, their surrounding, the Church and world, in which a man of every time exists.<sup>193</sup>

The relation between spirituality and psychology has always been very controversial. A natural human trait is to try to explain the harsh experiences in life, which are many forms of suffering. Suffering is the very space which most adequately shows the possibilities of these two disciplines. It is obvious that psychological studies can do a big favor to the development of contemporary people. Psychology possesses appropriate qualities, especially when it comes to the process of human development, which safely enable self-determination. However, psychology is not a complete discipline, ie having solutions to all problems. Especially in the face of the phenomenon which is suffering. Its foremost failure is in the analysis of the meaning of suffering. For spirituality the criterion is the person of Jesus Christ. He goes beyond the naturalistic vision of humans and the world. This way spirituality points towards the human vocation of aspiring to infinity, which is full holiness. Suffering plays a great role in that aspiration. It bears witness to the common-nature formation, exposing the greatness and dignity of human in the presence of God.

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<sup>192</sup> John Paul II, *Oroędzie na IX Światowy Dzień Chorego. Nowa ewangelizacja o godność człowieka cierpiącego*, Rome 22.08.2000, 3.

<sup>193</sup> Cf. P. Thigpen, *Krew męczenników*, translated by J. Wolak, Cracow 2003, p. 15-34.

## Education in the family

Not many people are aware of the fact that in Poland there is a possibility of teaching your children at home – legally! It may raise some controversy. Well, we ourselves were attending public schools, so it might be natural that we want for our children to do same. However, more and more families decide to homeschool their children. Why? The reasons are many, but common to all is the fact that parents want to have a say in caring for their God-given child. They want to have a part in his comprehensive development, individual and diversified education, safety, in developing a world of values as well as his personal outlook on life.

### Care of the church.

It is worth to notice that the Church's involvement in the care of the children began with Jesus Christ Himself, Who when asked by his disciples, "*Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?*" sat a little child in the midst of them and said, "*Verily I say unto you: except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me. But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea*" (Mat.18:2-6).

Benedict XVI emphasises that the main factor in raising children is a testimony, "*and a true educator (...) desires for a child or a pupil to know the truth and to develop personal relations towards it. The caretaker fulfills his calling to the end, so his vigilant and faithful presence will always be at hand without fail, and his goal is for a child to listen to the voice of truth speaking in his heart and follow it through the life's journey*".<sup>194</sup> In today's world such a possibility of daily presence is found in homeschool education.

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<sup>194</sup> Homilia Benedykta XVI podczas Mszy św. w Niedzielę Chrztu Pańskiego, Bazylika Watykańska, 8 stycznia 2012 roku.



## **Polish traditions**

In *The Pedagogical Encyclopedia*, published in 1890 Aniela Szycówna wrote that “[h]ome education seems to be the oldest form of teaching. The primeval man, foreign to modern job specializations, did not make a distinction between raising and educating children. The father was a natural teacher to his son and the mother to her daughter. Led by their inborn parental instinct, parents were doing their best to pass on their knowledge and skills to the children, doing it in a very simple way, by involving their children from the very early age in household jobs and chores, thus preparing the youth for their future responsibilities. Even more so the grandparents, would gather their youngsters around, and paint word pictures of past times by recounting heroic deeds of their ancestors, telling legends or their own adventures, teaching songs and wisdom of their fathers, passed on to them in parables and moral sayings. They did not withhold their counsel, sharing precepts on how a man should live his life, always starting and finishing daily work with united prayer, thus establishing the religious foundation. With the development of science the parental teaching were no longer sufficient. Hence, the need for teachers, who as the servants of a master or mistress of the house were successfully contributing to the overall development of a young generation. Even though schools became more and more common, home education remained the most natural, obvious and efficient way of passing on the knowledge until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century both forms of education existed simultaneously until new governing powers of the People's Republic enforced an obligatory school attendance. This led to the exclusion of home education first from being an option for parents then from the mentality of the whole Polish society. We can observe the consequences of it today. It is not hard to notice that even though legal regulations permit parents to educate their own children, once it is undertaken, it meets with unjustified opposition and defiance, and often without any objective reasons, but most of all in opposition to the holistic understanding of well-being of society, family and children.

## **Discovered again.**

Presently, there are over 500 families teaching their children at home in Poland, and the number is still growing. Some associations were brought into existence in order to assist parents in their endeavors to educate their children in this way; national gatherings as well as individual meetings are held; a collective work under the title “Homeschooling in Poland. Theory and practice” was created. ([www.edukacjadowawpolsce.pl](http://www.edukacjadowawpolsce.pl)).

The most important though is the fact that through homeschooling the beauty of its calling is discovered by the families themselves: the relations between family members are getting stronger and the very togetherness is a source of deep joy.

Some might doubt whether homeschooling it is indeed necessary: what about religious or private schools. It is true, such schools exist but rarely do they manage to put the family's well-being as the primary goal of their school. Instead, more often than not they manage to lead a child out of the family union, offering not much in exchange. Apart from that, schools are often located far from child's home and daily commuting back and forth to school takes away many hours out of the family's life. And what about the families who live in the areas where such schools are not available or are simply too expensive? It often happens that even the best in our opinion school is still, for various reasons, not appropriate for our child. This happened to Małgorzata who was driving her children to, in many aspects, good school. Daily, she would spend three hours in the car, hours often filled with hurry to make it on time to school (traffic in Warsaw at times!!!) and lots of unnecessary pressure. As a result, there was less and less time for each other. Many times she felt very uncomfortable listening to her son's account of what happened at school that day, "Mummy, you know, today again I was able to copy some work from Aneta, and I got 5!" or "We've had a test today. I don't remember anything, but luckily I had extra help...". Comments like multiplied. After some time she noticed that her younger daughter began to behave in the same way. From the point of view of a parent she felt like a failure. She selected the school in hope of her children not only acquiring knowledge but also developing as decent human beings. Their average grades per semester reached 4.5, but there was not much left in the children's heads, not to mention the additional baggage of negative influences...

One morning, before leaving home for school, Margaret heard on TV that there are families who teach their children at home. The information kept coming back throughout the day. In the evening, together with her husband she did some research on the Internet. They found out that the matter is not very complicated. Apart from their decision, they only needed to fill in the application to a school director before the end of May and get the opinion from a psychologist. To get the opinion they went to some private clinic and it happened, since September 2009 they are teaching their children at home. Margaret became the teacher of her own children. Prior to that, she was their driver. Their heads are not empty anymore and the children have more time for their interests and passions. Since starting on homeschooling Margaret realised that she didn't really know her children before, and their relations were very shallow. Out-of-school education gave place for needed changes and made their efforts

worthwhile. She also discovered that teaching her own children is not as complicated as she thought it to be. They can freely plan a variety of outings to museums or other important historic and archaeological sites. This way many lessons are taught on location instead from books. Finally, there is enough time for distant relations, history accounts spoken by their great-grandma or by uncle who fought in the war.

### **Our adventure**

Our adventure with homeschooling began a few years ago when we came to a decision that school doesn't fit into our family life and is not beneficial in itself. Because of the character of our work, we often are away from home, and that would mean leaving the children alone. One solution could be the total change of our work, giving up our own interests and passions – ... for a public school. The question comes up – what for? Homeschooling turned out to be the solution for our dilemmas and that is how we began our united family adventure. Presently, we are teaching (using school terminology) already four of our children. This allows us to build our family together with each member partaking in a learning process and developing their own personality traits. It turned out that learning can be a pleasure and a true passion for children. Now, the problem is not that they spend too little time reading, but too much. Younger kids learn spontaneously, observing their older siblings – this way Marysia, not yet 5, can already read by herself. Besides, life itself offers many lessons. Our children, accompanying us during many activities and challenges of daily life, have a chance to enrich themselves with the experiences of other people, mature and sometimes immature individuals, in the real world. They have a chance to struggle with life's battles right there and then, of course, according to their own, sometimes very small, ability. And it turns out that it is quite enough. Through the active participation in a regular life our boys learned to read (they started quite early by learning to read road signs), to count (mainly during our shopping, which at times cost us a bit). It is not boring for them to acquire knowledge, because they can see for themselves that they need it for their existence. We've noticed that in difficult and stressful situations they use not only what they know, but what they've experienced and observed so far. This lack of isolation from the adult world offers a child a great possibility to form their personality in natural and real surroundings. Firstly, our teaching has, literally, many faces, because the most important aspect of it is meeting other people and gaining knowledge from their experiences. Secondly, there is much travelling, encounters with living (preferably) history or nature on location. Thirdly, there is the world of

books and getting to know its richness. Fourthly, striving to gain a very concrete competence, defined in the program basis for each level of education.

One of our family's adventures was to prepare a book about homeschooling. The children were included in the editorial work. They designed the cover, chose the pictures that were later published in the book. They had a chance to meet the authors of the articles, exchange any comments and observations. Thanks to the courtesy of the publishing office, they could get familiar with the printing process of the book.

Looking back and reflecting on our decision again from the perspective of many years, we can testify that in spite of many hardships and difficulties of daily life, this decision brought a great deal of goodness to our family as a whole and to each one of us separately.

### **Verification**

The studies repeatedly conducted in the USA show that homeschooling brings very good results not only scientifically, but also socially. Homeschooled pupils receive better grades than those taught in traditional schools; they visit libraries and museums much more often than the latter. They are more willingly accepted by universities, because of their strong motivation to learn and admirable resourcefulness. They cope much better with their adult lives. On the American social ground homeschooling is one of their chief assets.

Apart from that, it was established that parents' education and their wealth don't have a significant influence on school results of homeschooled children. The charges of one person's inability to teach so many subjects are also unjustified, because teaching parents are managing their new roles impressively well. On the sideline, if, according to this hypothesis, an adult person can't comprehend so many scientific disciplines, why should we let our children waste their time doing just that?

### **Challenge**

The phenomenon of homeschooling, outside of the institutional form of education accepted in certain societies as obligatory, concerns not only our modern times. Such form of education was embraced by none other but the Holy Family from Nazareth. We can get to know them better thanks to the revelations of the Italian mystic woman, Maria Valtorta. Her messages were written down and published for the first time in 1956 in a book under the Italian title 'IL POEMA DELL'UOMO-DIO'<sup>195</sup> and was translated into many languages, also into Polish. In her writings we can find the exact description of *Jesus' early years, the*

*games He played, clothes He wore. We can read accounts of His talks with the Father and the Mother, with His friends etc., as well as public sermons, the journeys through Palestine, filled with His teachings and miracles, and then His trial, his being sentenced to death and the horrible crucifixion. All this is described by Maria Valtorta with historical, geographical, biblical, geological, theological accuracy and familiarity, which filled the specialists who read the book with admiration.*<sup>196</sup>

Thanks to her dynamic descriptions, we find ourselves in the midst of daily uncommonness of the Holy Family's life. It is filled with love, care, service and time spent with each other. St. Joseph and Mary were the very first teachers of God's Word. They were teaching, even though they didn't have any special education nor held any public positions. They were teaching to love God and His Word, and to work. Jesus Himself, in revelations experienced by Maria Valtorta, recalls this period of His life as the most beautiful time in His earthly life, and as a word of caution for us living in modern times says:

*Parents of 20<sup>th</sup> century! Your children belong to everybody, but not to yourselves. They belong to a babysitter, a teacher and school – if you are wealthy. They belong to playmates, street and school – if you are poor. But they don't belong to you. A mother gave birth, that's it. With fathers is no different. But your child is not only flesh. Within him or her there is a mind, heart and spirit as well. None more than a father and a mother has a right and responsibility to raise this mind, heart and spirit."*

So strong are these words and yet, even if we find something in them to oppose, let's not neglect to meditate on their truth ...

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<sup>195</sup> W tłumaczeniu polskim – „Poemat Boga – Człowieka”.

<sup>196</sup> Ze wstępu Maria Valtorta z Viareggio, Renzo Allegri

## **Stereotyping and labeling in school education**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Modern civilization in its axiological space seems to put big emphasis on such values as interpersonal dialog, intercultural openness outside of any prejudices and stereotypes in human relationships.

Globalization, industrialization and urbanization as well as new technical inventions intensify and at the same time objectify interpersonal contacts. This generates a necessity to accentuate bigger care for „a spiritual life” of each individual and society. It is considered that widely understood education, and its institutional form of school is preferred, is instrumental in raising the level of awareness and openness to other culture.

School' character, in spite of many changes and reforms, is still very assessing and classifying. A child in school is subject to a description, and then to a classification on a base of possessed knowledge and the progress he or she has made.

Wioletta Florkiewicz, the consultant at the Teachers' Training Center in Sieradz, points out that: *one of the informal elements of the educational system was „a label”, which is still present, often taking place of objective diagnostic tools. The label is easily received, because people don't need schemes and formulas that make our reality easier to perceive (2004).*

The ability to generalize traits and motives in actions of a specific group of people, the American psychologist Elliot Aronson says, *we are learning since early years. In one experiment children from 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grades were asked to assess their classmates regarding their popularity, leadership abilities, impartiality etc. The children from higher class families were given more positive opinions than children from lower class families. It seemed that the children couldn't see in their classmates their individual character, but were unbiased through stereotypes according to the social class they belonged to. (E. Aronson, 2008, s. 282).*

The narrow and simplified perception of another human being is accompanied by stigmatization, which appears in the school reality as often as overgeneralization and labeling.

Stigmatization with all its connotations is always negative and leads straight to marginalization, discrimination and harassment.

In the study below we'll look at a socialisation process that is offered by schools with all its negative effects. In particular we'll show how school strengthens attitudes and patterns of gender related stereotypes, how social stigmatization in relationships within school institutions causes problems with harassment (psychological aggression).

## **STEREOTYPING WITHIN SCHOOL REALM**

### **a. Stereotype and its connotation**

Stereotype is a simple, often irrational picture of things, institutions or people, made up of traits that are considered typical for them and instilled into the consciousness of members of a group or social class. Stereotypes are the limited representatives of the world, based on ignorance and incorrect opinions. These convictions are very hard to eradicate, they determine human attitudes towards i.e. certain social and religious groups, other nationalities, forming permanent, often unfair judgments. Such damaging convictions are instilled in us since childhood at home, as well as in school.

More often than not we meet with national stereotypes; our conceptions about other nations. Forming stereotypes is a natural human tendency and we generalise all human imaginations about the surrounding world of nature as well as of society. This has to do with the ways we organise the whole reality through categorisation and generalisation.

Stereotypes are often based on incomplete or false knowledge of the world, established by tradition, resulting in being resistant to change. Many scientists were trying to find "a grain of truth" in stereotypes; the expression "the stereotype accuracy" was even created. When a fact that seems to invalidate certain stereotype appears, people have a tendency to consider it as an exception, because "the exception proves the rule" or to create a subcategory as not to disturb the main one.

Stereotypes can lead to growing prejudices towards certain groups. Prejudices can be negative or positive, but the European school of science on the subject agrees that it is a negative occurrence. And that is why we deal here with negative attitudes, aversions and discrimination.

Another definition of “stereotype” is: the false, ill-founded general attitude towards a certain group of people, usually insensitive to argumentation ( Wikipedia, 2009 ).

Stereotypes can come under certain circumstances to a change or total elimination. Three models of stereotype changes have been proposed:

- the bookkeeping model, in which each instance of stereotype-relevant information is used to gradually modify the stereotype,
- the conversion model, in which stereotypes change radically in response to dramatic or salient instances,
- and the sub-typing model in which new stereotypic structures are developed to accommodate instances not easily assimilated by existing stereotypes.<sup>197</sup>

**b. Stereotypes connected with student gender functions**

The cognitive function in the school environment is based to a large extent on stereotypes which help to distinguish and categorise occurrences and events. Perceiving similarities in our surroundings, grouping them according to common traits and characteristics into categories makes our cognitive function in the environment much easier. In result of knowing the specifics of a particular category we are able to form rules of behaviour that belong to that category. Here it concerns categories and social functions of a student in relation to the gender context.

More often than not the role of stereotypes in this field is overestimated, through excessive referring to similarities, schemes and overlooking exceptions to the rule.

Stereotypes connected with gender function can have a negative impact on children’s development. If since early years a child is treated according to a stereotype, chances for his creative development are lessened. It would be worthwhile for schools and kindergartens to be gender friendly, avoiding unnecessary ballast that is carried by stereotypes. The school period has a very special meaning, because starting his education a child is undertaking very important social roles: that of a pupil and of a member of a peer group. Not only does he acquire knowledge, but develop social abilities, form convictions about his own competency and adequacy, establishing close relationships with his peers.

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<sup>197</sup> Jennifer Crocker, Renee Weber (1983), "COGNITIVE STRUCTURE AND STEREOTYPE CHANGE"



Boys and girls experience different treatment given them by teachers from early years in school.

Children are encouraged to play different games supported by suitable props.

Since the very beginning of school life they grow up in a specific culture, and what goes with it - among stereotypes.

And although not all children fully identify themselves with proposed segregation, it has to be noticed that already four-year-olds know what behaviour is expected and approved of them according to the gender.

Early schooled children have already formed conceptions about what kind of games, clothes and behaviour is appropriate for boys and girls. They take these conceptions into their adult life. The repeated stereotypes carry real dangers. A very clear example of gender stereotypes we can see in Polish society, though relatively ethnically and religiously homogeneous. It concerns the specific way of treating the science subjects and humanities in relation to gender and the traditionally defined roles of women and men.

c. **Establishing gender classified attitudes and behavioural patterns in school environment**

Stereotyping that concerns gender identity, social roles and being the subject of the studies, doesn't omit school institutions. Already in kindergartens there are formed expectations and prohibitions in accordance with the classic image of man and woman. We can observe models of "good girls and playful boys" – a picture in conformity with existing assumptions about roles in the society. Situations of such type are just the prelude in a further promotion of scenarios of genre roles, acting upon which would be a guarantee of well-played manliness and femininity.

In the functioning of school we can observe generic polarisation of society and there we distinguish three dimensions: school organisation and structure, teachers' influence and the content of education. All of them, starting with the organisation of school space and personnel structure, through teachers' convictions and expectations, ending with the educational program and contents of school books, transmit the hierarchical structure of society. The society in which men take higher and more prestige positions, "manly" things are judged on the base of other criteria than things that are "womanly"; we are obliged to the stereotypical images of women and men. The task of the general system of education is creating equal

opportunities for all of the children. This postulate remains to be only a wish considering existing educational inequality. The gender related stereotypical attitudes and behavioural patterns, reinforced by school, leads to gender related inequality in education.

Promoting “the only right” sex image brings very negative results for girls as well as for boys. Girls can very easily lose the confidence in their own abilities and later choose a life road that is not appropriate for them and which will limit their own aspirations. Whereas the boys are expected to be successful; they're growing up with conviction that they have unlimited possibilities. But the real adult life with all its hardships like finishing a good school, finding a well-paid job (bread-winner) could bring, and often does, frustration and behavioural deviations.

#### **1.4. Persistence in stereotypical classification of students**

During his education in the elementary school a child absorbs promoted gender role stereotypes. This is the best period to instil and to establish in a child gender images and expectations. According to a paradigm of sex polarisation, it is a male element that is dynamic, conquering and success oriented. In school there is a notion of typical boyish and typical girlish tasks. This leads to differences in the treatment of boys and girls and the whole pedagogical practice seems to follow double standard, separate for each sex.

The teachers give boys more time, more back information, more praise and correction, more counsel and directions, they ask them more questions. Through this boys are somewhat more motivated to work harder with a promise of a future success.

Science subjects are considered as typical boyish ones, in opposition to humanities and languages – foreign as well – which are girls' domain. It would be as hard for a girl to come to the fore in Physics class, as it would be for a boy reciting a poem or just talking about it, while being surrounded by sneering peers as well as the teacher, who often doesn't support him in such ventures. This categorisation doesn't encourage children to look out for their own field of interest, in which one can be fulfilled and successful. It generates pressure from superior grounds and deters from broadening their field of operation. It is harder to try one's strength at a field, knowing abilities don't meet its quality standards and that competing in it is predetermined to a failure. In schools there are not enough untypical, not gender-role correct tasks. There is not enough activity and competition models for girls, as well as tenderness patterns for boys. Social expectations can deter a boy, who loves literature, from being

accomplished in that area. It is already enough that his peers call him “sissy” or “softy”. At the same time a young girl would rather forsake her technical or science interests, if she would think that such “manliness” would lessen her feminine chances with boys. The books that pupils read in schools offer a variety of information about activities that are suitable for certain sex. The research shows that the way literary and historical characters are presented is subject to usual scenarios. It turns out that the main characters are boys and men, girls and woman being omitted. Most biographies we know are about males. They are stronger, more creative and courageous. Females are passive, inadequate. There is a picture of a woman at home and a man pursuing a success. It can be noticed that it creates a phenomenon called “the invisibility of women”, meaning omitting or underestimating the role of the women in history, development of all science or the world altogether. It goes without saying that the persistent promotion of this picture will be received by girls as an encouragement to be passive and to give up their competitive spirit. It will lessen their performance esteem in many fields.

Another problem worth addressing is the physical aspect of adolescence. At this time girls are faced with comments and taunts of their peers regarding their sexuality, which can be the source of stress, and further on lead to anxieties, inactivity, and especially to backing down from competing with boys. How very complex are interactions between school experiences and functions in a society shows the strong conformity of gender roles in young people' lives. It was concluded that during the period of puberty girls' confidence in their own abilities significantly drops, while in boys it raises high. In both sexes we find behaviour stereotypes connected with success and achievement. It was noticed that girls are subject to the conclusion that a woman in a manly profession is not socially accepted. Consequently, they obtain higher self-confidence only in gender appropriate situations.

As a result of the research done by Martina Horner, concepts such as “the fear of success” or “the motivation to avoid success” were elaborated. Horner came to a conclusion that success has negative consequences for women. Their need for achievement disappears and often their success, connected with negative consequences, is identified with femininity loss, especially when this happens in a field wildly dominated by men. Often this emanates from a perceived conflict between need for success and an intimate relationship.

Stereotyping of gender roles in school practice, reflecting on self-esteem, competency and self-confidence, leads to narrowing of the development possibilities, making it difficult to prove oneself useful in the desired field. It also blocks the discovery of a person's full potential, talents, passions and creative resources.

## 1.5. Possible changes

The early school experiences (between 6 and 12 years of age) and their further consequences, which were mentioned above, occur in a very difficult development stage. Erikson points out one crisis: industry vs. inferiority.

This is the stage when a child gains competences as a result of positively solved development crisis and learns to win recognition thanks to his own work performance. He begins to understand the work division and unequal chances; in other words he is assimilating the technological ethos of a given culture. This offers the danger of inferiority and impropriety, which can appear in case of an absence of hope to master a tool or ability and cause mediocre achievements in competing with others. It seems that in this time period, i.e. during school practice, we should look for solutions and opportunities for changes to occur in the present state of things.

After Bronfenbrenner we can cite that school is the environment of social development. One of its elements is the micro system which contains activity patterns, models of social roles as well as interpersonal relationships. Through its culture (customs, ideals, rituals, norms) school offers to each individual a possibility to receive a certain identity. We can talk about school emancipation with its goal to develop one's own potential, specific abilities and competences, to form identity and individuality. There is also a function to socialise, to develop socially desired behaviour, civic conduct as well as norms and value systems. To avoid unpleasant gender stereotyping, a balance in this area needs to be maintained and cooperation between emancipation and socialisation functions of education has to be reached.

It is necessary for the individual to receive behaviour patterns according to existing social and civic norms. This is the responsibility of teachers of the humanities such as in Polish language, history and ethics. The framework though has to be elastic in order to reveal our multicultural world along with its diverse value systems, to present the world with all its great amount of ideals, cultures, history aspects and dynamics resulting in changes.

A teaching process should be carried out in a response to the needs and interests of students, i.e. first of all they should be familiar with the whole educational offer and all subjects, and then with the help of a teacher they could deepen the chosen field of knowledge. The student should not be convinced that since he is not suitable for appointed tasks, he will fail in the areas dominated by the opposite sex as well nor is fit for anything else.

He needs to know that there are areas, which can be a domain of his activity, which he can master in. And this is one of the conditions for finding a positive solution to the one pointed out by Erikson and the mentioned above crisis.

An educational institution has the responsibility to support their pupils in search of their own domain, in which they can find fulfilment and satisfaction.

Summing up the above deliberations about stereotypes in school education, we can refer to the concept of polis, soma and psyche according to which the human being is comprised of three principle processes of organization (polis - the social aspect; soma – biological, and psyche – psychic) and to the functions of education to emancipate and socialise.

The optimal would be a state, in which the socially directed individual will have a possibility for full undisturbed development, with varied opportunities to use his or her abilities and resources. At the same time there should be a limit put both to the excess of individuality, as this could lead to deviations and social maladjustments, and to the excessive socialisation, which could result with blockage of individual development. We cannot reach our identity outside of culture. That is why it is not about changing traditions, norms or values, but about their flexibility and openness to the human being, as well as including them in an unconstrained, individual development.

## **SOCIAL STYGMATISATION IN SCHOOL ENVIROMENT**

### 2.1. Classification of the occurrence

The stigma concept is exceptionally wide. The author of social stigma theory, Ervin Goffman, defines people affected by it *as having a social attribute that is deeply discrediting and are perceived inferior because of it.*

(Goffman, 1963, pg. 3). Stigma is the certain way we interpret the reality and exhibit pejorative marking of emotional nature. It is a product of an social audience representing certain culture and it is not the property of a specific person.

This is why stigma can be hidden by skilful manipulation of an impression, conditions in a situation or directing information regarding it. Stigma can occupy either the central place in person's life, like in cases of being overweighed, regarding skin colour or peripheral like in case of poverty (Czykwin, 2007, page 71)

In literature we find different classifications of stigma. Goffman, referring to its Greek definition, distinguishes following types:

- stigmas connected to having physical deformations or body injuries
- deviations in personal traits, concluded by “social audience” based on certain information from biography including: prison conviction, suicide, premature maternity;
- tribal stigma as a result of belonging to a certain group.

It happens quite often that possessing one visible stigma leads to other prejudices and in the end to social ostracism. Certain stigmas fade away with time, because categories they were built upon become socially accepted. But this process is long-lasting, because stigmas can be rooted very deeply in the culture and are reproduced through interactions, having emotional tinge and often being very irrational.

## **2.2. Labelling and Pygmalion effect**

The label effect refers to a situation, in which children begin to treat one of them in a different way, following information about the child's possessed label. It comes from a previous attitude towards him or her. The Pygmalion effect leads to internalisation of a label. A child, who is nicknamed as an ignoramus, in time ceases to learn, because the information is coded in his mind and determines his attitude towards education. The power of self-fulfilling prophecy was widely studied. One experiment was carried out among primary school students (Miller, Brickman, Bolen, 1975). Some children were told that they are very neat and tidy. After some time it turned out they subsequently performed better in keeping their classes clean and tidy. In remaining classes, where they used other motivation methods, the same wasn't noticed.

## **2.3. Stigmatisation and labelling on school ground**

Without doubt school belongs to the stress generating environments. In each school institution, according to Hart (1995), we find few possible sources of stress, e.g. grades and connected with them pressure to strive for the best of them; next are teachers demanding solid knowledge, but not always being able to pass it on themselves. There are as well many hours of didactic activities, which are anyway supplemented by homework and private classes, not mentioning the instances of ridiculing and stigmatisation.

Stigmatisation and labelling on school grounds can be caused by such a seemingly simple action like grading. Statistically grading is the main source of many unpleasant and destabilising experiences. But it is hard to imagine school without grades. Among the faults and pitfalls of the grading process we can name:

- focusing on personality traits of students and not on the level of his knowledge
- deciding upon the end grades through setting the grade point average
- grading students according to the average level of the whole class

( Pólturzycki, 1996, pg. 301 – 302 ).

Teachers quite often use in their work with students means for negative stimulation:

- punishments and repressions of different kind
- caustic remarks
- name calling
- mocking

( Murdzek, 1993 ).

Labelling of this kind influences not only a student's image and his position in class in a negative way, but most of all reflects on his whole future, especially on his involvement in social life.

Christin Maslach, describing three symptoms of teacher burnout, points out to depersonalisation mechanisms and becoming indifferent in relations with students. To the classic depersonalisation techniques belong most of all:

- labelling
- objective treatment
- stereotyping

(Zams, 2007 ).

Paul Widlake stated, that the process of student's labelling can cause bigger difficulties in learning than any other activity of the teacher (1990). It is necessary to notice the possible damage, which superficial diagnoses drawn from labels only can cause in student's development. For labels:

- define the identity of a child in a selective way and by this they are narrowing the area of his possibilities;
- direct other people to have negative attitude towards a child, which further leads to subjective devaluation of expectations;
- narrow failure sources to only those that lay at the base of difficulties in learning and conforming to enforced standards;

- lead as a rule to over-protectiveness, lower expectations and incompetent helping (Florkiewicz);
- focus on the behavioural problems of individual, not on his positive traits (Kozłowski);
- deforms interpersonal relationships through constant control of situation to minimize probability of occurrence
- lead to social rejection of individual.

Wojciech Poznaniak through his studies came to a conclusion that *“stigmatisation is contradictory to education, because it puts a student in an obligatory situation. He is obliged to yield to expectations dictated by stigmas, which lower his sense of psychical security and raises feelings of insecurity and lack of trust”* (Olech).

The research done by Joanna Wnęk in 2007 showed, that teachers, who repeatedly attribute positive labels and offer incompetent help to certain categories of students (poor, disabled), condemn them to isolation or stigmatism by other students. Young people very quickly notice if someone is favoured. One of the respondents accused one of the teachers of organising costly outings as to unable for the poorer students to participate. Excursions were evidently prepared for the children of influential parents to gain their favour.

It is easy to find similar examples of labelling and stigmatisation in parent-teacher relationships. Students from single-parent families often are stigmatized because of his parent’s absence on class meetings. *Most teachers make the assumption that single parenthood has to be connected with child rearing problems and social pathologies. Female teachers were especially very disapproving and mistrustful towards single fathers. Problems of stigmatisation got deeper because of discussing parental absence in an open class forum* (Wnęk, 2007).

#### **2.4. Labelling in grading system**

Grading is always connected with the valuation of the state of a thing, occurrence, person, and someone’s behaviour. In school the effects of student’s work are subject to grading. This work and its effects belong to a subjective order of things along with its three characteristic dimensions: autonomy, integrity and self-awareness. One of the aspects of self-awareness is human ability to value results of his work. Self-grading done by a student each



time precedes grading done by a teacher and carries much bigger value, since it is the creation of his own spirit, the fruit of his own self-reflection. Moreover it is a very personal thing not allowing for objectification.

It is quite different with grading done by a teacher: all the time and everywhere it is endangered by the objectification of a student, confining him within rigid frames of numbers, points, percentages, tables, lists and ratings. What else is grading if not reducing a child to numbers and points, which often decide about his whole future? We have to deal here with a peculiar kind of metaphysical scandal: the richness of a student and the poorness of grading.

Unintentional poorness of each grade (even in a descriptive cold and schematic assessment) makes assessing to change often into labelling and further on into judging, discouraging and instability.

Labelling makes a student replace his own identity with another one that is completely foreign to him. There are some teachers, who through grading can humiliate and cause a mental break down. And this is not a rare occurrence (Kawecki, 2006).

In the conclusion it has to be stressed that commonly used school assessment systems can *disturb, devastate and even destroy the world of child's experiences, the world of his values and attitudes towards himself as well as other human beings (ibid).*

## **2.5. Ways of escape**

In pedagogical efforts we need to remember, that *once formulated stereotypes are resistant to changes even in the face of new information. Formed in one's mind the same construction is a foundation for creating and attributing labels (ibid.)* Moreover forming one's own groups of references increases chances for stigmatisation and labelling to occur, and the border between these two and violence is very thin. It is easy to notice that the most often used forms of psychic violence are: labelling and stigmatisation of student, which is synonymous with false grading based on his appearance or behaviour by attributing him with the appropriate label, i.e. "clown", "slob", "lazy bum" (Dziedzic).

It is worth to list here, using the literature of the subject, few postulates, which can be a help in reducing the problem in schools. Some of the proposals are:

- replacing the categorising model of education with the integration one;
- holistic understanding of human person;
- individual educational process
- to equip teachers and students in an adequate knowledge of labelling mechanisms;

- ability to criticize in relations to the behaviour and not the personality of a student;
- mastering the ability to connect criticism with positive attention (causing in a hearer cognitive dissonance);
- introducing a multicultural education to make students more sensitive to problems of stigmatisation and discrimination in different ethnic groups (Bartz, 1997, pg. 13);
- using strategy of familiarising and rationalising for verbal equivalents of social categories (Czekwin, 2007, pg 28 ).

## IN CONCLUSION

In the social-pedagogical discussion, in spite of many years gone by, we can still recognise elements of the post communistic behavioural models ( Klus – Stańska, 2008, pg. 7 ). In them the person of student or a pupil was connected with such traits like discipline, ability to submit, enthusiasm, optimism. All of these, as it turned out, were used by A. Makarenko to create a description of *a new man*. In order to reach this sky-high ideal, very often in a conscious way stereotyping methods were used. Unfair classifications were made. Students were made into objects and not subjects of educational activities. Unfortunately we can still hear the echoes of this utopia sounding out “on corridors of Polish schools”. But it can be different. A child has a right to be what he is; a right to be a human person, a right to be himself.

A label is just a tool in the hands of teachers and like each of tools should be of service to a man and not used against him. It can become *a blessing to a child*, or *a force bringing social death* (Wnęk, 2007). Understanding the power behind labelling and stereotyping in the child’s life, we can skilfully modify student’s behaviour and direct it towards life-affirmation and one’s own possibilities.

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## **Mass as a Transformation of the World**

### ***"The Body-World" of Logos***

Hildegard lived in the years 1098 - 1179AD. As for a woman of that era she was an extremely brave character. This is evidenced by her numerous letters, often containing a strong admonition addressed to the then high-ranking officials and notable figures. Her extremely rich knowledge one could call interdisciplinary today. Her works deal with religion, medicine, music, ethics, and cosmology. However, it is her mystical abilities that are today more and more appreciated by thinkers and seekers of the spiritual experience/practice. She has also been a part of a numerous spiritual visions that remained not only in written form. Nevertheless, the most impressive are her miniature illuminations, an attempt to represent the spiritual experience. On her visions, Hildegarda commented: "I told about these things and described them, not due to the feelings of my heart, or some other person, but due to the participation in the secret mysteries of God, that became my participation under heaven."

The person described above is Hildegard of Bingen - a mystic, the founder of the monastery and abbot . In some of her mystical images she presented herself as a visionary. The self-portrait above comes from the lower left corner of the monumental miniatures appearing in "Liber Divinorum Operum / De operatione Dei". It was created within the decade between 1163 and 1173/1174. The gigantic scope of this monumental work is as follows: God and the world. The main formation of God: creation. In it, man. And all this immersed in the mystery of the Triune God.

### ***God***

In Hildegard's vision God is the primary cause, and (only) in the sense a "Father." He constantly begets - as it is later expressed by the most important representative of the German

mystic Meister Eckhart (1260-1328). Hildegard sees this Primary Cause as a head that is superior to everyone's heads, which goes beyond the frame.

Then, the "Son," Logos that was born before all ages, in the inseparable unity with the Father (John 10, 30). He has a fiery head, fiery feet and circular and, therefore, perfect "Body".

Fire: a divine element of love, "ruah", the Divine Spirit that flows through the body and brings it to life.

### ***Creation***

In this fiery "body" Hildegard sees all of creation, in the heavenly blue, with all its macro-cosmic forces, authorities and powers. They all have a lasting impact on the human microcosm, which in a perfect form is the center of creation.

### ***Everything happens in God***

Fundamental composition of Hildegard's vision is a spiritual message of an unpredictable range. The whole of creation, its entire history, its past and future is a reflection of the "space" in the "body" of Logos. It becomes a "body-world" of Logos: mystic Paul, in his speech addressed to the intellectual skeptics of ancient Greece on the Areopagus in Athens, puts it in simple words: "For in him we live and move and have our being, as well as tell some of your poets: "For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring"<sup>198</sup> (Acts 17, 28). Everything is done - as Paul calls it in his often repeated formula - "en Christo"<sup>199</sup>.

**So there is nothing that is not performed in the field work of God.** Everything is permeated by the Spirit of God. God dwells in all things. For this reason, Teresa of Avila (1515-1582)<sup>200</sup>, a representative of medieval mysticism, stresses that God lives in every man. This truth also applies to a declared atheist, because this dwelling of God is not a matter of subjective perception, but a matter of being.

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<sup>198</sup> Quote of the Greek writer Aratus (III BC).

<sup>199</sup> "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death so that like Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection (Romans 6: 3-5). See: L. Schick, *Paulus: in Christum - für Christus. Betrachtungen*, Bamberg, 2008

<sup>200</sup> Teresa von Avila, *Inner Fortress*, Kraków 2006. Work written in 1577.

Therefore, if all that is created is carried out in God, then every being and every life is shaped by its primary cause: the God who is the "dance of love." To God belong relationships, connections and love in its superlative form.

The creation emerges from this "dance of love" and having achieved perfection at the end of time - have been absorbed by itself. It is, therefore, made "of love" (ex amore) (Wis 11 : 24 – 12 : 14)<sup>201</sup> and includes the internal purpose and dynamics purpose striving for perfection in love. This dynamic is supported by a unique action of the Spirit of God. Human destiny is to become a being loving in God's way ("like God"), in God ("full of God").<sup>202</sup> Pope Benedict XVI in his first encyclical "Deus Caritas Est," states: "... so that we too can become capable of true love and be springs of living water in a thirsty world".<sup>203</sup>

### ***The Unity of All Beings***

Hildegard's vision of creation sends another important message to our modern, individualistic way of life: among all beings there is a profound unity. Modern science confirms this inner unity of the world. Great tradition of spirituality in both Judaism (Kabbalah), Asian religions (Buddhism) and Christianity (Francis of Assisi) says about one and only "chain of being"<sup>204</sup> This ontic unity also applies to human beings. In all the differences and over all the differences there is one humanity: we all have the same DNA, and we have the capability to understand each other. In order to illustrate this fact, the concept of "human nature" is used by academic philosophy. From the standpoint of genetics, every man carries a wealth of the

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<sup>201</sup> "But thou hast mercy upon all, because thou canst do all things, and overlookest the sins of men for the sake of repentance. For thou lovest all things that are, and hatest none of the things which thou hast made: for thou didst not appoint, or make anything hating it. And how could any thing endure, if thou wouldst not? or be preserved, if not called by thee. But thou sparest all: because they are thine, O Lord, who lovest souls. O how good and sweet is thy spirit, O Lord, in all things!" (Wis. 11 : 24 – 12 : 1).

<sup>202</sup> The Greek Fathers of the Church speak of deification (Theosis) of man. "God became man so that man is deified," says Athanasius. In his deification is the goal of the Incarnation of God in Christ. Therefore it is the purpose and meaning of human existence. For this set up is all of creation. Fundamental of deification is, according to Athanasius, the Incarnation ... See: K.Ch. Felmy, *Die Theologie der Gegenwart orthodoxe. Eine Einführung*, Darmstadt, 1990, p. 142nd - In Christ, has been achieved goal of human existence - participation in God, union with God, deification. "Son of God became the Son of Man, to son of man, became the son of God", says St. Irenaeus, the martyr of Lyons. [PG 7.873]. Even more succinctly expresses the importance of this theorem St. Athanasius: "God became man to we are divinized." [PG 25, 192B]. Maximus the Confessor said: "A lasting and true foundation of our hope for the deification of human nature is the incarnation of God. Man is deified in the measure in which God became man. It is clear: He who made man without sin, may also (human) nature deificate, without transforming it into a deity. In the same measure in which He elevated the man, he humbled himself in that because of the man. "Maximus calls God "the One who wants liberation of man and longs for his divinization". [PG 91, 1209B]. Guided by boundless love to the man Christ climbed to Calvary and suffered death on the Cross, which reconciled and re-united man with God. Hilarion Alfejev, *Geheimnis des Glaubens. Einführung in die orthodoxe dogmatische Theologie*, Freiburg 2003, p. 109 - Divinization of man, indeed the entire cosmos is the goal of all creation: op. cit., p.10.

<sup>203</sup> Benedikt XVI, *Deus Caritas Est*. The encyclical, no. 42.

whole development of life starting from inanimate matter ("ontogeny" contains all the "phylogeny").<sup>205</sup> The deep connection between all beings in one creature, where man is included, present itself not only at the genetic level. The world develops interdependently, growing at the same time more and more in an incremental way. This applies both to the level

of matter and the cultural evolution<sup>206</sup> Internet connects more and more people on the plane of communication. Moreover, also in terms of economic, the world develops interdependently: every crisis in one particular part of the world becomes a global crisis. "The global march" of migration induces cultures and thus religion to interchange between each other. The interchange is often full of conflicts. The question: *Are peace and justice possible to achieve?* has become an insurmountable political problem.

How heavily the life itself, and thus the human race, rely on communication and how it is dependent on communication, can be confirmed by the latest brain research. Not only apes<sup>207</sup>, but also people possess mirror neuron<sup>208</sup> in brain that allow for communication and imitation (mimesis). Disruption or even damage to the communication and resonance can lead to mental illness or psychiatric disorder, in extreme cases even to death<sup>209</sup>.

### ***Everything Towards Him is Created***

Everything is done in God. There is a deep unity of being. These are the two premises of Hildegard's cognitive vision concerning God and the world. The third one that is to be mentioned is: **Creation has a purpose, for which it aims continually**<sup>210</sup>. Mystic Teilhard de Chardin, in consonance with the modern natural sciences, and developed theory of evolution,

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<sup>204</sup> A. Lovejoy, *The great chain of being: a study of the history of ideas*, Warsaw 1999, (First edition: Cambridge 1936).

<sup>205</sup> S.J. Gould, *Ontogeny and Phylogeny*, Cambridge, 1977.

<sup>206</sup> Modern science recognized that all elements in the universe, from the most simple to the most developed, contain a momentum directed towards unity. This inner element of the human wealth of love permeates the whole cosmos. The above statement is a theological premise for the fact that the universe owes himself to God which in itself is love so uniting the meeting, "relatio infinita". So everything what is created manifest themselves in the same essence as the "relatio", though, including "finita". See: C. Bresch, *Evolution - Kluft zwischen Brücke und Glauben und Wissen*, Freiburg 1981.

<sup>207</sup> G. Rizzolatti and C. Sinigaglia, *Empathie Spiegelneurone und Die Basis des Biologische Mitgeföhls*, Frankfurt aM, 2008.

<sup>208</sup> J. Bauer, *Warum their fühle, was du fühlst: intuitive Kommunikation und das Geheimnis der Spiegelneurone*, Hamburg, 2005.

<sup>209</sup> Ibid. p. 105-116. See: Idem, *Das Gedächtnis des Körpers. He knows Beziehungen Lebensstile und unsere Gene Steuern*, Munich, 2009.

calls this ultimate unity of "explored" world - the Omega Point. In his mystical language he names it "cosmic Christ". Infinite variety of "developing world", and at the same time lasting diversification<sup>211</sup>, are united in the "Christ".

This vision is not new to the biblical story of the universe. The letter to the school community in Colossae, coming most probably from the Paul's school, dated about 60 BC, includes the Christological hymn, which was used in early Christian liturgy, and which has been slightly reworded for the purpose of kerygma (Col. 1 : 12-20).<sup>212</sup>

"Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son. In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.

Who is the image of the invisible God,  
the firstborn of every creature,  
For by him were all things created,  
that are in heaven, and that are in earth,  
visible and invisible,  
whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers.  
All things were created by him, and for him  
And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.  
And he is the head of the body, the church.  
Who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead;  
that in all things he might have the preeminence.  
For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell;  
And, having made peace through the blood of his cross"(Col 1 : 12-20)

Christ, the resemblance of the invisible God, is hailed as the one through whom all things are

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<sup>210</sup> For many years professor of genetics in Freiburg, Carsten Bresch defines it in the face of the case and the freedom which are present in evolution, "a system of compulsion." It consists in the fact that what is developing into an unpredictable diversity simultaneously - the higher is degree - is unified again.

<sup>211</sup> "On the contrary, our God contributes to the diversity of creatures, which unites around itself as the center, to infinity. The highest degree of complete surrender to elect him find fulfillment in their personal excellence. Thus Christianity itself simultaneously with the laws of reason saves significant efforts throughout the mysticism: to unite - that is, become the other, remaining on him ". See: Teilhard de Chardin, *Der göttliche Bereich. Ein Entwurf inneren des Lebens*, Olten 1962 (Le milieu divin, Paris 1957), p. 131n.

<sup>212</sup> R. Hoppe, *Epheserbrief, Kolosserbrief*, Stuttgart 1996.

not only created, but also "to him." According to mystic Teilharda He is the Omega Point that is a "regular" goal that, from the very beginning, is a central of evolution. This vision, in the context of the modern theory of evolution, is also characteristic for Hugh Miller, catholic geneticist from Scotland. In 1854 he wrote: "My question is what is the essence of earth's history or the history of creation? The decisive factor in both cases is progress. In both we can find the transition from inanimate to simple forms and then to higher forms of life. But is this process completed? It is not. God always provides a higher degree coming after the lower one. Now the poor man' is being prepared by God for the transition to a higher status. The work on the seventh day is salvation. Eventually, the creation and the Creator will unite in one being at one point. The transition from inanimate matter to man was a constant purpose of God. From the very beginning up to the point of union. The true God and the true man. Both can recognize the Lord of the whole future who is praiseworthy".<sup>214</sup>

In this text there is Teilhard de Chardin's future vision to be noticed. At the same time, Christ is not a randomness to him, He is not some kind of abstract cosmic principle, but the Crucified and Rised from Death:

"The world to create, to improve and to lead to its redemption, as we read in Paul and John, for God is uniting the world in organic union with itself. How can it be united? In this way, that part of his nature is being immersed in the things, that He makes himself an "element". Then, by virtue of the point of support which is found in the heart of the matter, He takes over the directing and script of what we call evolution today. Being a rule of universal source of life, Christ took His place by the fact that He arose as a man among men. From this moment He subordinates, purifies, maintains and stimulates the overall development of consciousness, in which He is included. Through the permanent operation of alternate communion and sublimation He gathers all the spiritual power of a land around Himself. When all is by him collected and transformed, his last act will be to return to the divine sheepfold, which he never left. With what He got, He will return to Himself. And then, says St. Paul, only God will be

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<sup>213</sup> About such a cosmic Christ mentioned not only Teilhard. Excellence to create an image of hope is found in both the Dominican theologian Matthew Fox, as well as lectures by Henri Boulada. Pope Benedict XVI in a homily in the Aosta Valley, during the summer 24/07/2009 leave stated that he is thinking the rehabilitation of Teilhard de Chardin (L'Osservatore Romano from 26/07/2009 onwards).

<sup>214</sup> Quotation from: C. Bresch, *Evolution - Kluft zwischen Brücke und Wissen und Glauben*, Freiburg 1981 (lecture at Catholic University. Archived as a sound document Fri: "Rede des Monats Dezember 2008" in the library of the University of Freiburg.



there, "all in all." Truly, a higher form of "pantheism"<sup>215</sup> – with no poisoned process of davotail and destruction.<sup>216</sup> Waiting for perfect unity in which each element, which has been immersed in it, will reach its fullness together with the entire cosmos".<sup>217</sup>

The whole story, seen through the eyes of believers, is the process of maturation, driven towards the complete union with God<sup>218</sup>, towards inclusion in "dance of love" in God, or as the Greek Fathers of the Church (eg Athanasius) used to call it: towards "theosis"<sup>219</sup>, towards " the birth of God ":

“First of all, it shall mean that we should be the Father, secondly, we should be, 'mercy ', since the name of the Father is: to beget, He begets His likeness in me ... Heavenly Father begets his likeness in me and from this the parity / equality comes love, that is the Holy Spirit. The nature of God is that he shares Himself with each good soul, and the nature of the soul is that it takes God; it may be said so with respect to something noble, to which the soul may indicate. So the Father is never at rest, he seeks (even more), always strives to ensure that His Son begets in me. God ... therefore, became man, so you could beget as His only begotten Son, not diminish. "(Meister Eckehart).<sup>220</sup>

## Original Sin

The bright vision of history and the beginning has a long tradition in Christianity. However, confronted with the events and facts of the history, it seems to be deceptive and naive. Human experience also has a dark side: history of humanity is a unique document of this rather depressing experience. Since at any time, violence (murder), lust (property), leave marks in the course of history.

This dynamic is not new to the Christian perspective on history. In the Western Christian

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<sup>215</sup> „en pasipantatheos”.

<sup>216</sup> "Mystical Christ, Christ the Lord of All Saint Paul, may have relevance and importance in our eyes only as an extension of Christ born of Mary, who died on the cross." P. Teilhard de Chardin, *Der göttliche Bereich. Ein Entwurf inneren des Lebens*, Olten 1962 (Le Milieu divin, Paris 1957), p. 133.

<sup>217</sup> P. Teilhard de Chardin, *Der Mensch im Kosmos (Le phénomène humain)*, München 1959, p. 289.

<sup>218</sup> Philosophically it is unthinkable, as Uncreated (God) and created (creation) could become one. The key to understanding this is found, according to Jesuit Knauer, in the Incarnation. See: P. Knauer, *Christus "in" den Religionen: Interiorismus*, FZPhTh 51 (2004), p. 237-252.

<sup>219</sup> In Orthodox theology in relation to the Greek Fathers of the Church and in the ancient liturgy of soteriology in the center is the concept of "deification" (theosis). It occurs where the circle of Western theology is a term having at its core the concept of justification. *Von Gott angenommen - in Christus verwandelt. Die Rechtfertigungslehre them multilateralen ökumenischen Dialog. ACCESS zur Studie des Rechtfertigungslehre*, ed. U. Swarat, J. Oeldemann and D. Heller on behalf of the German Commission for Ecumenical Studies (ACCESS). Addendum to "Ökumenischen Rundschau," No. 78, Frankfurt 2006, p. 33f.

tradition, it is even a dominant point of view. It is also followed by Augustine, Anselm and Luther. Tradition tends to call it this stigma of mankind history, "*the original sin*". Highly typical for it are division and alienation: here the loss of the creation unity with the Creator and unity within creation. It means that "The dynamics of original sin" is antithetical to what is the inner purpose and use of creation (the original salvation) - unification.

### ***The Loss of Protective Unity***

Many tried to characterize and explain the phenomenon of losing "unity" due to the destructive violence, greed and falsehood. Two of these explanations, which complement each other - on the basis of cultural anthropology and depth psychology - deserve special attention:

According to René Girard, cultural anthropologist, from open human heart longing desire comes the dark lust, greed, which is mimetically other people- oriented.<sup>221</sup> Through the way of imitation it leads to the continuous escalation of rivalry to find expression in many forms of violence. People can live with this destructive form due to the fact that in times of particularly high risk it indicates the scapegoat. The scapegoat is "scared away into the wilderness" to continue the rival style of life after the ritual of purification.<sup>222</sup>

Monika Renz<sup>223</sup>, depth psychologist and theologian, prefers an individual explanation. In the prenatal period man happens to experience profound unity with the mother - including the existence? Through the trauma of the birth a newborn person experiences the threatening "loss of unity" with the mother.<sup>224</sup> What happens is that instead of treating the loss of unity with a radical confidence in God who guarantee protection, man creates the strategies of defense mechanisms: through violence they dominate life-threatening rivals, through

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<sup>220</sup> Meister Eckhart, *Deutsche Predigten und Traktate*, ed. and translation Josef Quint, München 1995, p. 268.

<sup>221</sup> "When the primary needs are satisfied - sometimes even before - then the man is animated by an intense desire, but does not know exactly what he desire: lust of existence - the existence of which, according to his subjective feelings, have someone else. The entity expects that other, that tells him what to desire that existence is reached. [...] This model shows to an entity worthy object of desire is not by words but in his own desire. [...] desire is essentially mimetic, it is dependent on the model the desire, he chooses the same object as a model". R. Girard, *Das Heilige und die Gewalt*, (originally: *La violence et le Sacre*, 1972) . Tranlation from French Elisabeth Mainberger of French-Ruh, Frankfurt 1992, pp. 215.

<sup>222</sup> R. Girard, *Ich sah den Satan vom Himmel fallen wie einen Blitz*, München 2002.

<sup>223</sup> M. Renz, *Erlösung aus Prägung. Botschaft und Leben Jesu als Überwindung der menschlichen Angst-, Begehrens- und Machtstruktur*, Paderborn 2008.

<sup>224</sup> Also the parable of the "lost Son" is by some explained in the context of depth psychology. Every man must leave safe "father's house" to find your way through life (Lu. 15).

accumulated wealth they try to secure their existence, ( self) deception helps to see the wrong path as the right thing. In this way, a "senseless, inherited from their ancestors, bad behavior" is developed (1 Peter 1: 18).

One of the strategy of the defense mechanisms is also attracting like-minded people and excluding others. Unsustainable self identity (egoism) is thereby replaced by the identity of the group. This, however, rules out, rather than unite. On top of that, it is a complete contrary to the internal dynamics of the unity and love.

### ***Anxiety is a Key***

The above explanation of the dark side of humanity, formulated in the context of cultural anthropology and psychology, they seem to bring the dark side of history to a common source: fear. Following the concept of trauma of birth, Monika Renz determines it as Primeval Fear. Formulating this theory, she is placed in a long line of thinkers for whom fear is the key to the dark side of humanity (Soren Kierkegaard, Eugen Drewermann, Eugen Biser).<sup>225</sup> In result, fear will not let people be as they were made through the love of God: loving. Instead of a happy and joyful human life, there is human lost and failure. The younger son in the parable of Jesus, leaving his father's house (which is the archetype of every human being), suffers defeat in love and work: living among prostitutes and hired himself as a slave, the adventure of his life ends with the pigs, which for every Jew is a horror (Lu. 15).

Born out of fear and taken over by the history of mankind senseless way of life permanently interferes the concept of growing up to fill / to the full, which is sustained by the power of God's Spirit . "Original sin" hinders the development of "original salvation." It seems that creation, together with humanity, goes its own way, far from unity with God. Anxiety and its consequences delayed God's purposes for creation.

### ***Incarnation***

God does not agree to the yaw of creation and humanity. "If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself" (2 Timothy 2: 13). In spite of the randomness of evolution and the human freedom (which is often used in negative sense), He remains "systematically"

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<sup>225</sup> Expand: E. Drewermann, *Strukturen des Bösen. Die jahwistische Urgeschichte in psychoanalytischer Sicht*, München 1977, t. 1–2. *Drewermann rests on suitable works of S. Kierkegaard, Der Begriff Angst*, Hamburg 1984. Additionally: *Die Angst des modernen Menschen*, Zürich 1977. – A. Künzli, *Die Angst des modernen Menschen. Soeren Kierkegaards Angstexistenz als Spiegel der geistigen Krise unserer Zeit*, Zürich 1947. Idem: *Die Angst als abendländische Krankheit. Dargestellt am Leben und Denken Soeren Kierkegaards*, Zürich 1948.

faithful. God will "react" to the separation caused by sin, but not by a moral imperative, but by healing being in its mortally wounded roots.

He comes as a goal the fulfillment by the fact that at the "end times" (1 Cor 10 : 11, LG 48) He starts to fill creation, through the "mixing" in the story and becoming a man. The Incarnation of Logos is the beginning of perfection of creation. God began the pursuit of purpose, which is irreversible. The grand unification of God and his creation has began, the final wedding feast.

Through the incarnation of Logos in Jesus, God takes the form of "human nature". This happens with all its (historically occurring) elements, with all its dark sides, including the torture and the death.<sup>226</sup> Christ identifies Himself with each man to the level where it becomes a sacrifice for sins (His own and others') and thus the dark history of separation, to make it an even deeper way to unite with God.<sup>227</sup>

Being one with God, Jesus, as a man, has never lost a radical trust in his Father. It empowers him, in his 33-year journey of life, to become a fully loving and thus to reveal the essence of God.<sup>228</sup>

The beginning of complete perfection of creation culminates in the resurrection of Jesus. That is when, Jesus was freed from the constraints on space-time continuum and when He was established Christ: "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made the same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2 : 36).

That makes him the "new Adam", the "by the will of God" (Col. 1), Son of man - the concept of the Book of Daniel (7, 1-28), which Jesus often refers to himself, he became the Arche-

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<sup>226</sup> Jesus himself emphasizes the depth of this identification by their actions and words at the Last Supper: As the food and drink are completely assimilated by eating and drinking by their own body. The sacrifice of Christ, as demonstrated in the Eucharistic signs, must be understood as the bodily union of those for whom he died. [...] In His love without violence, He not only came down to their dark world as has been noted but also wanted to rescue them, to stand with them one body. "R. Schwager, *Jesus Heilsdrama them. Entwurf einer biblischen Erlösungslehre*, Innsbruck / Vienna 21 996, p. 217.

<sup>227</sup> Ibidem: p. 220.

<sup>228</sup> In this love which ultimately carried out as a love of enemies it's less of a moral issue and more about theology. Raymund Schwager writes about it: "As Christ works in complete trust in God, His behavior does not directly provide a greater or lesser moral ideal; it only a question of God. The decision of Jesus to give Himself into the hands of his enemies becomes so great theological significance. "R. Schwager, *Jesus Heilsdrama them. Entwurf einer biblischen Erlösungslehre*, op. cit., p 126.

and proto-type of man . Because of the deep communication of all human beings and one humanity ("human nature"), what happened in Him, relates to all of us. With this nature Jesus identifies Himself voluntarily, devotes His pro-existence to it: "Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life" (Rom. 5 : 18).

The Resurrection of Jesus and His transformation in Christ concerns everybody. Death and futility are no longer present in the heart of the world, but there is God and life to be found (Karl Rahner)<sup>229</sup> Jesus matures into infinite present in history as a hidden Christ: He is now the beginning of a perfect "body-world God." And when someone at the end of the life's journey through torment and death moves into direction of transformation of the resurrection,"saved" body-world broadens. Also Christ expands. Then the deeper cosmic dimension is being reached. As a result all the creation will be saved, complete love will be achieved. The creation will be included into the "dance of love" in God. That will be followed by the Second Coming of Christ, and with it the end of the current world will come. It will be replaced by the new heaven and new earth because: "And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all" (1 Cor 15: 28) [8, 6, Rom 11 : 36].

### ***Hidden and Visible Action of the Holy Spirit***

The aforementioned process of growing to the state of complete love is assisted by the Spirit of God. Therefore, where people are capable of true love are present, where the deep and real

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<sup>229</sup> "Earth, our great mother, is very worried. She moans in pain over insignificance. The merriest feast holidays are the beginning of the feast of dead and when you hear the laughter celebrating, she trembles if he does not instantly turn into a cry. She begets children who die that are too weak to live forever and have too much spirit to resign unpretentiously from eternal joy, because they, unlike animals of this land, they see the end before he will come through this waking experience the end is not spared the suffering ... He died. But - he died does not mean (as we often guided by the very un-Christian myopia), that he died his spirit and his soul, his eternal deity vessel, pulled himself to the world and earth, refuge in the distant Kingdom of God on the other side of the world because the body that it combines with the earth was defeated by the death, because killing the earth showed that the child of eternal light can not find a home in the dark. We say that He died and add immediately: he entered the kingdom of death and rose again, and so was quite different from this earthly sense. Jesus Himself said that He will be in the bosom of the earth (Mat 12 : 40), right there in the heart of all earthly things, where everything is connected and is unity and where the center of this unity are death and transience. There He is permeated with death; He helped beat to death, so immersed in the interior of the world, went down to the mother and the full unity of the world. His divine life was forever sacrificed. Since he died, the more belongs to the earth. The death has become the heart of the earthly world, God's heart in the heart of the world, where He left the categories of space and time, where it became the root of the omnipotence of God ... He has already begun to transform the world. He took the world for eternity". See: K. Rahner, *Das kleine Kirchenjahr*, Freiburg, 1948, p. 84-92).

unification, which is not based on exclusion of others, becomes true<sup>230</sup>, there is the overwhelming power of the Spirit of God, who renews the face of the earth. Often, for long periods of history in many cultures (as in cultures for which atheisation is characteristic, the Czech Republic, DDR, Estonia), the Spirit of God works "secretly", as the inner dynamics of existence, which induces to unity and love. However, its action is palpably sensed in people who truly love, "to them the Spirit of Truth has been given in the way that is secret to us" (Hans Urs von Balthasar).<sup>231</sup>

The Spirit of God that sets us free from fear and at the same time releases love, works in all creation (he who creates, renews the face of the earth, "they are created: and thou renewest the face of the earth" (Psalm 104, 30) and in all people (we all are a temple of the Spirit)<sup>232</sup> including Buddhists, atheists, spiritual wanderers ...

## **Church**

Only on such a broad background of the history of God and the world, from its beginning with God until after its mature growing into the cosmic Christ, it is possible to sense the role of the Church and the meaning of the Eucharist as "the transformation of the world." Both have their place in the great history of God and His world. "The Church is right in Christ," states the Second Vatican Council, "like a sacrament, a sign and instrument of intimate union with God and unity of all mankind" (LG 1).

## **Preaching**

The first mission of the Church is to expose what has been done by the Spirit of God, especially the things that are not easily noticeable. This makes it the "light of the world" (Mt 5, 14). The Church indicates things that are done by God in all creation through His Spirit. The Church carries out this task in many ways: through how it functions as a community of love (Koinonia, Diakonia), through what it preaches in a prophetic and an evident way (Martyria),

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<sup>230</sup> See refer to the two most important hypotheses of theology dramatic: "The deep, true and lasting peace between people which is not built at the expense of others, no polarity on enemies, it is very difficult to achieve beyond human strength. But as a reality it is a small sign that God (Holy Spirit) is present in the actions of people. This logic is not only a biblical message, but also makes numerous ecclesial legible "signs of the time" in the history of mankind. R. Schwager and J. Niewiadomski, *Religion erzeugt Gewalt - Einspruch! Innsbrucker Forschungsprojekt, Religion - Gewalt - Kommunikation - Weltordnung*, (BMT 15) Munster 2003, p. 64.

<sup>231</sup> H.U. von Balthasar, *Spiritus Creator*, Einsiedeln 1967, p. 159.

<sup>232</sup> As a community: "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" (1 Cor 3 : 16), as individuals: "You not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which you have of God, and you are not your own?" (1 Cor 6 : 19).

and also through what we celebrate in our liturgies (Leitourgia). These three forms are interconnected. That challenges Christians: they ought to become pioneers in making the world a better place and they ought to be guides for the pilgrims on their way to Completeness: "Until we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunningcraftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive. But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ" (Eph 4 : 13,15).

### ***Earth of Healing***

The Church is not only the "light of the world" but also "the salt of the earth" (Mt 5, 13). |Salt heals / cures. In this way the Church helps to heal<sup>233</sup> the creation. It supports the transformation of the world and people in the direction of perfect form: the cosmic Christ. The Church accomplish this by the fact that it releases healing powers thanks to what it is itself and through its action. Imitating the Savior, it becomes the same - "healing earth".<sup>234</sup>

Contemporary neuroscience seems to confirm such a vision of the Church. "Gerald Hüther<sup>235</sup> a brain researcher suggests that learning, possessing new skills (formation of new connections in the brain from the point of view of brain physiology) is most likely to happen when people do something with passion, when they are emotionally involved in the job, when they love - thinking, feeling and action are integrated. New patterns of behavior and abilities are not absorbed when people work under time pressure or when they are forced to do the job. They are absorbed when people are welcome and when they have a chance to discover the joy of improving their potential. The necessity of such a development he called the transition from

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<sup>233</sup> The fact that Christianity is less about morality and more about healing, is being increasingly acknowledged by contemporary theology: the pioneers in this subject were Eugen Drewermann and Eugen Biser.

Ibidem: E. Drewermann, *Wort des Heils - Wort der Heilung. Von der befreienden Kraft des Glaubens. Gespräche und Interviews*, ed. Bernd Marz, Düsseldorf 1989 (31990 ). Idem: *Ein Mensch braucht mehr als nur Moral*, Düsseldorf 2001. Idem: *Heilende Religion. Überwindung der Angst*, Freiburg 2006. E. Biser, *Theologie als Therapie: zur Wiedergewinnung einer verlorenen Dimension*, Heidelberg 1985. Idem: *Die glaubensgeschichtliche Wende: eine theologische Positionsbestimmung*, Graz 1987. Idem: *Die Heilkraft des Glaubens. Entwurf einer therapeutischen Theologie*, Concilium (D) 34 (1998), p. 534–544. Representative of practical theology with elements of pastoral psychology is I. Baumgartner, *Pastoralpsychologie. Einführung in die Praxis heilender Seelsorge*, Düsseldorf 1990; idem (ed.) *Handbuch der Pastoralpsychologie*, Regensburg 1990.

<sup>234</sup> M. Beranek, *Gemeinde als Heil-Land. Erfahrungen heilsamer Gemeindepraxis im Rahmen der Studie ‚Gemeinde als Heil-Land‘ und theologisch-spirituelle Perspektiven*, Dissertation, Wien 2002.

the society which robs human resources to the society that sustains developing potential. We need a society / community in which the individual man will be seen from the perspective of his inherent abilities, a society in which each human being can experience not only ties and roots, but also freedom and opportunities. Hüther calls this attitude Supportive Leadership, although it can be simply expressed as the culture of love".<sup>236</sup>

### ***The Eucharist: Constant Change of the World***

The Eucharist is, and always will be, the most internal and compact happening in Church.<sup>237</sup> It is the source and an apex of Christian life and the Church (Vatican II).<sup>238</sup>

### ***Becoming the "Body of Christ"***

The Eucharist is not "an individual experience of a soul" (though it is very touching for each person): when we incorporate "Body of Christ," into ourselves, we are "incarnated" into perfect resurrected body of Christ. In this way the Church is spreading and growing in its depth as a "body of Christ." Together with it, the Church becomes the part of creation in the Spirit of God (in the epiclesis): matter and human beings transformed into their perfect form: "Christ" grow in us and transforming us more and more overwhelmed us, and in this way He becomes more widespread, more "cosmic".

Therefore, what takes place in every celebration of the Eucharist is not only the transformation of our hearts and our our being in the one-world body of Christ. This transformation is a part of the world transformation. We are all inextricably united, therefore, my transformation is not only a transformation of ecclesial community. In this transformation takes place "to change of the world". Creation progresses one step further towards its fullness.

### ***Body "given"***

When we, as individuals, as a community, as a part of the same world, are changed in "Body of Christ", then we share in His destiny: our life's journey becomes similar to His journey: it runs through the suffering and death, it ends up in the joy of resurrection.

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<sup>235</sup> Ibidem: Hüther 2009, FOKUS 07.11.2009.

<sup>236</sup> P. Steinmair-Pösel, *Kirche als therapeutische Gemeinschaft. Paper proposal for the COV&R 2010 Conference on Transforming Violence: Cult, Culture, and Acculturation*, Notre Dame 2010.

<sup>237</sup> "The Holy Eucharist contains the Church's spiritual well-being in all its abundance" [See: Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theol.* III, q. 65, a. 3, ad 1, q. 79, a. 1 cu. example 1] (PO 5).



Being like Him also means to become a "body given". The sacrifice means here the highest form of love: "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (Jn 15 : 13).

No one else but Pope Benedict XVI made an effort to explain to the young people the role of celebrating the Eucharist in the life of the world during the World Youth Day in Cologne: "The first fundamental transformation [in the death of Jesus on the cross into the resurrection] violence into love, death into life, brings other changes. The bread and wine become His Body and His Blood.

At this point, however, this transformation can not stop, what's more -that is when it actually needs to start. Body and Blood of Christ have been given to us so that we ourselves could be transformed. We are to become the Body of Christ, be relatives with Him. We all eat the same bread. This means that we ourselves become one ...

He is in us, and we are in Him. His dynamic enters into us and then then to others to finally spread over the whole world, so that His love could become the dominant measurement of the world "(Benedict XVI, World Youth Day, Cologne 2005).

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<sup>238</sup> "The Eucharist appears as the Source and the highest summit of all evangelization" (PO 5). "Participation in the Eucharistic Sacrifice, the source and summit of all Christian life, you make sacrifice God divine and with it themselves" (LG 11).

## **Jacob's warnings against the sin**

The Jacob's letter has a pragmatic character. It contains many different moral instructions. Author gladly presents examples which illustrate individual instructions and personification. He's convincing, encouraging, threatening or reprimanding. Author's main goal is to convince Christians to stay in accepted „Word of truth” (Jk 1,18). Therefore, Jacob discusses Christian attitude toward different experiences and temptations (as above: 2-18). He pays attention to necessity to fulfil good acts followed from faith (1,19-2,26), specially related to neighbour's love and acts against quarrelsomeness, greed, attachment to the world and specially against indigents oppression (chapter: 3-5). It's recommended to pay attention to his warnings related to sin and their reasoning showing timeless reality.

### **1. Temptation**

Temptation is a dangerous state of human being's soul, who falls into weakness and instability which takes effect into moral fall. It means, a danger to return to the evil's area, from which a human being was released by Jesus Christ. Christians being in enemy's environment, or among persecutions, were exposed to temptation to return to the old, pagan way of life. This situation was specially real to direct recipients of Jacob's Letter<sup>239</sup>. Therefore, the author encourages: „Blessed a Man, who perseveres in temptation, because when subjected in trial, he receives the wreath of life, promised by Lord for those who love Him” (Jk 1,12).

To get out of the state of temptation you have to fight and conquer. The author compares the way of fight to sports games where the Winner normally received laurel wreath. It was a reason to be proud for the rest of his life. A Christian who manages to persist in much more difficult test, additionally will receive more precious laurel wreath, which is glory and integrity for eternal life. (por. 1 Kor 9,25; 2 Tm 4,8; Ap 2,10). Persistent attitude toward

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<sup>239</sup> Por. K. Romaniuk, A. Jankowski, L. Stachowiak, Komentarz Praktyczny do Nowego Testamentu, t. 2, Poznań-Kraków 1999, s. 482.

temptation is an essential sign of people loving God. Such attitude allows to receive the eternal prize<sup>240</sup>.

Then, Jacob writes about internal temptations: „Who receives temptation, let not say God tempts him. God neither is subjected to temptation of evil, nor tempts anyone. It is our own desire which tempts everyone. As a continuation, when the desire is born, it gives sin, and as a sin grows up, brings death” (Jk 1,13-15). He points at the beginning of a sin and warn against attributing temptation to God (w. 13a). What is more, he points the reasons why we shouldn't act this way. One of the reasons is the holiness of God (w. 13b) and the other is a human lust/desire (w. 14 n).

The essential issue is a source of temptations and experiences in human being's life. Jacob mentions wrong opinion as if God were the source of temptations. Such opinion is not only wrong, but also blasphemous. This wrong idea could appear with reference to greek idols, who instigated people according to Hellenistic beliefs. We clearly see here an influence of fatalistic tendencies. Other source of those wrong opinions about alleged temptation by God could be lack of distinction between temptation and experience. God do not tempt anyone, but sometimes experience people to verify their faithfulness (por. np. Rdz 22,1; Hbr 11,17). In Old Testament we can find some examples of such test, for example a test of Abraham's loyalty (Rdz 22,1-9) and his chosen nation/people (Wj 15,25 n; 16,4; 20,20; Pwt 8,2; Sdz 2,22), but it's a test of loyalty, not a temptation as Jacob describes it. This loyalty test is a proof of God's love and his saving will. Main goal is always the good of human being<sup>241</sup>.

Therefore, God doesn't tempt anyone. Jacob shows not only that God is not subordinated to temptations of evil, but he doesn't even send any temptations to people (Jk 1,13b). God is not subordinated to evil because he is the only good. Therefore, a man can not test God in the right meaning. The holiness of God cannot be compared with evil area, always close to temptation<sup>242</sup>. In Holy Bible we can find mentions about „temptation of God”. However, it means human's sinful doubts about His saving will or eternal power with testing it (por. Wj 17,1-7; Iz 7,12; Ps 78,17 n; 95,8 n). So it's rather a form of lack of faith and disobedience toward God (1 Kor 10,9; Dz 5,9; 15,10).

This wrong idea, described by the author, is related with moral responsibility for potential fall of human being, which God himself would be partially burdened. People, who attribute

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<sup>240</sup> Por tamże; F. Gryglewicz, *Listy katolickie. Wstęp – Przekład z oryginału – Komentarz*, Poznań 1959, s. 60 nn; E. Szymanek, *Wykład Pisma Świętego Nowego Testamentu*, Poznań 1990, s. 451; J. Kozyra, *List świętego Jakuba. Wstęp – Przekład z oryginału – Komentarz*, Częstochowa 2011, s. 88 nn.

<sup>241</sup> Por. K. Romaniuk, A. Jankowski, L. Stachowiak, *Komentarz Praktyczny do Nowego Testamentu*, t. 2, s. 482.

temptation to God, want to give him the responsibility for committed sins. While Jacob describes that „it is our own lust which test everyone for any temptation” (Jk 1,14). Therefore, he shows the source of temptation in own human being’s lust, which is the cause of a sin. Although he shows more direct and internal factor, it is beyond all doubts, he presents the co-operation between the Devil, as a personification of evil, and human’s lust, as a result of Devil’s acting inside of a man (por. 1 Kor 7,5). Mentioned lust comes from the body, the most prone/ susceptible human’s part/side to fall<sup>243</sup>.

Jacob emphasizes that responsibility for committed sin lies inside of every man (por. Syr 15,11-20). Since lust causes sin (Jk 1,15). Although in Greek lust means both desire of Good and Wrong, in biblical language it is always desire of Wrong. Therefore, it is bad quality/attribute of a man. The author writing that lust „puts to temptation” (w. 14b) shows that it wants to deceive a man. He emphasizes the wrong of lust trough its personification. A man overpowered by his own lust bear responsibility for a sin<sup>244</sup>.

Line 15 presents the consequences of lust’s activity: „While acting, brings sin and when sin matures, it brings death”. That lust after luring a man overpowers him and „brings sin” (w. 15b). Lust is clearly and concrete personified. Expression: „while acting” (w. 15a) seems to mean the agreement for what the temptation tempts<sup>245</sup>. It is worthwhile, that the author uses the vocabulary which means activity of immoral woman. She lures a man and when he succumbs to her, it is followed by conception and then procreation. According to this description, sin is a fruit of a man’s lust, which could not show the moral resistance<sup>246</sup>.

In analysed fragment not only lust, but also a sin is personified. The author presents sin as a child of lust: „lust when acting, brings sin” (Jk 1,15ab). But when sin grows and becomes mature, then himself brings death (w. 15c), which is the opposition of life, to what the author refers to in line/verse 12. We can see here similarity of descriptions to Rz 5,12; 6,23; 7,13. However Paul describes death as a external power, which attacks human being. Instead, according to Jacob, death is the essence/point of a sin, which comes from a Man and is his possession. Sin causes closure of a man to adopt the God’s life<sup>247</sup>.

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<sup>242</sup> Por. F. Gryglewicz, *Listy katolickie. Wstęp...*, s. 62 n; E. Szymanek, *Wykład Pisma Świętego Nowego Testamentu*, s. 451; J. Kozyra, *List świętego Jakuba. Wstęp...*, s. 91.

<sup>243</sup> Por. K. Romaniuk, A. Jankowski, L. Stachowiak, *Komentarz Praktyczny do Nowego Testamentu*, t. 2, s. 482 n.

<sup>244</sup> Por. E. Szymanek, *Wykład Pisma Świętego Nowego Testamentu*, s. 451.

<sup>245</sup> Por. F. Gryglewicz, *Listy katolickie. Wstęp...*, s. 64.

<sup>246</sup> Por. E. Szymanek, *Wykład Pisma Świętego Nowego Testamentu*, s. 452; J. Kozyra, *List świętego Jakuba. Wstęp...*, s. 93 n.

<sup>247</sup> Por. tamże; T.W. Leahy, *List świętego Jakuba, KKB*, s. 1495.

Sin grows and brings death of a man's soul, who surrenders/succumbs to lust. The source of active attitude of lust is death eschatological, as a result of a sin made by a Man. This correlation between sin and death is mentioned by Paul in Rz 5,12-17. Thought contained in Jk 1,15 is a contrast of what we find at the beginning of a letter concerning those who come in full glory from their experiences. They build their perseverance and become perfect through experiences, and as a result receive the wreath of life (ww. 2-12). Those who are surrendered by temptations commit sin. As a result they receive eternal death. It does not mean physical death, as an end of terrestrial life, but an opposition to a situation with reception of life's wreath dedicated for those, who love God (w. 12). It is eternal death (por. Mdr 1,11-16; 2,4; Rz 6,21.23; 8,6; Jk 3,6; 1 J 5,16 n; Ap 2,11; 20,6.14; 21,8).

Temptations come from inside of a man. Our own lust, which brings to sin, brings us to the Wrong. And sin brings to death. This moral instruction is to some extent a psychological analysis of Source of sin<sup>248</sup>, which Jacob finishes with warning against all illusions: „Do not let yourselves deceive, my beloved brothers!” (Jk 1,16). Emphasizes the God's Good. Invariable God is a cause of all Good: „Every Good we receive and every perfect gift from the top, we receive from our Father, devoid of transformation and changeability” (w. 17). The Good comes only and strictly from him. Only good and perfect blessings (w. 17a). There is no dualism or division inside of him, which characterizes the sinner. Neither we find any change (w. 17c). Author emphasizes this way the permanence/invariance of God and the unceasing brightness of his luminosity. The vocabulary used by the author constitutes the reference to astronomy. Stars undergo eclipse as a result of motions and alterations. However, God cannot lose his brightness because of his permanence. This is why he's described as „Father of lights” (w. 17b)<sup>249</sup>.

God is also the perpetrator of Good, which means, he makes people approach preternatural God's life: „From his will he begot us through the word of truth, to be as his first creatures” (w. 18). This is one special God's grace/gift for a sinner. To some extent, author opposes the God's grace/gift to sins (por. w. 15). Expression from Line 18: „made us approach” constitutes contrast to sin and death in line 15. It's a reference to Israel, made as a nation. While Christians constitutes new nation, also made by God in preternatural way<sup>250</sup>.

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<sup>248</sup> Por. R. Bartnicki, *Problem żywej wiary (List świętego Jakuba)*, w: *Wprowadzenie w myśl i wezwanie ksiąg biblijnych*, t. 10: *Ewangelia świętego Jana. Listy Powszechnie. Apokalipsa*, red. J. Frankowski, Warszawa 1992, s. 123.

<sup>249</sup> Por. F. Gryglewicz, *Listy katolickie. Wstęp...*, s. 65 nn; E. Szymanek, *Wykład Pisma Świętego Nowego Testamentu*, s. 452; *Komentarz historyczno-kulturowy do Nowego Testamentu*, red. C.S. Keener, K. Bardski, W. Chrostowski, Warszawa 2000, s. 536.

<sup>250</sup> Por. F. Gryglewicz, *Listy katolickie. Wstęp...*, s. 67 n.

This new beginning is an invitation/approach to faith (por. J 1,13; Ga 4,19; 1 P 1,3) and the baptism and acceptance of Jesus Christ's teaching are related with it<sup>251</sup>. It's linked with wisdom and ability of life (por. Jk 3,14; 5,19). So, when lust brings death through sin, the God's Word makes Christians as firstlings of new beginning, the beginning of everyone, who will be saved<sup>252</sup>. Hence, Jacob exhorts to decline/refuse all impurity, even remains of evil: „Therefore throw away everything impure and all inhumanity of evil and accept in a way of softness inoculated word, which has to help redeem your souls” (1,21)<sup>253</sup>.

## 2. Sins of a language

Jacob pays attention to the problem of language abuse (Jk 3,1-12) mentioning at first about teachers: „Not many of you pass as teachers, my brothers, because you know, then you will be judged even more rigid” (w. 1). Author warns against wrong desire/wish to become a teacher in non noble way, from egocentric motives. There are lots of those who aspire to the title of a teacher and some even usurp it<sup>254</sup>. Decree of Jerusalem's ecumenical council even mention about them (Dz 15,24). Normally they refer to authorities of Church's prominent individuals or invalid values. Those usurpatory teachers have never-ending religious discussions. Jacob shows that during Judgement Day they will need to realise their reckless speeches. It is related to verbal sins<sup>255</sup>.

Jacob reminds devoted people, but not yet prepared to teach, they have more responsibility than others. He warns teachers against responsibility and against strict judgement. Since teachers will be judged with more severity (Jk 3,1). All the more they should control themselves. Warning related to language's sins we can refer to teachers, who because of their position, are specially exposed to transgression in this particular area. They specially need to be masters in art of language<sup>256</sup>.

Then Jacob writes: „We all usually fall. If someone does not sin with speech, is a perfect man, capable of control of his whole body” (Jk 3,2). The author comes from general statement that everyone is a sinner (w. 2a; por. Hi 14,4; 15,14 n; Ps 51,7; Rz 3,9-18; 1 Kor 4,4; 1 J 1,8), and then comes to the issue of language and its art, because he perceives that sinning of

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<sup>251</sup> Por. tamże, s. 68.

<sup>252</sup> Por. E. Szymanek, Wykład Pisma Świętego Nowego Testamentu, s. 452.

<sup>253</sup> Por. F. Gryglewicz, Teologia Nowego Testamentu, t. 3: Teologia Dziejów Apostolskich, listów katolickich i pism św. Jana ewangelisty, Lublin 1986, s. 22 n.

<sup>254</sup> Por. R. Bartnicki, Problem żywej wiary (List świętego Jakuba), s. 125.

<sup>255</sup> Por. K. Romaniuk, A. Jankowski, L. Stachowiak, Komentarz Praktyczny do Nowego Testamentu, t. 2, s. 493 n.

<sup>256</sup> Por. F. Gryglewicz, Listy katolickie. Wstęp..., s. 96 nn; E. Szymanek, Wykład Pisma Świętego Nowego Testamentu, s. 453; R. Bartnicki, Problem żywej wiary (List świętego Jakuba), s. 126.

speech is a source of evil. Sins related to speech organ are so common that impeccable attitude in this particular area seems to be perfect: „If someone sins with speech, is a perfect man” (Jk 3,2b). It does not mean absolute perfection or complete sinlessness of who does not sin with speaking, what would deny the idea of universality of sin (w. 2a). This statement shows rather high level of perfection<sup>257</sup>. Author explains that a man who does not sin with speaking has a power to conquer all the word (w. 2c). Author makes conditional self-control of whole body on control of language/speech. Self-control of language is helpful, but very hard at the same time. But who controls the language, has a power to control all other parts of his body. Hence, the author encourages to control language because if someone controls his language, he can control himself, over his body, personality and behaviour<sup>258</sup>.

Later/As a continuation in pericope, author presents suggestive life examples from everyday life observation showing that thanks to a small object you can run big organism. First of the examples concerns riding a horse through a bit: „Therefore we take the bit between horse’s teeth, to be obedient and to control all their bodies” (Jk 3,3). The necessity to control the language is here compared to results of taking the bit between horse’s teeth. It causes they are obedient to a Man. A bit as a symbol of restraint in language was known in Old Testament (por. Ps 32,9; 39,2; Syr 28,25). Jacob emphasizes the obligation to run the impulses of human parts. It is a subject of asceticism. It is included here as well a reminder that a man has a helpful power to take it into practice<sup>259</sup>.

The second example concerns a ship steered by small, inconspicuous helm: „Here even ships, in spite of being powerful and storm tossed, inconspicuous rudder gives such direction, as is suitable for helmsman will” (Jk 3,4). This comparison of language is based on disproportion of controlling/steering factor with the object, which is being controlled/steered. In fact, little language gives a tone of whole moral life of a man. As Jacob writes: „The same as language, apart from being little object, has a reason to be proud of himself” (w. 5a). Through this two examples Jacob shows the importance of organ, which is language, although little, it can cause both many good and wrong. However, the author pays attention that

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<sup>257</sup> Por. E. Szymanek, Wykład Pisma Świętego Nowego Testamentu, s. 453.

<sup>258</sup> Por. R. Bartnicki, Problem żywej wiary (List świętego Jakuba), s. 125 n; K. Romaniuk, A. Jankowski, L. Stachowiak, Komentarz Praktyczny do Nowego Testamentu, t. 2, s. 494; T.W. Leahy, List świętego Jakuba, s. 1498.

<sup>259</sup> Por. F. Gryglewicz, Listy katolickie. Wstęp..., s. 98 n; R. Bartnicki, Problem żywej wiary (List świętego Jakuba), s. 126; Komentarz historyczno-kulturowy do Nowego Testamentu, s. 540; T.W. Leahy, List świętego Jakuba, s. 1498 n; J. Kozyra, List świętego Jakuba. Wstęp..., s. 181.

language causes many wrong. He uses a Greek expression *auchei*, translated as „boasting about” (w. 5a). Sins of a language are a serious obstacle to achieve Christian’s perfection<sup>260</sup>.

As a continuation, the author comes to an issue related to damages made by language, mentioning/naming examples of a small cause and big result. He compares language to small fire, the flame of which can burn whole forest: „Here is a little flame and it can burn so big forest. So, the language is a flame and iniquity’s areas” (Jk 3,5b-6a; por. Ps 83,15; 120,3 n; Prz 16,27; Iz 10,17 n). He shows the damaging language action/activity, which disordered use can cause many damages in all areas of human life.

As an example Jacob shows how much wrong can a man does because of language. However, he does not write here about use of language to good reasons. The author pays attention to big harmfulness of human’s language attitude/action/activity, which defame a man and can present as well wrong/bad actions as a good ones. It is similar to a fire, which Has its beginning in hell and burn everything which connects with human existence: „Language is among all of our organs what desecrates our body and is wasted by infernal fire kindle the circle of life” (Jk 3,6b). The author shows long-range results caused by excessive speech use. It means abundance of iniquity caused by language. Whole human’s life is full of fire caused by language<sup>261</sup>.

As a continuation, the author warns against wrong/improper use of language, describing obstacles in its achieving: „Therefore, all animal, birds, reptiles and maritime creatures species can be tamed and, in fact, human nature tamed them. However, no one can curb one’s language. It is an evil instable, full of harmful poison” (Jk 3,7 n). The author using another expression to describe the language’s harmful activity, to some extent explains in a way his firm opinion/judgement about its harmful action.

A Man is a master of whole living nature because of God’s will (por. Rdz 1,26; 9,2; Ps 8,6-9), he rules over all kind of wild Animals. However, usually he becomes helpless towards such inconspicuous organ, which is language, and he cannot take control over him. He compares it to “killing/destructive poison” (Jk 3,8b; por. Ps 58,5; 140,4). In that way it is clearly show dimension of evil, which can be caused by language use. It is an evil, which acts constantly and everywhere introduces its deadly poison (por. Ps 12,3; 140,4). All the more, we need perceive as a perfect a man, someone who can control his language (por. Jk 3,2).

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<sup>260</sup> Por. E. Szymanek, Wykład Pisma Świętego Nowego Testamentu, s. 453; R. Bartnicki, Problem żywej wiary (List świętego Jakuba), s. 125 n; J. Kozyra, List świętego Jakuba. Wstęp..., s. 181 n.

<sup>261</sup> Por. E. Szymanek, Wykład Pisma Świętego Nowego Testamentu, s. 453 n; Komentarz historyczno-kulturowy do Nowego Testamentu, s. 540; T.W. Leahy, List świętego Jakuba, s. 1499; J. Kozyra, List świętego Jakuba. Wstęp..., s. 183 n.



In the meantime, as Jacob reminds, the language is a tool destined to praise the Lord/God. The language should be flawless, as a man because of him speaks/expresses God's names, calls and adores/worships him. However, the reality is different. The language is a tool to swear at people, who after all have characteristics of their Lord/Creator: „With its help we worship God and Father and swear people created as a resemblance of God” (Jk 3,9; por. Łk 6,28; Rz 12,14; 1 Kor 12,3; 1 P 3,9).

Jacob writes about blessings and swearwords expressed/spoken by the same language: „From the same mouth comes blessing and swearword” (Jk 3,10a). Praise a Lord/God and then swearing people is something unnatural. This status quo is something abnormal. We can see here a contradiction a Christian needs to eliminate from his life. The evil hidden deep inside of a man needs to be eliminated. Particular evil/wrong of swearword consists on being focused on those who were made as a resemblance of God (Rdz 1,26).

Language is an organ, which can give someone's glory or humiliation. It can be part of blessing and praise a God, but it can be as well dedicated to swear and say malediction. Jacob definitely protests against such state of things: „It cannot be this way, my brothers!” (Jk 3,10b). He supports it by giving examples from surrounding nature: „Did not gush from the same slit of spring sweet and bitter water? My brothers, can a fig tree gives olives or a grape-wine figs? The same a Salty spring cannot give sweet water” (w. 11 n).

It is presented here a strong reaction against the fact mentioned in lines: 9-10a. The same language should not be used to good and evil action/acts. Such state of things is unnatural and the author emphasizes it by giving examples related to the nature: about the spring, fig-tree and wine bush (w. 11 n). As it is impossible that sweet and bitter water flow from one spring or olives grow on fig-tree and figs on wine bush; so, it cannot be that with the same language worship God and at the same time swear people. In this kind of situation human's life is wrong and sinful.

There is only one spring that gives sweet water, good for a human, or bitter water, which is useless. Fruit trees cannot give other fruits than suggest their kind. Salty spring cannot give at the same time sweet water, useful to drink. Such supposition would be an obvious absurd. Those examples presented by the author lead to the conclusion of abused word's absurd. One speech organ should be dedicated by a Christian to multiply good and to blessings, because it

derives from grace resource and Jesus Christ's words. The usage of language to other goals constitutes the elimination both of natural order and supernatural<sup>262</sup>.

The author calls: „Brothers, do not defame one another! Who defames his own brother or Judge him, offend Law and judge Law. If you Judge law, you are not an executor of law but a judge. One is a legislator and Judge, who's Power is redeem or condemn. And who are you to Judge your neighbor? (Jk 4,11 n). Those words are related to interpersonal/human relation. It is a continuation of thoughts related to sins of language from z 3,1-12. Currently the author pays attention not to condemn your neighbour<sup>263</sup>.

Jacob introduces as well the slander issue, emphasizing the necessity of neighbour's love. It means showing an absent man in a wrong position, insulting him, his good name and dignity, which is against God's love law and liberty (por. Jk 1,25). A man by judging a neighbour claims the right, which has only God as a Lawmaker and a Judge. The judgement of such behaviour gives Jesus Christ: „do not judge, and not to be judged. Because with the Judge you Judge, you will be judged, and such measure you measure, others will you measure” (Mt 7,1 n). To put oneself's over valid love law is equivalent to its negative judgement and rejection. Jacob does not develop the motive of self imperfection as a factor leading to other people's judgement. Paul discusses it in Rz 2,1 nn (por. Jk 2,1-4).

### **3. Warning against behaviour according to terrestrial wisdom**

In Jk 4,1-12 author calls to conquer different weaknesses. He discusses many defects, which are results of terrestrial wisdom. The source of many defects is lust: „From where come wars and quarrels among you? Only from your desires which battle within your organs” (w. 1). Lust is a cause of all disagreement, the reason of misunderstandings and wars<sup>264</sup>. The author refers to internal dilemma inside of a man. Paul writes about him in Rz 7,14-25 i 8,5 nn emphasizing the battle of sensual nature against God's law. However, Jacob emphasizes even more the action of evil inclinations, which lead to quarrels and disputes or even bring hate<sup>265</sup>.

Jacob characterizes lust and its results. Poor people, who need material goods or would like to have more of them, are exposed to its action. Rich people as well, as their needs are always unsatisfied: „You desire and cannot possess/have, you feel murderously envy and cannot achieve it. You fight and quarrel and have nothing, because you don't pray” (Jk 4,2).

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<sup>262</sup> Por. K. Romaniuk, A. Jankowski, L. Stachowiak, Komentarz Praktyczny do Nowego Testamentu, t. 2, s. 495 n; C. Hope Felder, List św. Jakuba Apostoła, w: Międzynarodowy komentarz do Pisma Świętego, red. W. Chrostowski, Warszawa 2000, s. 1635; J. Kozyra, List świętego Jakuba. Wstęp..., s. 187 n.

<sup>263</sup> Por. F. Gryglewicz, Listy katolickie. Wstęp..., s. 117 n; J. Kozyra, List świętego Jakuba. Wstęp..., s. 228 nn.

<sup>264</sup> Por. F. Gryglewicz, Listy katolickie. Wstęp..., s. 109 nn.

Author compares lust to uncontrollable need of possession. It causes constant hunger of goods and as a result envy towards those who possess more. People usually want to achieve temporal prosperity, instead of trying to achieve true, spiritual goods. It was practiced among primitive, Christian communities, which consisted of many poor people, but we can find similar situation as well in present-day. Inappropriate behaviour related to lust is a need to possess more and more goods. In this shameful race usually take part rich people.

Jacob shows that the reason of impossibility of desired goods achievement is lack of prayer to God, who's a donor of all goods and can give them to anyone<sup>266</sup>. Prayer is essential way to achieve temporal goods (por. Mt 6,11; Łk 11,3), but a man absorbed by lust usually forgets about it (Jk 4,2b) or makes prayer useless. Hence, the author writes: „You pray but receive nothing, because you pray in a wrong way, only wanting to satisfy your desires” (w. 3).

The prayer of a man, who pays homage to his desires, is wrong and does not achieve intended goal. It has to be followed by right intention and faith (por. Jk 1,5 n). So, praying to achieve material goods should correspond with Christians' needs, which enable or make easier to achieve eternal goods. The prayer becomes wrong, if a man prays for material goods and his intention is disorganized usage of them. Then, those goods become a goal on its own and serve only as a tool to satisfy desires, which causes at the same time excessive lust<sup>267</sup>.

The prayer should be unanimous with God's will (por. 1 J 5,14) and the essential element should be God's Kingdom. As Jesus teaches: „As a start try to achieve God's kingdom and his justice and everything will be given to you” (Mt 6,33). And pray just for something which satisfies human desires is a wrong prayer. People who pray do not receive it because they pray in a wrong way. As they just want to satisfy their own dishonourable desires.

Pericope from Jk 5,13-16 concentrates on the problem of prayer's effectiveness. Jacob demonstrates: „Someone among you is ill? Bring priests of the Church to pray over him and apply holy oil in the name of God. The prayer full of faith will be a rescue for the ill and Lord will heal him. And if he committed sins, they will be forgiven” (Jk 5,14 n). It describes the critical state of ill/sick person and not his temporary debility. Even in Old Testament it was a conviction that „healing comes from the Most High” (Syr 38,2a). Because of this Sage shows: „Son, in your sickness do not turn away from your God but pray to Him and he's going to cure you. Eliminate perversity – straighten your hands and purify your heart from every sin!”

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<sup>265</sup> Por. F. Grylewicz, *Listy katolickie. Wstęp...*, s. 111.

<sup>266</sup> Por. K. Romaniuk, A. Jankowski, L. Stachowiak, *Komentarz Praktyczny do Nowego Testamentu*, t. 2, s. 498.

<sup>267</sup> Por. K. Romaniuk, A. Jankowski, L. Stachowiak, *Komentarz Praktyczny do Nowego Testamentu*, t. 2, s. 498; J. Kozyra, *List świętego Jakuba. Wstęp...*, s. 204 n.

(Syr 38,9 n). During terrestrial Jesus activity people usually called him begging for cure of seriously ill or dying and he gave them their health (por. Łk 7,2 nn; J 4,46 nn).

Jacob presents triple result of the last rites made by official Church representatives. This is a kind of help/rescue in supernatural way, health state improvement because of God and sins absolution, if they lied heavy on ill person. This custom was probably practiced since the beginning of apostolic activity as recommended by Jesus according to old practices (por. Mk 6,13) and then become the source of sacramental blessing. The author writes as well: „Confess one another your sins, pray one for another to Get back your health. The prayer of righteous person Has a great Power” (Jk 5,16). Justifying element of this reflection is health recovery. It is underlined the effectiveness of prayer sending to God by a Man united with Him. The condition of this effectiveness is clearness of conscience, it means true confession of all sins with prayer to absolution<sup>268</sup>.

Encouraging prayer Jacob warns against desires, which have as a goal attainment of terrestrial goods. Flaws/defects mentioned in Jk 4,1-3 show that its essence is attachment to the world<sup>269</sup>. In line 4, the author explains that if someone stays in friendship with the Word, he’s an enemy of God: „Adulterers, didn’t you know, that friendship with the world is hostility to God? So, if someone would like to be a friend of the Word, becomes enemy of God”. Such people Jacob calls adulterers. It is an expression used as a metaphore. Adulterer is show in Holy Bible as a traditional picture of serious offence/crime against God. Oldtestamentary prophets usually described in that way the sin of idolatry, treated as a violation of union established between God and nation, and implied in analogical way to marriage (por. Oz 2; Jr 5,7). Devotions towards idols was considered adultery against true God (por. Oz 2,2; 9,1). Metaphore of marriage exists as well in New Testament and it is described as a relation between Jesus Christ and Church (por. Rz 7,3 n; 2 Kor 11,2; Ef 5,22-24; Ap 19,7; 21,9). Those who does not want listen to Jesus Christ lessons are perceived as a adulterous generation. (Mt 12,39; 16,4; Mk 8,38)<sup>270</sup>.

Jacob refers to this metaphore and calls adulterers those who stay in „friendship with World” (Jk 4,4) and do not search relationship with God. So, it does not mean a sin of neighbor’s marriage violation. This “friendship with world” (w. 4) concerns area hostile to God. World fell into reign of Devil (3,15). So, it is impossible to start any type of negotiations

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<sup>268</sup> Por. R. Bartnicki, *Problem żywej wiary (List świętego Jakuba)*, s. 127; K. Romaniuk, A. Jankowski, L. Stachowiak, *Komentarz Praktyczny do Nowego Testamentu*, t. 2, s. 505 n; J. Kozyra, *List świętego Jakuba. Wstęp...*, s. 290 nn.

<sup>269</sup> Por. R. Bartnicki, *Problem żywej wiary (List świętego Jakuba)*, s. 123.

<sup>270</sup> Por. F. Gryglewicz, *Listy katolickie. Wstęp...*, s. 112; T.W. Leahy, *List świętego Jakuba*, s. 1499 n.

with him. Expression „friendship of the World” means inappropriate attachment to material goods and to this what is against Jesus Christ’s lessons. Jacob shows that you cannot be both friend of the World and God. You cannot serve to God and at the same time be attached to the World, which is against God. Jacob refers clearly to Jesus’ lessons concerning all instability or ethical duplicity. We cannot serve to two masters (Mt 6,24; Łk 16,13). World is presented here in eschatological way. The author describes in such way defunct values, destined to pass away as a synonym of sinful existence.

World appreciates haughtiness/arrogance and despises humility. God’s action is completely different: „God is against arrogant but gives grace to all humbles” (Jk 4,6b; por. Prz 3,34; 1 P 5,5b). A man completely subjected to God is a recipient of grace in optimal way. Hence, Jacob encourages to be humble: „Be humble to God, oppose to Devil and he will disappear from you” (Jk 4,7). Everything which needs improvement comes from Devil’s temptations. Complete devotion to God is the Best defence against Devil, who cannot act without man’s permission<sup>271</sup>. Hermas in one of the letters *Shepherd* comments those words from the line 7. in following way: „Devil gives fear but the fear he brings is not so threatening. Don’t be afraid of him and He will go away from you ... He cannot Take control over servants of God who trust God with All their hearts. He can struggle with them but cannot beat them”<sup>272</sup>.

Jacob calls further: „Come closer to God and he’s going to approach to you. Clean your hands, sinners, sanctify your hearts, people insecure!” (Jk 4,8). The response from God’s side to complete devotion under his control, would be a certain closure, which was demonstrated by Old Testament authors (por. Pwt 4,7; Ps 145,18). Committed sin gives guilt which has to be purified. Sinners need to start penance and then God will approach to them. Privileged Christian’s situation as a new man obliges him to live in moral purity. A purified and sanctified man becomes prone to God’s voice and as a result he becomes saint<sup>273</sup>.

It is not sufficient enough understand one’s hopeless situation going away from God. It is needed to do penance. As a result author writes: „Accept your poverty, grieve and cry! Your laugh turns into sadness, Joy into gloom!” (Jk 4,9). Jacob suggests taking voluntary kinds of mortification in spirit of penance. He describes penance representing through suffering,

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<sup>271</sup> Por. F. Gryglewicz, *Listy katolickie. Wstęp...*, s. 115; R. Bartnicki, *Problem żywej wiary (List świętego Jakuba)*, s. 123; C. Hope Felder, *List św. Jakuba Apostoła*, s. 1637.

<sup>272</sup> Cyt. za: K. Romaniuk, A. Jankowski, L. Stachowiak, *Komentarz Praktyczny do Nowego Testamentu*, t. 2, s. 499.

<sup>273</sup> Por. F. Gryglewicz, *Listy katolickie. Wstęp...*, s. 115 n; R. Bartnicki, *Problem żywej wiary (List świętego Jakuba)*, s. 123; K. Romaniuk, A. Jankowski, L. Stachowiak, *Komentarz Praktyczny do Nowego Testamentu*, t. 2, s. 499.

sadness and crying, which have to be instead of previous laugh and joy. Penitential acts contain both internal nature, which is a result of understanding one's misery and insufficiency, and external acts proper to people of East (por. Am 8,10; 1 Mch 9,41; Mt 5,4; Łk 6,21).

It is remarkable that Jacob does not condemn Joy or laugh. Personally recommends Joy at the beginning of his letter (Jk 1,2). He only condemns such Joy which is related to sin. Such Joy should be changed into penance (por. Prz 14,13; Tb 2,6; 1 Mch 9,41; Am 8,10; Mt 5,4; Łk 6,25; J 16,20). Joy and Lough should come out of true supernatural posture and not from sin and temporal pleasures. The author would like this sadness becomes an origin of imperishable Joy of constant existence with God, according to words said by Jesus: „blessed, who are sad because they will be consoled” (Mt 5,4)<sup>274</sup>.

His reasoning Jacob ends with words: „Be humble in front of God and he will elevate you” (Jk 4,10). This sentence catch in whole what was said in lines: 7-9. Exposure, approach to God and penance can take place only among humbles. Hence, absolutely a man needs to abase himself in front of God. When a sinner abases himself, Lord will praise him. Such Promise is continuously repeated in Holy Bible. Every voluntary lowliness in front of God causes praising by Him (por. 1 Sm 2,7 n; Hi 5,11; Prz 3,34; Ez 17,24; Mt 23,12; Łk 1,52; 14,11; 18,14; 1 P 5,6).

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<sup>274</sup> Por. F. Gryglewicz, Listy katolickie. Wstęp..., s. 117.

## **Priest as an extraordinary minister Of the sacrament of confirmation in the light of provisions of the code of Canon Law of 1917**

The discussions of previous centuries between canonists and theologians on the subject of the minister of the sacrament of confirmation were concluded on 3 March 1547 at the solemn VII Session of the Council of Trent. A following definition was proclaimed: “If any one saith, that the ordinary minister of holy confirmation is not the bishop alone, but any simple priest soever; let him be anathema”<sup>275</sup>. Therefore, the Council definitely stated that an ordinary minister of the sacrament of confirmation could only be a bishop. However, simultaneously it did not exclude a situation when a priest could be a minister of the sacrament of confirmation. With this statement, the Council put an end to all discussions about this matter and set the path for further ecclesial legislation with regard to the minister of the sacrament of confirmation<sup>276</sup>. In the period after the Council of Trent, a legal term had developed for a priest as an extraordinary minister of confirmation. After the Council of Trent, which had been aimed against heretics – in order not to strengthen them in the erroneous belief that every priest is an ordinary minister of confirmation – the Holy See withdrew the privilege of confirmation, granted to some abbots well before 1547<sup>277</sup>.

Through the centuries from the Council of Trent to the publication of the Code of Canon Law in 1917, there had been an evolution of regulations and legal norms issued by the Holy See, concerning a priest as a minister of the sacrament of confirmation. As the conditions of life are subject to constant changes, the legal norms governing and regulating this life must consequently undergo changes as well.

This was especially a result of many geographical discoveries. Mission territories had special regards of the Holy See. There are many documents from the 16th, 17th and 18th

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<sup>275</sup> *Concilii Tridentini Diariorum, Pars prima*, edidit Markle Sebastianus, Friburgi Brisgoviae 1901, vol. 1, p. 621; R. Dworecki, *Szafarz sakramentu bierzmowania w Kościele Zachodnim*, Lublin 1960, p. 63.

<sup>276</sup> See J. Rybczyk, *Proboszcz jako minister nadzwyczajny sakramentu bierzmowania*, “Kielecki Przegląd Diecezjalny” 38 (1957) nos. 3-4, p. 108.

<sup>277</sup> R. Dworecki, *op. cit.*, p. 85.

century, in which the Holy See, in special circumstances, allowed priests to confirm – especially in North and South America<sup>278</sup>.

Since the 18th century, the Holy See not only granted the faculty to confirm to priests for pastoral reasons (large mission territories and small number of bishops) but also wanted to distinguish some places. This was the case with guardians of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem<sup>279</sup>.

By granting of the privilege of administering of confirmation, the Holy See also wanted to distinguish non-bishop priests holding various church dignities. Therefore, the faculty to confirm was granted to the abbots of Campedua, Monte Cassino, Cave, Einsiedeln, or Mons Virginis<sup>280</sup>.

Since the second half of the 18th century, the Holy See did not authorize individual priests to administer confirmation anymore, but instead granted the bishops, vicars general and vicars apostolic with the power of subdelegation of priests to confirm<sup>281</sup>.

A legal term denoting a confirmation-administering priest as an extraordinary minister of this sacrament – *minister extraordinarius* – was introduced permanently by Pope Benedict XIV in the constitution “Eo quamvis tempore” of 1745 and in the letter “Ex tuis precibus” of 1748, as well as by an instruction by the Holy Congregation for the Propagation of Faith of 1774<sup>282</sup>. This term was also included in the Code of Canon Law of 1917.

Canon 782 § 2 of the CCL<sup>283</sup> distinguishes two sources of a priest’s power as an extraordinary minister of the sacrament of confirmation. These sources are: the universal law and a special indult by the Holy See.

### **1. Priest as an extraordinary minister of the sacrament of confirmation by virtue of the universal law**

By virtue of the universal law, the faculty to confer the sacrament of confirmation is granted to cardinals without the Episcopal consecration, territorial abbots and prelates, as well as vicars and prefects apostolic (Canon 782 § 3)<sup>284</sup>.

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<sup>278</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 85.

<sup>279</sup> See T. Szważyk, *Szafarz nadzwyczajny sakramentu bierzmowania*, “Ruch Biblijny i Liturgiczny” 11 (1958) no. 2, p. 143.

<sup>280</sup> See R. Dworecki, *op. cit.*, p. 86.

<sup>281</sup> See I. Grabowski, *Bierzmowanie w ustawodawstwie kościelnym*, “Ateneum Kapłańskie” 40 (1948) pp. 453-455.

<sup>282</sup> See R. Dworecki, *op. cit.*, p. 86.

<sup>283</sup> In the present article, the 1917 Code of Canon Law is denoted by the expression: “Code of Canon Law” or “CCL”, not mentioning the date of promulgation.



Territorial abbots and prelates have power equal to bishops in their own territory but they do not have the Episcopal consecration. Prelatures and abbeys have their own independent territories with churches, clergy and the faithful, exempt from the surrounding dioceses<sup>285</sup>. Provisions of the code apply to territorial abbeys and prelatures consisting of three or more parishes; other ones have separately issued statutes (Canon 319)<sup>286</sup>.

Vicariates and prefectures apostolic are established in mission countries. They constitute a certain stage of development of the church organization in a given territory. The completion of this development is the establishment of an ordinary church hierarchy with dioceses and metropolises. The vicariates and prefectures apostolic are headed by vicars and prefects apostolic. In their territory, they have the same powers and rights as residential bishops, unless the Holy See limits these rights<sup>287</sup>. They are local ordinaries with ordinary, albeit vicarious authority. Additionally, they are granted broad delegated powers<sup>288</sup>.

Cardinals, by virtue of a privilege resulting from Canon 239 § 1 no. 23, may administer the sacrament of confirmation everywhere, since the canon law puts no territorial limit to this faculty. Moreover, cardinals have the faculty to confirm without limits with regard to persons. Therefore, they can confirm without restrictions with regard to both persons and place. They should, however, care about recording of the names and surnames of the confirmed faithful in a special confirmation register, in accordance with Canon 798. Although the Code does not expressly mention it, it should be supposed that the faculty to confirm exercised by a cardinal is only valid during his holding of a cardinal's dignity, similarly as exercise of this faculty by a vicar and prefect apostolic and by a territorial prelate and abbot is only valid during their holding of offices. Therefore, at the moment of loss of a cardinal's dignity, his faculty to confirm ceases, of course unless he is a bishop<sup>289</sup>.

On the other hand, territorial abbots and prelates, as well as vicars and prefects apostolic, by virtue of Canon 782 § 3, have the faculty to confirm only in the areas under their jurisdiction. Their faculty to confirm is also limited by the term of their office. They only can validly administer confirmation during their hold of office. Moreover, a territorial abbot, if

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<sup>284</sup> See Canon 782 § 2: "Extraordinarius minister ert presbyter, cui vel in re communi vel peculiari Sedi Apostolicae indulto ea facultas concessa sit".

<sup>285</sup> See F. Bączkiewicz, *Prawo kanoniczne*, vol. I, Opole 1957, p. 496n.

<sup>286</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 497.

<sup>287</sup> See Canon 294 § 1.

<sup>288</sup> See F. Bączkiewicz, *op. cit.*, pp. 487-489.

<sup>289</sup> See Dworecki, *op. cit.*, p. 113.

required by a papal provision or an order constitution, must obtain a benediction beforehand to be able to confirm; he can accept it from a bishop of his own choice<sup>290</sup>.

Although the CCL does not expressly mention the provicars and proprefects apostolic as extraordinary ministers of the sacrament of confirmation, the opinions of canonists are divided on this question. Matthaeus Conte a Coronata<sup>291</sup> claims that provicars and proprefects apostolic cannot confirm<sup>292</sup>. Probably he is afraid of using of an extensive interpretation of the law in this case.

Herbertus Jone<sup>293</sup> and Eduardus Regatillo<sup>294</sup> have different opinions. They invoke Canon 310 § 2. By virtue of this canon, provicars and proprefects apostolic have all the ordinary and delegated powers of vicars and prefects apostolic, whereas the faculty to confirm is a delegated power. This allows to qualify also the provicars and proprefects apostolic as extraordinary ministers of the sacrament of confirmation, who have this power by virtue of the law itself.

The power of governance of an apostolic vicariate or prefecture is passed to a provicar or proprefect apostolic when there is no vicar or prefect apostolic<sup>295</sup> or when their exercise of the office or even epistolary communication with their administrative units is impossible due to imprisonment, deportation, expulsion or other incapacity (e.g. mental illness)<sup>296</sup>.

In identical circumstances, the power of governance of a vicariate or prefecture apostolic is passed to a priest appointed by the provicar or proprefect apostolic as their deputy<sup>297</sup>, or to a priest who is senior by appointment in a given territory, unless there is a provicar or proprefect apostolic appointed to this function or his deputy<sup>298</sup>. According to Dworecki, the priests mentioned above are also granted the faculty to confirm for the period of their governance of a vicariate or prefecture apostolic<sup>299</sup>.

The CCL grants priests with the faculty to confirm as extraordinary ministers under the universal law, by virtue of their office or held dignity. Thus, cardinals have the faculty to confirm by virtue of the held dignity. On the other hand, territorial abbots and prelates, vicars

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<sup>290</sup> See Bączkiewicz, *op. cit.*, p. 498.

<sup>291</sup> See *De sacramentis*, vol. I, ed. 2, Taurini-Romae 1950, no. 166, p. 124; M. Pastuszko, *Prezbiter jako szafarz sakramentu bierzmowania*, "Prawo Kanoniczne" 25 (1982) nos. 3-4, p. 141.

<sup>292</sup> See *Commentarium in Codicem iuris canonici*, vol. I, vol. II, Paderborn 1954, p. 49; Pastuszko, *Prezbiter jako szafarz...*, *op. cit.*, p. 141.

<sup>293</sup> See *Ius sacramentarium*, ed. 4, Santander 1964, no. 83, p. 56; Pastuszko, *Prezbiter jako szafarz...*, *op. cit.*, p. 141.

<sup>294</sup> See Pastuszko, *Prezbiter jako szafarz...*, *op. cit.*, p. 141.

<sup>295</sup> See Canon 309 § 2.

<sup>296</sup> See Bączkiewicz, *op. cit.*, p. 564.

<sup>297</sup> See Canon 309 § 3.

<sup>298</sup> See Canon 309 § 4.

<sup>299</sup> See Dworecki, *op. cit.*, p. 114.

and prefects apostolic, as well as the priests mentioned in Canon 309, § 1, 3 and 4, i.e. those who are granted the power of governance of a vicariate or prefecture apostolic if there is no vicar or prefect apostolic or when the exercise of their jurisdiction is impossible, obtain the faculty to confirm by virtue of the held office of a local ordinary. These priests are local ordinaries by virtue of Canon 198. The code grants these priests with a faculty to confirm for the sake of the spiritual good of the faithful. Therefore, the priests having the powers of an extraordinary minister of the sacrament of confirmation by virtue of the universal law are obliged to confer this sacrament to those subject to their jurisdiction, if requested duly and reasonably. In the same manner as bishops, these priests should administer confirmation, especially during visitations of their territories<sup>300</sup>. The duty of confirmation is quite strictly defined. Both bishops and priests competent to confirm should endeavour so this sacrament could be conferred no less than once per five years in the territory of their jurisdiction. This also results from Canon 785. No minister of the sacrament of confirmation is obliged to confer it to those who request it unreasonably or without a just cause, e.g. if requested by an unprepared person or outside the time appointed by the minister<sup>301</sup>.

The law quite strictly emphasizes the duty of ministers obliged to confer the sacrament of confirmation. If any of the ministers neglects his duty towards the reasonably and duly requesting subjects, the metropolitan should report it to the Holy See<sup>302</sup>. These duties apply to both bishops and priests, except cardinals without the Episcopal consecration. Cardinals have the faculty to confirm by virtue of their dignity and it is of privilege character, aimed at stressing the cardinal's dignity; therefore, they cannot be classified under general legal norms regarding the duty of a minister, since they can exercise the privilege in any manner<sup>303</sup>. If one can speak about a duty of the cardinals regarding confirmation, it would rather result from their love for the faithful than be a duty in a strict meaning of the word, originating from justice<sup>304</sup>.

Before the CCL, the Holy See never granted the faculty to confirm to the priests mentioned in Canon 782 § 3 in such a general manner and in such a wide range. Although some priests mentioned in this canon used to confer the sacrament of confirmation even before the 1917 promulgation of the CCL, they did it either by virtue of an indult by the Holy

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<sup>300</sup> See Canon 785.

<sup>301</sup> See B. Wyrobisz, *Minister bierzmowania w świetle prawa kanonicznego*, "Gazeta Kościelna" 34 (1927) p. 375.

<sup>302</sup> See Canon 785 § 4.

<sup>303</sup> See Dworecki, *op. cit.*, p. 115.

<sup>304</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 115.

See, or by virtue of granted powers, as renewed from time to time<sup>305</sup>. This principle, expressed for the first time in the form of such general disposition, was included in the Code under the influence of both the practice existing in the Eastern Churches and the doctrine preached by theologians and canonists.

Extraordinary ministers of the sacrament of confirmation cannot delegate their faculty to confer this sacrament<sup>306</sup>. Whereas in the Western Church priests are extraordinary ministers of the sacrament of confirmation, in the Churches of Eastern rite they are ordinary ministers of this sacrament. It results from the tradition existing in Churches of those rites, as well as from an unwritten privilege by the Holy See which knew about this tradition but did not usually object<sup>307</sup>. However, through the centuries, in some countries, popes used to withdraw the faculty to administer confirmation from the priests of Eastern rite. The sacrament was then administered invalidly, when it was conferred to the faithful of both Eastern rite and Western Church<sup>308</sup>. The priests of Eastern rite administer confirmation to children of their rite jointly with baptism. Provisions of the code forbid them to confer confirmation jointly with baptism to children of Latin rite<sup>309</sup>. This prohibition was included in the Code in consideration of a principle forbidding the mixing of rites<sup>310</sup>. Canon 782 § 5, forbidding the priests of Eastern rite to confirm the faithful of Latin rite, uses the wording “nefas est”, meaning: it is wrong. Such wording suggests that although such priest is not allowed to confirm the faithful of another rite, a confirmation conferred by him against the prohibition will nevertheless be valid, albeit wrong, and the minister will commit a sin<sup>311</sup>.

## **2. Priest as an extraordinary minister of the sacrament of confirmation by virtue of an indult by the Holy See**

According to Canon 782 § 2, a second source giving a priest the faculty of administering confirmation is an indult by the Holy See. The Holy See used to grant indults in individual cases and on request. It was not easy to obtain such faculty. Not only it was only granted as a last resort but also after a very careful and thorough consideration of the request.

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<sup>305</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 113.

<sup>306</sup> See Pastuszko, *Prezbiter jako szafarz...*, *op. cit.*, p. 141.

<sup>307</sup> See Dworecki, *op. cit.*, p. 132.

<sup>308</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 117.

<sup>309</sup> See Canon 782 § 5.

<sup>310</sup> See Wyrobisz, *op. cit.*, p. 374.

<sup>311</sup> See Dworecki, *op. cit.*, pp. 123-124; see Wyrobisz, *op. cit.*, p. 374n.

It was only in 1946 when the Holy Congregation of Sacraments issued a decree “*Spiritus Sancti munera*”, by virtue of which the priests occupied with the care of souls have been granted wide faculties to confirm<sup>312</sup>.

In the first centuries, the Church did not grant permissions to confirm to priests by virtue of indulgences; an exception was the permission granted by Gregory the Great to Sardinian priests in 593<sup>313</sup>. In later centuries, this faculty used to be granted more often by Popes: Nicholas IV, John XXII, Urban V, Eugene IV, Leo X, Hadrian VI – to the Friars Minor; Gregory XIII, Benedict XIII, Clement X – to some Jesuit missionaries, and Benedict XIV – to guardians of the Holy Sepulchre in the Holy Land<sup>314</sup>. In his letter “*Trans oceanum*” of 18 April 1897, Pope Leo XIII authorized the bishops of Latin America for 30 years to delegate priests to administer the sacrament of confirmation<sup>315</sup>. On 1 January 1910, Pope Pius X included these faculties in the so-called “*Facultates decennales Episcoporum Americae Latinae*” and granted them also to the bishops of the Philippines<sup>316</sup>.

Before the CCL, a priest could only be an extraordinary minister of the sacrament of confirmation by virtue of an indulgence granted by the Holy See. Taking into account the entire history of the Church, the number of granted indulgences was small<sup>317</sup>. After the 1917 promulgation of the Code of Canon Law, obtaining of an indulgence was even more difficult, since under new regulations, a new category had been added: extraordinary ministers authorized by virtue of the law itself.

For example, in 1924, the bishop of a Belgian diocese of Namur had requested the Holy See to allow an abbot to confirm in his diocese, since the bishop could not perform this duty himself in view of a great number of the faithful. The diocese of Namur consisted of two provinces and counted over half million faithful. The Holy See declared that such motivation was insufficient<sup>318</sup>. A negative response was also received by the bishop of the Elna diocese in France, after he had requested a faculty to confirm for an abbot. The bishop substantiated the request with his prolonged illness<sup>319</sup>. The Holy See usually granted indulgences to missionaries and diocese administrators in locations where either there was no bishop at all or bishop’s

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<sup>312</sup> See “*Acta Apostolicae Sedis*” 38 (1946) pp. 349-358.

<sup>313</sup> See Wyrobisz, *op. cit.*, p. 363.

<sup>314</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 363.

<sup>315</sup> See Pastuszko, *Prezbiter jako szafarz...*, p. 142; see “*Acta Leonis*”, vol. I, pp. 100-107.

<sup>316</sup> See “*Acta Apostolicae Sedis*” 2 (1910), pp. 217-219.

<sup>317</sup> See Wyrobisz, *op. cit.*, p. 363.

<sup>318</sup> C. Zerba, *Instructio pro sacerdote confirmationem ex Sedis Apostolicae delegatione administrante*, “*Apollinaris*” 8 (1935), p. 44; see Dworecki, *op. cit.*, p. 117.

<sup>319</sup> See “*Acta Apostolicae Sedis*” 27 (1935) p. 11n.; see C. Zerba, *Instructio pro sacerdote...*, *op. cit.*, 8 (1935) p. 44; see Dworecki, *op. cit.*, p. 117.

visitations were seldom carried out in view of great territories, unfavourable climate conditions or communication difficulties.

Analyzing the regulations concerning extraordinary ministers of the sacrament of confirmation by virtue of the universal law, it can be noticed that such faculty was granted to them either by virtue of their high office in the jurisdiction hierarchy or of the held dignity. The case is different with indulted priests. The code does not require them to hold any church dignities. However, popes recommended in various pronouncements that priests who are about to be granted an indult authorizing them to administer confirmation should hold any church dignity or e.g. the office of a dean. Especially Pope Pius XI objected delegation of ordinary priests to administer confirmation in the localities they themselves lived<sup>320</sup>.

A priest of Latin rite, who obtains the faculty to confirm by virtue of an indult under Canon 782 § 4, may only validly confirm the faithful of his own rite. This canon foresees a possibility of valid conferring of confirmation to the faithful of Eastern rite as well, but this must be expressly stated in the indult. Therefore, if a priest of Latin rite, by virtue of an indult authorizing to administer confirmation only to faithful of his own rite, confirmed faithful of the Eastern rite, this sacrament would be invalid by virtue of Canon 782 § 4.

The power of a priest with an indult also has territorial limits. The indult under which a priest administers confirmation mentions a territory in which he can validly administer this sacrament<sup>321</sup>. Therefore, a confirmation conferred outside the territory mentioned in the indult is invalid. On the other hand, authorized ministers confirm validly within the limits mentioned in the indult, also the faithful who are not their subjects – that is, from outside the area mentioned in the indult – unless there is an express prohibition by their own ordinary<sup>322</sup>.

A priest who would confirm the faithful who are not his subjects, knowing the express prohibition by their own ordinary, according to the penal law<sup>323</sup> is *ipso facto* denied the faculty to confirm, unless any imputability-diminishing reason has arisen<sup>324</sup>. This is a *latae sententiae* penalty. To be imposed with such a penalty, and in this case – to lose the faculty to confirm, such abuse of granted powers is necessary which would be a totally free act done

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<sup>320</sup> “Leges Ecclesiae post Codicem iuris canonici editae, collegit, digesit nostisque ornavit Xavierus Ochoa in Universitate Lateranensi Professor”, vol. I, “Leges annis 1917-1941 editae”, Romae 1966, no. 560, col. 641; see Pastuszko, *Prezbiter jako szafarz...*, *op. cit.*, p. 142.

<sup>321</sup> See Dworecki, *op. cit.*, p. 120.

<sup>322</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 120.

<sup>323</sup> See Canon 2365.

<sup>324</sup> J. Chelodi, *Ius Poenale et ordo procedendi*, Tridentini 1925, p. 125; see Dworecki, *op. cit.*, p. 121.

with a full discretion of mind, since by virtue of Canon 2229 § 2, any diminishment of imputability, either by mind or by will, exempts from the *latae sententiae* penalties<sup>325</sup>.

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<sup>325</sup> See Canon 2229 § 1.

Zofia Bańdur\*

**„Man to the junk yard” – is there a need for his re-establishment as a Father?**

The development of science, intensive scientific and technical progress brings the third millennium a great chance to further civilization's development, however if uncontrolled, it can become a threat and bring insecurity and fear.

In an urbanized and conformist society, so susceptible to the influence of advertisement and manipulation ideals, values and traditions fade out, and the cult of the average arises. Contemporary people begin to lose that, which is the essence of their existence, losing their identity because of only living the moment.

Reflecting on manliness and fatherhood, which are being brought down to an anti-masculine and anti-father social trend, whose reasons are to introduce an ersatz seeking constant improvement and to displace authorities from life, will become the starting point to further reflection.

This paper intends to present two aspects of being a father. The first aspect will spotlight the problem of negating fatherhood, which has come from western cultures and is becoming increasingly dangerous to family, society and country, and its consequences and engagement in the change of image of father are caricaturized. The second aspect will attempt to take radical steps towards returning fatherhood its true image<sup>326</sup> and the rightful position to the father.

Summarizing, theological reflections will be referred to in order to show God's intention towards male as a man and father, and his dignity as a person.

Only through experiencing God as the Father can we contribute to the real rebirth of the father's status in the contemporary world.

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<sup>326</sup> Por. Claudio Risé, *Sztuka ojcostwa*, Poznań 2006, s. 6



## 1. Social and cultural reasons for the father status' fall.

The deep changes that took place at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century have had an impact on family, especially the authority and status of the father figure.

The 20<sup>th</sup> century was a time of equality, emancipation, discovering and promoting the genius of femininity. Man was summoned on the battlefield of the sex wars, with which he needs to fight to ultimately have power over himself. Men's feminization, unmanliness, weakening the male identity, and women's taking over the male conception of life have led to a hurt and weakening of motherhood, whose final effect is the crisis of manliness and fatherhood.

History is didactic and provides an objective view on current events. The two World Wars greatly changed people's lives. Men went to war, leaving their families. The whole burden of taking care of children, rearing them and leading them into adulthood was left to women only, who became familiar with men's world through working outside home. Generations grew up without a father figure to look up to, which they would later become themselves in their adulthood. Contemporary women have the rights to vote and work jobs that were previously only for men, e.g. factories<sup>327</sup>.

*The Industrial Revolution* contributed to important changes in the institution of family, i.a. separating the father and his son. This new life style is modelled not on fatherly values, but on "pedagogy of success"<sup>328</sup> has led to egoism, protecting the unit, acquiring material benefits according to the capitalistic idea. It is the state that took over the range of caring for children and the elderly, becoming the determinant of existence. A disappearance of traditional values, social ties and civic virtue in the society came. There is now an increasing erosion of the functioning of the traditional family.

*Secularization* – a process, which played a very essential role in the weakening and undermining of the importance of the father figure. Protestant reforms and Luther "secularize" marriage and family, but his motives and desires become characteristic features of the "anti-father rebellion". The institution of marriage possesses a state dimension, not sacral, so divorce is an item of the secular order. In its idea it deprives the Divine Father of His

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<sup>327</sup> Mary Pytches, *Miejsce ojca*, Kraków 1993, s.44.

<sup>328</sup> Cf. Claudio Risé, *Ojciec, niezgoda na nieobecność*, Kielce 2005, s.56.

fatherhood image, while “For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name”<sup>329</sup>

Reformation, supporting Luther’s views, begins to lean towards entrusting the competence of rearing to the mother, and not the father. A few centuries later the father figure becomes physically absent from the home, and “the role of the father is being lost and is accompanied by a loss of transfer of the male identity, and thus, in the psychological and symbolic sense, manliness itself”<sup>330</sup>.

Family and human life become separated from the spiritual sphere, where the father stops being the protector of the family in a natural and divine way, and even a representative of the law in the social aspect. To advocate such a life style means attempting to rob the family of its basic religious value. Human and autonomous reality completely ignores God in its existence. The process of secularization had its share in the fall of the father figure and his authority.

*Feminism* became one of the areas where the male authority as a father is rejected. The idea of making women more important was essential and portrayed man and women as socially equal, with keeping a right balance between them. This movement’s actions led to the breakdown of marriage and lack of morality, because it allowed women to become free, independent and equal<sup>331</sup>. The fear of male domination sidetracked the father’s engagement, as well as his making decisions about rearing the children. Women took control of the most important aspects of marriage and family. An example of this can be the legal actions taken by the Court of Justice of the European Union in 1981, when it acknowledged what feminists had earlier claimed, that the father has no right to co-decide about the woman conducting abortion. By supporting such feministic ideas and taking over his function, the state devastates the father figure. But what kind of function is that and where will it lead? The consequences of wrong actions such as that will affect the whole society.

*Commercial media* are an increasingly developing technology in contemporary society and they have a great influence on humans and their lifestyle. The media’s impacts are usually negative, especially in regard to children and youth. Psychologists warn that escaping to the virtual world can result in problems with making contact with other people. It is the media that have slowly begun to replace parents and, in a sense, take over their role and change the

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<sup>329</sup> Ef 3,14-15

<sup>330</sup> Por. Claudio Risé, *Ojciec, niezgoda na nieobecność*, Kielce 2005, dz.cyt., s.50

<sup>331</sup> Por. Mary Pytches, *Miejsce ojca*, Kraków 1993, s.49-54

shape of family. The bond between children and their parents is fading, each is living in their own world, a world created and fashioned by the media.

There is no doubt that in the recent times cinema productions, television, radio and press have not been promoting a family-oriented lifestyle, nor a good image of men. The image of the father is characterized by negative and over exaggerated traits of the contemporary manliness. The positive model is increasingly collapsing. The father is presented as the tormentor of beloved ones – a emotionally immature person who lost his idea of role of the father. Presenting the father figure in such a twisted way becomes a role model that is pushed away as a pathological margin of life, where it is acquired by children, youth and the general society<sup>332</sup>. The new trends brought to the world by the media are becoming the determinants of the standards of conduct and interpersonal relations. It is the western culture that identifies itself more with typically feminine traits rather than male traits. The cultural phenomenon is the foreground here. Pretty looks, good presentation, self confidence, desire to satisfy needs are rather feminine traits which, when fashioned, have a positive influence on the development of consumption. In a context like this the brave and positively set on life man, a model father, ready for sacrifices for the good of the whole family, does not fit into the picture the media created<sup>333</sup>.

Consumer society, in which every unit is a consumer, loses its creative activity and with it its uniqueness, feeling of being distinct, special and the ability to give, take risks and its fantasy and ideals.

It is not accidental that the 20<sup>th</sup> century began the process of manipulating the human being, was the time of great totalitarianism, less or more open to atheism, that wanted to form humans under their machine-like iron rule.

Undermining the fundamentals of fatherly ethics forces the father to face a dilemma – retain his values as the fundamentals of social and family life at the cost of considering himself a deviant.

*The loss of identity* caused by pushing the father figure aside leads him to having to withdraw from his original role. From the role of father and head of the family man transmissions into the position of an observer with immature behaviour, forever a boy, who constantly seeks his narcissistic life sooths, which lacks that which is manly and the fatherly

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<sup>332</sup> Por. Justyna Szulich-Kałuża, *Współczesne ojcostwo w dyskursie prasowym, Ojcostwo wobec wyzwań współczesności*, Dorota Kornas-Bielea, Lublin 2007, s.69-70.

<sup>333</sup> Por. Claudio Risé, *Sztuka ojcostwa*, Poznań 2006, s. 24-26.

mind set. Physical and mental absence brings the father down to providing material goods for his children, not important values, thus giving a natural direction for their development.

Temporality and the feeling of human's emptiness create a weak identity. At that time people resort to drugs, and accept uncritically concocted political ideas and various pseudo religious beliefs. The newly formed ideologies, sects, pseudo religions bring in chaos, usurping the empty space left by the father.

The increasing number of *divorces* is clearly a sign of the anti-father lifestyle, which breaks already existing families. The western societies created a "divorce factory" with the help of interstate authority and the pro-divorce female society<sup>334</sup>. The social disease in interhuman relations has led to new and sophisticated attacks against fathers, stripping them of their laws. In most case it is the woman who disposes her husband and the father of her children as if he were a used up item. The man's role is being brought down to only paying alimonies. Fatherhood becomes an obstacle, and that is the reason for argumenting the father be eliminated from the child rearing role. The whole divorce mechanic is becoming a threat not just to family, but also the society, which builds a state without a future.

The notion of perceiving marriage as an antiquated institution is growing, while *homosexual relationships* that can adopt children is gaining in being popularised in the name of social tolerance. This absence and lack of a male role model of the father is one of the factors affecting such behaviour. This is proof to how importance of the father's presence and proper contacts with his children.

Escaping into individualism and egoism results in people becoming unapproachable by others. The woman can decide about killing her own unborn child, but the father has no say in it, even though without him that child would never come to exist. It is thus a paradox to care for health, physical strength in order to preserve one's youth as long as possible, while also fighting for the right to make *abortion* become a law.

It can be observed that the contemporary world shows an increasing battle between civilization of life and one of death. John Paul II stressed how valuable life is many times. "The value of civilization – the universal, timeless, cross cultural – is measured by its attitude towards life. A civilization that rejects the defenceless deserves to be called barbaric. Even

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<sup>334</sup> Por. Claudio Risé, *Ojciec, niezgoda na nieobecność*, Kielce 2005, dz.cyt., s.69.

despite them being greatly developed economically, technologically, artistically or scientifically<sup>335</sup>.

“I have said many times, and am certain of it, that the greatest danger to peace today is abortion. If a mother is allowed to kill her own child, what stops me or you from killing each other? The only one who may take people’s lives is He, who created it. No one else has that right: neither the mother, nor the father, nor any agency, nor any conference, nor any government (...)”<sup>336</sup>

It is clear that abortion takes away a man’s fatherhood, destroying his sensitivity, identity and dignity.

The social problem is revealed by the acceptance of creating new children by a artificial insemination coming from an anonymous donor – the father-inseminator, a man donating his semen to a *sperm bank*. Social acceptance supports women who want to create a two person family, in which the child is a result of medical manipulation. Sperm banks are a source of income as well as a way for men to prove their manliness, but as anonymous donors they do not allow the child to identify them<sup>337</sup>. This particular pathology, degeneration, split between fertility and responsibility for its consequences. The lack of personal dignity, awareness of the value of life leads to a consumer treating of people. The phenomenon of sperm banks is a sign of the regression of culture and a stage of the degradation of society, and what follows, the degradation of fatherhood and also motherhood.

## **2. Consequences of rejecting the father figure**

The symbol of the father is identified with the ability to endure wounds, losses and suffer defeat, which are all inevitable in life. This authority was shattered by the disregard of the father figure. It is a great and obscure failure of the contemporary world. Why should one obey the teacher, police, priest or even politician, who all set norms of behaviour, when one does not have to obey his own father?

The problems in the struggle against life and numerous *suicides* are signs of a “resistance”, leaving the family home and parting with one’s own father become unacceptable and unbearable to the child or youth. Many studies show, that to male teenagers the father is a

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<sup>335</sup> Jan Paweł II, *Homilia w Sanktuarium św. Józefa w Kaliszu, 4.06.1997*, <http://www.info.kalisz.pl/pope/>, 2.03.2012.

<sup>336</sup> Tamże.

<sup>337</sup> Dorota Kornas-Biela, *Współczesny kryzys ojcostwa*, Dorota Kornas-Biela, *Oblicza ojcostwa*, Lublin 2007, s.184-185.

more important parent than the mother. The father is the only person who can help the boy to leave his home and go out to the society, boldly taking the risk and become independent and self confident. Whereas the mother wants to keep the child by her side, which results in the child closing itself off from others and having issues in relations with friends. All suicidal attempts are desperate cries for help and fatherly love and all that it brings with it.

The lack of contact with one's father and the separation of children creates an unaware *aggression* towards the society. The father is perceived as the one who wants to punish, abuse and possess his children. This leads to periodic bursts of pathological violence, proof to which contemporary is *terrorism*. Sadistic aggressiveness of terrorism is tied related with the lack of the father and his relations to the law. Destroying one's self and others through sadistic behaviour is twice as high as in cases of children who have both parents<sup>338</sup>. An increasing number of juvenile offenders demonstrate such behaviour in the streets, at school in relation to their teachers as well as their peers. The lack of norms and rules, which are taught by the father, introduces passivity and fosters all kinds of abuse.

Striving to entertainment, pleasure of living life, being fashionable, and rejecting all that which is painful, tragic, full of pain, suffering, renunciation are all promoted by mass media and advertisement. It is increasingly often that the contemporary human is suggested all sorts of stimulants that allow him to take a break from the real world, by causing stupor and intoxication.

The results of the lack of the father in the family for young people are behavioural disorder and antisocial behaviour caused by anger.

Children devoid of their father are much more exposed to alcohol and drug abuse, mental illnesses, suicide, bad grades at school, teenage pregnancy, crime as well as seeking understanding in sects, informal groups or gangs. In a situation in which the absence of the father is stressed the child is exposed to a greater risk of disorders in social adaptation, lack of respect for authority, hyperactivity, aggressiveness (also directed at their own self), depression, anxiety, feeling unsafe and failing at school.

The lack of the father is the lack of adaptation, helplessness in the face of the trials of life, as well as an attitude of demanding and expecting towards the society which it is not able to satisfy. Neurosis and mental problems are, among other things, bring impoverishment of the relations of feelings with a veil of mystery (medial standards of behaviour devoid of all norms of proper behaviour and life) and propagating all sorts of phobias. The lack of

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<sup>338</sup> Por. Claudio Risé, *Ojciec, niezgoda na nieobecność*, Kielce 2005, s.111.

initiative and great dependency are the effects of undermining the authority of the father and his role.

Especially severe are the results of the lack of a father for boys – they create a twisted image of manliness, overly aggressive, they negate the behaviour and attitude of the mother and have problems finding themselves as parents when they have children of their own. Such deductions are presented by authors who analyze the issues of child development in the conditions of the father's absence (temporary and permanent). The lack of a father's participation in rearing his son causes that he also does not acquire the competence necessary to become a father himself; this way the caricature of the father figure is reproduced by the society.

The lack of a father, especially in the context of the "last resort", certainly does not leave to earlier maturity. The soul is left with a scar that will not be easy to heal. That scar is the result of forcing a still immature psyche to prematurely enter adulthood and become responsible for others. The lack of a role model causes the child to live in constant anxiety and uncertainty about his or her choices and future. Young people do not know what is good and what is evil, they do not have the experience needed to meet the want with the can.

This matter should be given some thought, and drastic actions should be taken to re-establish the position of the father, and the family at the same. The threats to contemporary family are, most of all: omnipresent demoralization, pornography, dechristianization, unemployment, abortion, euthanasia and freedom in manipulating human embryos.

The future of the citizens and their states depends on family. In it people mature physically and mentally, as well as emotionally and intellectually. Family shapes patriotism and national attitude, which are the fundamentals of a good moral and spiritual condition.

Pornography and violence reach people via television, radio, movies, press, obscene song lyrics, satanic music and the Internet. They effectively destroy the psyche and personality of young people. Neo-Paganism, dechristianization and secularizing the public and private life result in religion and values that cannot be substituted by anything else no longer count for the state, family and unit. Because of this many families, who do not have relations with religion and are morally weak, quickly fall apart, which has a negative influence on the image, position of the father and rearing the children.

The weakening of the position of the father was affected by the events of the past centuries, which in a selective way have been referred to as the background for the continuity of the process of the degradation of family and the image of the father figure. This process is

proceeding, and all currently arising procedures foster the ruination of authority in Poland, Europe and the whole world. Moral and ethical values are becoming unfashionable and inconvenient, antiquated, and people are becoming independent of the rules that bind them. A society without fathers is a deeply pathologic society. Many empiric studies have proven this. If manliness and fatherhood are lost, then so are femininity and motherhood.

By analysing various trends, new ideologies, observing the contemporary world, one can reach a conclusion – “man to the junk yard”, technology has developed, mankind reached the stars, and unnecessary things are thrown away, disposed of. Achievements that are supposed to serve a good cause are what makes human life and interpersonal relations be in a state of serious crisis. People hunger for their basic values, the closeness of another person and that is why the need to re-establish the position of the family, especially the father, is greater than before.

### **3. Theological reflection**

God’s plan towards man and father appears at the moment when he was created: “So God created mankind in his own image, (...) male and female he created them”<sup>339</sup>. Since then being a man or a woman is basic to defining one’s own humanity. Building mutual relations between men and women nowadays is now marked with rivalry, suspicion, battle, tension and lack of respect for other people, which results in a lack place for trust and respect for dignity. “At stake is the dignity of the human person, whose defense and promotion have been entrusted to us by the Creator, and to whom the men and women at every moment of history are strictly and responsibly in debt”<sup>340</sup>.

A civilization which rejects God as the Father only causes the male-female relations to be industrialized. These relations have become a commodity for sale, which makes big money (e.g. pornography, contraception, dating services, companionship services and gay movements striving to erase the difference between men and women). There is a lack of reasonable thinking. People cannot see, appreciate, respect and admire the mutual complementation, different roles of men and women, which are humanity’s great treasure.

Only by the bond with God the Father, the source of all life and love, can man find in himself the desire of manly maturity, planted in him in the act of creation. Honest and true prayer provide him the courage to overcome his fears, inner repentance and building brotherly friendships.

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<sup>339</sup> Por. Rdz 1, 27.

<sup>340</sup> Por. Jan Paweł II, *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, 47.



The crisis of the position of the father was preceded by a fall of moral and religious values, which in turn led to loss of human dignity as a priority value in life. „The absence of the father causes psychological and moral imbalance and notable difficulties in family relationships”<sup>341</sup>. One should take a bow and reflect on the topic of human in the spirit of the gospel. Many times did John Paul II appeal and show a vision of an integral human dignity: “If this profound process takes place within him, he then bears fruit not only of adoration God but also of deep wonder of himself. (...) In reality, the name for that deep amazement at man’s worth and dignity is the Gospel, that is to say: the Good News. It is also called Christianity”<sup>342</sup>. The true roots of good and man’s greatness should be revealed to the contemporary world and the Church. In a situation of such severe attacks of breaking the laws of a human person, in the face of theoretical and practical materialism, which reduces people to the commodities, in the face of the evil of which man is capable of in the time of globalization, steps must be taken to make man the subject, not the object. The fundament of the greatness and dignity of man is law and love.

If men are respected in those categories, then their dignity as males and fathers will also be re-established. One should also turn to the beginning of human existence, which closely related with God, our Father and Creator. A tragedy of the contemporary image of the father is being set on himself and that which is materialistic, purely human. The loss of the real model leads to many marital and family disasters.

The sin of the western civilization is the separation of sexuality from marriage and parenthood. Destroying human fertility (contraception, abortion) and treating infertility (which is often the result of contraception and abortion) is a possession of powerful corporations, whose attitude towards human fertility is dehumanizing. Selling semen, reproductive cells leads to antihuman attitudes and attitudes that humiliate human dignity so much, that actions against it should be considered.

It is thus evident that the place and duties of a father are the only and indispensable values<sup>343</sup>. There is a close relation between fatherhood and religious experiences. Losing that element causes the disappearance or obscuring the role of the father. Feelings of losing the sense of life, loneliness, a feeling of being abandoned, fear towards the hardships of life arise. By erasing God’s image human destroys his personality. It is indispensable to have a relation with one’s father in order to create a relation with God. Human thinking should also be

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<sup>341</sup> Por. Jan Paweł II, *Familiaris consortio*, 25.

<sup>342</sup> Por. Jan Paweł II, *Redemptoris hominis*, 10.

<sup>343</sup> Por. Jan Paweł II, *Familiaris consortio*, 25.

directed at saving and re-establishing the position of fatherhood. Only through experiencing God as the Father can we contribute to the real reestablishment of the father figure in the contemporary world. In his encyclicals John Paul II says: “In revealing and in reliving on earth the very fatherhood of God, a man is called upon to ensure the harmonious and united development of all the members of the family: he will perform this task by exercising generous responsibility for the life conceived under the heart of the mother, by a more solicitous commitment to education, a task he shares with his wife, by work which is never a cause of division in the family but promotes its unity and stability, and by means of the witness he gives of an adult Christian life which effectively introduces the children into the living experience of Christ and the Church.”<sup>344</sup>.

### **„Man to the junk yard” – is there a need for his re-establishment as a Father?**

The question is stated the way it is for a reason. It is supposed to be moving, encouraging action and show the extraordinary need to work on re-establishing the role of the father. In attempting to find a cure for the disease humanity is suffering one must resort to taking more insight into the role that fatherhood is supposed to fulfil. However the focus should not be on the roles themselves, but the integrally understood attitude of human towards God and his neighbours. Fatherhood is ill, when the man’s soul is ill. And when a man’s soul is healthy, so is fatherhood<sup>345</sup>. It is necessary to help discover responsible fatherhood, which is a natural attitude of a man who is searching for God with his whole self. It is not only a personal effort, but an extraordinary gift, transferred by one’s own family. The complex paths of many men, personal tragedies should incite understanding in the society, and a need to help. Men, fathers often did not experience the right role model in their own family. Many of them struggle to avoid being “thrown out to the junk yard”. And instead be a solid rock, on which a good home can be built – perfect for marriage, family and fatherhood.

The concluding thought, and reflection at the same time as well as an example for all men and women can be expressed by the words of John Paul II, that show a great power that lies in the real life example of one’s own father: “My father was a great man and almost all my childhood memories are about him. The violent blows, that hit him, opened in him immeasurable spiritual depths, his worries became his prayer. The simple fact of me seeing

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<sup>344</sup> Tamże, 25.

<sup>345</sup> Piotr Hensel, *Lekarstwo na chorujące człowieczeństwo*, [http://www.angelus.pl/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=8202:lekarstwo-na-chorujce-czowieczestwo&catid=223:varia&Itemid=790](http://www.angelus.pl/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=8202:lekarstwo-na-chorujce-czowieczestwo&catid=223:varia&Itemid=790), 5.03.2012.

him on his knees had crucial influence on my youth. He was so demanding of himself that he no longer had the need to be demanding of his son: his example taught me discipline and a sense of duty<sup>346</sup>.

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<sup>346</sup> Bronisław Mierzwiński, *Mężczyzna – Mąż – Ojciec*, Otwock 1996, s.179.