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The Fifth Gospel in the Context of the Way of St. James

Abstract

What is referred to as the Fifth Gospel is the tangible and intangible memorabilia from the area of the present-day Holy Land. The buildings, landscape, nature, social atmosphere and customs cultivated till this very day allow to have a better understanding of the inspired biblical texts. The authors prove this thesis to be valid. They show that although it is mainly used in the pastoral care of pilgrims, it is not devoid of theological foundations. People experience faith also in a physical manner. Sensual experiences associated with the stay in the Holy Land make it easier to grasp spiritual matters and to reinforce faith. The article illustrates the issue in question with a few practical examples. The closing paragraphs formulate pastoral postulates. They show how the experience of visiting the land of biblical events can be used in the pastoral care of pilgrims more effectively.

Keywords

The Fifth Gospel, Holy Land, theology of space, anthropology of pilgrimage, pastoral care of pilgrims, theology of space, The Route of St. James.

Pilgrims who travel to Palestine often refer to it as the “Fifth Gospel”. Does this name bear any scientific merit or is it merely used in a practical sense by guides and writers?¹ Or maybe it is merely a term used by pastors? After conducting a thorough analysis, it is possible to say that the Fifth Gospel can be used in a scientific context. In this article, the authors attempt to justify this thesis and connect the Fifth Gospel to the Way of St. James, not only because traces of St. James the Elder Apostle can be found in Palestine. It seems that regardless where the Camino pilgrim travels to, he finds himself in a similar context of culture, nature or communities which makes him have a unique take on the Gospels.

St James himself is an evangelical figure. Tracing his footsteps allows to get closer to the Gospel and to explore it anew. Both the pilgrimage to the Holy Land and the Way of St. James are considered a gateway into a sacred realm riddled with symbols which are conducive to discovering religious truths. Therefore the phrase – *mutatis mutandis* which is often used in the context of the Holy Land can also be applied to Camino.

The term “Fifth Gospel” can be found in various contexts. We know of the so called Apocryphal Gospels: Gospel of Thomas, Gospel of Philip or Gospel of Mary Magdalene. In a sense, they may be referred to as the Fifth Gospel, as they are not part of the canonical four. However, this is beyond the point. Just like other biblical apocrypha, Apocryphal Gospels, describe events which, although are not always possible to prove historically or sometimes even legendary, have become permanently embedded in religious culture. Many of the traditions cultivated in the Holy Land and other places visited by pilgrims up to this very day were created based on these apocrypha. From a broader perspective, religious art, not only that in the Holy Land, very often refers to apocryphal stories. Theologians utilize apocrypha, although they are aware that these writings are not doctrinal sources. However, they can allow for a better understanding of the cultural and geographical context that shaped canonical books. They also contain so-called “historically authentic” records. Legends and oral traditions have always had a grain of truth to them, which often allowed to get a better understanding of history, the peoples well as the social context of the described events. Although they do not contain the very truth itself, they, at the very least, bring us closer to discovering it.

If this is the case, then why can't the same thing be true for a pilgrim visiting places of worship? The Fifth Gospel primarily refers to tangible memorabilia

¹ Cf. P. Vandenberg, *Piąta Ewangelia*, ed. Sonia Draga, 2017.

of evangelical events characterized by a high degree of authenticity, which are not necessarily located in the Holy Land. The most famous of these include the Shroud of Turin and Jesus's headband kept in Manoppello.² In this article, the term Fifth Gospel will refer to everything related to the Holy Land taking both the tangible and intangible elements into account. However, there is one reservation. Many places commemorating the biblical events no longer bear any physical evidence of those times. Those have only been preserved in the memory of many generations of pilgrims and custodians. Only a few items are likely to be an authentic product of biblical times. However, it is still possible to talk about people, landscapes or the nature of that land. Despite the passage of time and the development of infrastructure, many elements reminiscent of Biblical times have been preserved up to this very day.

Therefore, the term "Fifth Gospel" can be used for items or phenomena not described in scripture that nonetheless reflect evangelical truths. They allow us to get a deeper understanding of what the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments contain and get a better insight into them. Sometimes they can be tangible (buildings, landscape, nature, etc.), while in other cases – intangible (habits, beliefs, social atmosphere, etc.) In the following paragraphs of our article, we will attempt to explain the concept in more detail and illustrate it with examples.

1. A Theological basis

To start off, it is important to us ask the question whether there is any theological merit behind the term "The Fifth Gospel". It seems that the Incarnation of the Son of God can be considered as such. God is an immaterial being and his actions are of a spiritual nature. However, these actions often affect man who is a physical being. Consequently, in order to save humanity, God became human as Jesus Christ. He took the human form along with its constitution. He had a human family and lived in a specific country. In the prologue of his Gospel St John writes: "The word became flesh."³ In both the Old and the New Testament

² Many scientific studies on the Turin Shroud have been produced, such as A. J. Palla, *Całun Turyński*, ed. Świat Książki, 2008; L. Schiatti, *Całun Turyński*, ed. św. Paweł, Częstochowa 2000; Regarding the headband e.g.: *Volto Santo di Manoppello*, <https://www.voltosanto.net/> (8.05.2019).

³ Jn 1,14.

man desired to see and experience God in earthly categories.⁴ The disciples turned to Christ saying “Lord, show us the Father.”⁵ Saint John writes in his letter: “that which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim.”⁶ The disciples could touch and see God Incarnate with their very own eyes. This became a way to discover deeper, spiritual realms. Through Jesus, God allowed mankind to experience the divine mystery.⁷

This theological problem can be resolved with the help of John Paul II’s letter concerning pilgrimage. The author writes that through a sheer act of his own will, God chooses an area on earth and makes it a place of his divine interventions. God’s presence manifests itself in a given area through an intense concentration of grace allowing for extraordinary, and miraculous interventions to happen.⁸ On the other hand, this is accompanied by a subjective human experience supported by faith. During the consecration of the Łagiewniki Sanctuary, the same Pope explained: “There are places chosen by God, where people may experience His presence and His grace in a unique way”. In these places, faithful prayer is more likely to be heard, and the people themselves are more convinced of the presence of God. Driven by faith, they journey to these places to meet Him.”⁹ The Holy Land is most definitely such place. However, there are also numerous sanctuaries spread across the globe where the faithful travel to. Even the Israelis had a sense of two areas: *sacrum* and *profanum*. The “Tent of Meeting” in the desert,¹⁰ the holy city of Jerusalem with Mount Zion¹¹ and its most holy temple¹² come to mind. When God manifested Himself to Moses in a fiery bush, he said: “Take your sandals off your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy

⁴ Cf. E.g. Psalms “Behold the generation of those who seek Him, who seek the face of the God of Jacob” (24,6); “Do not hide your face from me, do not turn your servant away in anger” (27, 8–9); “Let your face shine, that we may be saved!” (80,20).

⁵ Jn 14,8.

⁶ 1 Jn 1,1.

⁷ Cf. John Paul II, Apostolic letter *Rosarium Virginis Mariae*, Rome 16.10.2002, n. 29.

⁸ *List o pielgrzymowaniu do miejsc związanych z historią zbawienia*, Vatican 29.06.1999, n. 1.

⁹ Homily during service in Łagiewniki, 17.08.2002, in: *Bóg bogaty w miłosierdzie*, Krakow 2002, p. 73.

¹⁰ Cf. Ex 28,43.

¹¹ Cf. Is 48,2; 52,1.

¹² Cf. 1 Kings 6,16.

ground.”¹³ The mysterious presence of God elevates any area on the globe. This makes the faithful worship the Holy Presence in this very place.

Palestine of the Old and the New Testament became testament to God's divine interventions and the story of redemption has been engraved in it for eternity. No place on earth is sacred without a reason. It becomes sacred through its connection with God. And although God is not bound to a given physical area, he remains transcendent and inaccessible. He accompanies his people, and his mysterious presence is revealed through visible signs.¹⁴ While contemplating these signs and symbols man is not only able to recall the great events of the history of salvation, but also able to realize that they are happening around him all the time. Every person, regardless of the times in which they live in is a part of it and can draw from its fruits.

2. Anthropological basis

When explaining the concept of the Fifth Gospel, anthropological issues cannot be overlooked. As man is a being of body and spirit, he experiences his humanity through both the physical as well as the spiritual. These elements are inextricably bound, complement each other and remain in constant relationship. That being said, it cannot be forgotten that man is oriented towards eternal life. He constantly grows and creates. However, only after leaving the physical realm is he able to reach his full potential. This creates somewhat of a tension between the physical and the spiritual. St. Paul writes that while he still inhabits his earthly body, he longs to abandon it and find himself “in the face of the Lord” where he will find his fulfilment. Hence, he seeks no permanent settlement on this earth. This longing constitutes the basis for defining man as a pilgrim on a constant journey towards eternity.¹⁵

Since man is both a physical and spiritual being, imagination and feelings play an important role in his existence. They can be triggered by the surrounding atmosphere, landscape (mountains, valleys, fields, springs, rivers), sounds, colors and shapes and above all by experiencing interpersonal relationships. All of this may contribute towards his road to eternity.

¹³ Ex 3,5.

¹⁴ Jan Paweł II, *List o pielgrzymowaniu...*, quoted doc. nn. 3–4.

¹⁵ Cf. also 1 Pt 2, 11; 2 Cor 5,6–8.

Let us take a closer look at some of the mentioned “physical” elements which can affect the “spirit.”¹⁶ They play a role in the pilgrim’s experience not only in the Holy Land. In the next paragraphs we will try to illustrate the issue with examples from the bible.

The pilgrim leaves his own home and journeys between it and a holy place. In this time, he has the opportunity to admire the beauty of the surrounding landscape. Beauty is something that pleases him and gives him a sense of pleasure. According to St. Thomas, an object can be considered beautiful if it meets at least three of the following criteria: completion – perfection, proportion i.e. harmony, and radiance¹⁷. Other thinkers also add grace, majesty and multiplicity (variety). A perfect object must possess all these qualities. The proportion consists of quantity and quality arranged in mutual harmony and order. Beauty cannot be monotonous. Beauty is perceived by a contrast between objects. Radiance means revealing to the outside the perfection within. The world was created by God as a perfect and harmonious whole, with countless species of living creatures inhabiting its many forest, fields, lakes and seas in perfect harmony. The beauty of the world is a perfect testament to its Creator. Its every aspect can become a way for man to reach God. Through the beauty of nature man gets to know the supreme beauty of its Creator, as long as he wants to take a step back and contemplate.

The landscape is diverse. The mountains and hills make man reflect on higher truths. Throughout history, mountain tops have always been associated with God’s presence. Hence they were places of worship, places to build altars and finally places where one could experience God’s presence. Crosses and even larger chapels and shrines are often built there. The journey to the heavens requires a lot effort and is often associated with overcoming spiritual barriers or weaknesses.

Similarly water, whether in lakes, rivers or springs is a founding element for all life, particularly important in desert areas. Water, especially spring water, is associated with cleanliness and something that gives us strength. Taking a bath is refreshing and gives us joy. The sound of water has a calming effect.

¹⁶ Cf. M. Ostrowski, *Rekreacyjne i estetyczne motywy ochrony przyrody*, in: *Mówić o ochronie przyrody. Zintegrowana wizja ochrony przyrody*, eds. M. Grzegorzczak, J. Perzanowska, Z. Kijas, Z. Mirek, Instytut Ochrony Przyrody PAN, Instytut Studiów Franciszkańskich, Instytut Botaniki PAN, Kraków 2002, pp. 58–67.

¹⁷ *Suma teologiczna*, pt. I, zag. 6, art. 4 http://www.katedra.uksw.edu.pl/suma/suma_1.pdf (15.05.2019).

It helps relieve tension and is conducive for contemplation. It is no coincidence that water has been accepted in Christianity as an element in worship (sacrifice) and above all – baptism. It symbolizes God's grace, especially the Holy Spirit¹⁸.

Music and singing have accompanied man since the dawn of history. They reflect but also augment human emotion. They accompany all celebrations and help create a solemn atmosphere. Throughout the years, they were also a medium for prayer, not only in Christianity.

Smells are among the sensory experiences. They can be beautiful and evoke pleasant sensations. This is definitely true for meadows, forests and waters. Smells are also part of religious ceremonies. In Judaism and Christianity, they are used through incense during service. Incense symbolizes how prayer and the Gospel spreads around the world.¹⁹ That being said, there are also repulsive smells which symbolize all things evil and related to Satan.

An extremely important part of the pilgrim's experience is meeting other people, both pilgrims and local residents. It is no longer just about nature but about entering into relations with another person. It is a truism to say that man is a social being and needs to develop contacts with other people in order to fully grow. Human interactions are an opportunity for relations and testaments. They can be seen in various spheres of social life in culture, customs and religious life. The dynamics of faith, prayer and cultivating religious customs become an excellent inspiration. The words spoken by John Paul II during his stay in Kalwaria Zebrzydowska many years ago are a great example of this. He called the pilgrim community that had been gathering in the Calvary pilgrimage center for centuries "a reservoir of faith, hope and love", from which he himself repeatedly "drew", enriching his own religious life. According to the Pope, the pilgrims' prayers and their vigorous faith have been somehow engraved in the Shrine, and now they radiate towards other visitors.²⁰

As we have indicated earlier, only some elements of the world surrounding the pilgrim are listed. Through contact with them, he experiences the physical, the imagery as well as the emotional. This helps him to reach out and experience deeper matters of the spirit. In a way, it solidifies the assumptions which he could have made before, for example by reading the Holy Scriptures, meditating

¹⁸ Cf. Jn 7,38–39.

¹⁹ Cf. 2 Cor 2,14–16.

²⁰ Speech in Kalwaria Zebrzydowska, 7.06.1979, in: *Pielgrzymka Jana Pawła II do Polski*, Przemówienia. Authorised text, Poznan – Warsaw 1979, p. 156.

on religious texts and even analyzing images. Here, everything becomes almost tangible and possible to verify through the senses.

An important aim of the pilgrimage is not so much to reach and see holy places. It is about reaching spiritual values. To fully embrace them with thought and faith. This happens not only in the Holy Land, but in every other place reached by the pilgrim, also on the Way of St. James. In the next paragraph, we will illustrate the pilgrim's experience in contact with the Holy Land – the Fifth Gospel. It will then be easy to transpose these experiences to the situation of the Camino.

3. The Fifth Gospel in the Holy Land

When in the Holy Land it is impossible not to experience its “message”, the feeling that it complements the words written on the pages of the Gospel. We can even go as far as to say that without the Holy Land, there would be no Gospel.²¹ It was here that Jesus Christ and his disciples walked through the fields, taking in the smells of fresh grain.²² It was here that Jesus taught on the slopes of the Mountain of Beatitudes amidst grasses and flowers.²³ And it was here, that he met with his disciples and sailed on a boat on the Sea of Galilee.²⁴ He would walk through the streets of towns and villages, he would walk the roads of Jerusalem, where he would finally make the ultimate sacrifice for mankind. As John Paul II wrote: “everything in the Holy Land, from its northern to southern end, resembles Christ.”²⁵ It is a unique place that brings together all the senses and, as we have said before, is conducive for contemplating the words of God, and rediscovering them anew at every step of the way. Sanctuaries, monasteries, places connected with the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, with His Mother and the Apostles, and other figures of the Old and New Testaments are like a reliquaries.²⁶ There are not only the buildings and walls that show

²¹ Cf. J. Augustyn, *Medytacje Jerozolimskie. Świadectwo pielgrzyma*, Krakow 2010, p. 9.

²² Cf. Mt 12,1; Mk 2,23; Łk 6,1.

²³ Cf. Mt 5,1–2.

²⁴ Cf. Mk 4,1.

²⁵ John Paul II, *List o pielgrzymowaniu...*, n. 7.

²⁶ Cf. J. Kraj, *Piąta Ewangelia*, in: *Śladami Jezusa. Przewodnik po Sanktuariach Ziemi Świętej*, Jerusalem 2012, p. 5.

us the places connected with the history of salvation. There are also the people whom we encounter along our journey – pious Jews praying at the Wailing Wall, Muslims praying in the squares and street corners, and finally inhabitants of Samaria, where we will still find a well with “water of life” among them.²⁷ It is the eye-pleasing, diverse nature. From the beautiful greenery, lush vegetation at the springs of the Jordan river, through the fertile fields of Galilee with Mount Tabor rising above it, to the Jordan Valley, which runs through almost the entire country into the Dead Sea, to the deserts that give a sense of peace, full of majesty, diverse forms and colors.²⁸ There are the four great reservoirs that the pilgrim can experience during his or her journey – the Sea of Galilee, the Mediterranean Sea, the Dead and Red Sea. And finally, there are services, a wide variety of rituals that can be experienced during the stay. As we have already stressed, all these observations and sensations make the image of the Earth chosen by Christ more complete. Although it is not always easy to understand, it is thanks to “a sense of faith”²⁹ that a pilgrim is able to experience all that and deepen his faith. Let us now stop and look at a few examples.

a. Armenian Basilica of Saint James

Among the few relics of Jacob the Greater, in Jerusalem’s Armenian district we can find a cathedral dedicated to the Holy One. The Evangelist Mark shows the image of the calling of the apostles on the Sea of Galilee as Jesus walked on its shore and saw them casting their nets. Among the twelve called at that time was also St James, son of Zebedee.³⁰

Among the disciples who followed Jesus there were two named James. The first, called the Elder or Greater, was the son of Zebedee and the brother of John the Evangelist; the second was called Lesser or Younger. James the Greater was the first to suffer a martyr’s death by order of Herod of Agrippa I in 44.³¹ James

²⁷ Cf. Jn 4,10.

²⁸ The Judean Desert has different characteristics. It is a rocky, stony desert, which in the winter is green with fine grass. And definitely different is the Negev desert – with an extremely rich range of sand and rock colors, occupying almost two thirds of the country.

²⁹ Cf. Homily during service in Łągiwniki, 17.08.2002, in: *Bóg bogaty w miłosierdzie*, Krakow 2002, p. 73.

³⁰ Cf. Mk 1,16–20; Mt 4,18–22; Łk 5,4–11.

³¹ Cf. D. Baldi, *W Ojczyźnie Jezusa. Przewodnik po Ziemi Świętej*, Krakow – Assisi 1982, p. 104.

the Lesser was the first bishop of Jerusalem. He also died a martyr's death. He was a victim of the persecution that the Jews instigated after the sudden death of Prosecutor Portius Festus in 62 after Christ.³²

The Armenian cathedral commemorates both these Saints. According to one of the Armenian traditions after the beheading of James the Elder, the Apostles brought his head to the Blessed Virgin Mary and St John and they laid it in the place where today's cathedral stands. Later they also placed the remains of St James the Younger. The body of St James the Greater was found in Santiago de Compostela, Spain, which the Armenians call the edge of the world.³³

The cathedral is a characteristic building for Armenian churches. Full of prominence and majesty. It is the seat of the Armenian Patriarchate. It is decorated with numerous lamps illuminating the twilight. There are three chapels in the cathedral. In one of them rests the head of St. James the Elder. The cathedral is not open to pilgrims all day long. They can enter only twice a day. Upon entering, they can feel an elevated atmosphere and remarkable respect for the Patrons of this place. During the services, although they usually do not understand the language, pilgrims can experience the solemnity and importance of this place, which is a place of worship up to this very day. After two thousand years, both these saints live in the memory of the faithful and inspire the pilgrims.

b. Cana of Galilee

The Gospel of St. John mentions Cana of Galilee as the place of Jesus' first miracle. It was there that, at the request of Mary, he turned water into wine, and called the apostle Bartholomew – Nathanael. But let us focus on the first event. Just as Mary discreetly asked him for help, so he discreetly performed this miracle. This miracle foreshadowed that which would come later – the transformation of wine into the blood of Christ during the last supper³⁴.

According to the biblical description, serving as background to Jesus's miracle, we also see a couple of newlyweds who, in spite of their efforts, were unable to provide wine for all the guests at their wedding. Jesus did not leave them to deal with the problem alone, even though it was not His time yet. And so, in this most important moment for every couple, when they start a new life

³² T. Jelonek, *Ormiańska katedra świętego Jakuba* author's own materials.

³³ T. Jelonek, *Ormiańska katedra świętego Jakuba* author's own materials.

³⁴ Cf. J. Augustyn, *Medytacje Jerozolimskie*, Pilgrim's testimony, Krakow 2010, p. 173.

together, Jesus gave the couple his blessing by his very presence. Since that time, this blessing is given to all marriages in temples all over the world. By accepting this sacrament, the newlyweds invite Christ and Mary to accompany them on this difficult path.

The modern sanctuary, which is under the care of Franciscans, was built in 1880. However, the Fathers themselves have been present in Cana for three centuries. The place of the miracle itself was initially linked to various towns.³⁵ However, it was in Kafar-Cana that the ruins of a basilica dating back to the first century were found. The testimonies of pilgrims who visited the Biblical Cana date back to the 6th century. One of them was the “Anonymous Pilgrim from Piacenza”, who reported on his short stay in Cana. Today, the pilgrims can see the remains of archaeological excavations carried out by the Franciscan archaeologists Fr. S. Loffred and Fr. E. Alliath in the basement.³⁶

There is also a beautiful tradition connected with the sanctuary. During the service, married couples are surrounded by other pilgrims, as they renew the marital vows. Their faces show love as well as gratitude for the years they have spent together. Just as the newlyweds from Cana were grateful at the beginning of their journey, now, during every service, married couples praise God for all the graces and gifts he bestowed upon them.

c. Sea of Galilee

This place is called the largest pulpit in the world, where two thousand years ago Jesus Christ taught and healed. As he announced, it is here that he would meet his beloved disciples upon his resurrection. According to the Gospel: “But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee.”³⁷ Here, on the shores of a lake, there are several sanctuaries that commemorate those important events. In Capernaum, the place where many miracles and healings were performed and where the Eucharistic speech was delivered,³⁸ we can find a modern church which was built over the ruins of St Peter’s house. There are also the

³⁵ Cf. E. Alliata, E. Bermejo, G. C. Bottini, L. Cignelli, A. Sobkowski, *Śladami Jezusa. Przewodnik po Sanktuariach w Ziemi Świętej*, Jerusalem 2012, p. 24.

³⁶ Cf. E. Alliata, E. Bermejo, G. C. Bottini, L. Cignelli, A. Sobkowski, *Śladami Jezusa. Przewodnik po Sanktuariach w Ziemi Świętej*, Jerusalem 2012, p. 24.

³⁷ Mt 26,32.

³⁸ Cf. Jn 6,22–35.

ruins of a synagogue where he cast out an impure spirit.³⁹ In Tabgha, on the other hand, three evangelical events are commemorated, namely, the multiplication of bread,⁴⁰ the meeting of the resurrected Jesus with the Apostles⁴¹ and the Sermon on the Mount.⁴² In Tiberias, some of the events associated with Jesus' activities at the lake can be mentioned, and it is here that pilgrims visit St Peter's Church.⁴³

Being on the Sea of Galilee, it is impossible not to mention an event which is described by as many as three Evangelists, namely, when Jesus and his disciples crossed the sea in a boat, an event which most certainly remained in their memory.⁴⁴ During the journey, a violent storm broke out and the fearful disciples asked: "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?"⁴⁵ Jesus did not remain indifferent, and he calmed the storm, revealing his power once again to the surprise of his disciples. Nowadays, many pilgrims attempt to recreate this experience, marveling at the beauty of the landscape, listening to the calming sound of the water and feeling the breeze from above. Above all, however, they come to feel close to Jesus and his Gospel. After reading the biblical passage, they can ask themselves a question just like the apostles, namely: What does Jesus mean to me? Do I believe in His omnipotence and that if I ask for something impossible in human terms, Christ will do what He deems best for me and my life? Jesus wants us to experience omnipotence, not just in the Sea of Galilee. Every day, he invites us in front of the tabernacle to ask, just like the apostles: What does He mean to me and how does His presence affect my life?

d. Emmaus

The place is related to the events that took place on the evening of the resurrection when Christ appeared to the two disciples on their way from Jerusalem. He joined them on that road. However, according to the Evangelists, their eyes

³⁹ Cf. Mk 1,21–39.

⁴⁰ Cf. Mk 6,34–44; Mt 14,13–21; Lk 9,10–17; Jn 6,1–15.

⁴¹ Cf. Jn 21,1–17.

⁴² Cf. Mt 5,1–7; Lk 6,17–49.

⁴³ Cf. E. Alliata, E. Bermejo, G. C. Bottini, L. Cignelli, A. Sobkowski, *Śladami Jezusa. Przewodnik po Sanktuariach w Ziemi Świętej*, Jerusalem 2012, p. 43.

⁴⁴ Cf. Mk 4,35–41; Mt 8,23–27; Lk 8,22–25.

⁴⁵ Mk 4,38.

were obscured and did not recognize Him.⁴⁶ They talked about the recent events that took place in Jerusalem. When they reached their destination, they asked the stranger to accompany them for supper. Only when he began to break bread did they realize that the stranger was in fact Jesus Christ. This “breaking of bread” is recognized by the exegetes as the Eucharist celebrated by Christ. The disciples returned to Jerusalem on the very same day. The gospel mentions a village that was 60 stadions away from the Holy City, which is about 12 kilometers. However, it does not mention the direction, nor does it mention any major town nearby, so it is difficult to determine the exact location of Emmaus. Therefore, there are five different villages in the Holy Land that claim to be this evangelical town. The first is an unspecified village south of Bethlehem, on the road to Hebron. The second is Emmaus, 30 stadions a way – about 5.5 km from Jerusalem, identified with the ruins of Khirbet el-Mizzeh. The third is 75 stadions, 14 km from Jerusalem. It is the ancient Kiryat Jearim, also known as Abu Ghosz. The fourth village is 160 stadions a way – 30 km from Jerusalem Emmaus – Nicopolis. The fifth village, to which most of the exegetes are inclined, is the modern Emmaus al-Qubeibeh, where there is a Franciscan monastery and church. It is located in a straight line 11 km from Jerusalem, which equals the 60 stadions referred to in the description of St. Luke.

The Franciscan sanctuary “Breaking bread” is located in the small town of Al-Qubeibeh, which in Arabic means dome. It was already inhabited in the 3rd century BC. The modern church was built in 1901 on the ruins of the previous medieval one and consecrated on October 12, 1902. Inside the church, in its left nave, there is a rectangular building, which is traditionally indicated as the house of Kleofas, who was to host the risen Jesus. On Easter Monday, the faithful gather here to solemnly recall the events that took place on the night of the resurrection. During the Eucharist, the Custos of the Holy Land distributes bread to the faithful to commemorate the moment when the disciples met Jesus at the breaking of the bread.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Lk 24,16.

⁴⁷ Cf. Lk 24:35.

4. Pastoral implications

The pilgrimage, more than other forms of piety, corresponds to the basic anthropological truth that the pilgrim is a being composed of a body and soul. He expresses his religiousness not only with his heart, but with his entire being. This is sometimes referred to as “praying with your feet.”⁴⁸ As we have mentioned earlier, various sensations e.g. visual, auditory and other senses constitute an integral part of any pilgrimage. Along his journey, the pilgrim experiences the beauty of nature with all its sounds, smells, shapes and colors. He admires the religious buildings and cultural monuments. All this provides him with experiences that become rooted in his consciousness, and can influence his religiousness and faith.⁴⁹

Let us come back once again to John Paul II’s letter about pilgrimage. The author falls back on his own experience and writes about the pilgrims’ search for the traces of God on earth “searching for them in stones, in the mountains and waters that shaped the landscape when the Son of God visited the earth” in order to find “a memento of Christ.”⁵⁰ By journeying to the Holy Land, embracing its geographical elements, shapes and nature, the pilgrim can reimagine scenes from the life of Jesus and get a more profound understanding of those events. He begins to understand His parables and grasp the multifaceted analogies of the evangelical teachings. According to N. Bux (in the Holy Land) “the image of the Son of God and the Son of Man takes shape in various tangible signs of his presence that are still visible today [...]. In no part of the world is it so clear that eternal life starts right here, on this very earth.”⁵¹ The Holy Land is a kind of epiphany of the mysteries that took place there, a kind of mediator between the divine events that took place in history and the life of faith as we know it today. It continues to shape man – the pilgrim who visit these places and makes a conscious effort to contemplate the magnificence concealed in his

⁴⁸ Cf. E. Mielebrink, *Beten mit den Füßen*, Verlag Butzon&Bercker, KLens-Verlag Düsseldorf 1993.

⁴⁹ Cf. M. Ostrowski, *Ekologia w oczach turysty i pielgrzyma*, in: *Mówić o przyrodzie. Zintegrowana wizja ochrony przyrody*, eds. A. Dyduch-Falniowska, M. Grzegorzczak, J. Perzanowska, Z. Kijas, Z. Mirek, Instytut Ochrony Przyrody PAN, Instytut Studiów Franciszkańskich, Instytut Botaniki PAN, Kraków 2001, pp. 53–66.

⁵⁰ *List o pielgrzymowaniu...*, n. 4.

⁵¹ *Oglądać oblicze Jezusa w Ziemi Świętej*, in: *Tajemnica Trójcy Świętej*. The “Communio” collection, vol. 13 (2000), pp. 259–273.

area. What is attributed to the Holy Land can be equally applicable to many other places visited by pilgrims, including Camino, places which contain memorabilia related to the lives of the Apostles, the first Christians, martyrs and followers. By embracing these memorabilia, it is easier for the pilgrim to gain insight into the spiritual reality and the message that past generations of Christians have left behind.⁵²

The goal of pastoral work is to shape the pilgrimage program in such a way as to allow the pilgrim to experience all of the above. The pastor or guide discreetly directs attention to the various elements of visited places. He explains the symbolism behind them, and their connection to the biblical event. Here, a reading of the appropriately selected biblical texts can take place accompanied by a proper commentary. If a priest is present, the explanation takes the form of a homily. One can also suggest selected texts for personal meditation. However, always with prior explanation. The best situation would be to combine both variants. The previous paragraphs of this article have given examples of selecting biblical texts related to specific biblical places.

Similarly, psalms or prayers can be chosen. Spontaneous prayers are also of value as they represent a clear form of dialogue. Calls for prayer usually reflect the personal experience of the pilgrims.

When visiting biblical places, it is recommended to renew one's sacraments. For example baptism at the place of Christ's Baptism on the Jordan River, or marriage vows in Cana of Galilee. In the Cenacle, one can renew his vows of priesthood. The Church's liturgical books contain texts suitable for these sacraments. In all cases, the celebrations take the form of known and recommended biblical services in the Church.

It is necessary to add that there should be absolutely no rush and a sufficient amount of time ought to be reserved for reflection. Unfortunately, haste is one of the main sins of pilgrimage programs. There is a belief that the quality of the pilgrimage is measured by the number of visited places. This could not be more

⁵² For example: Paul VI called Rome the "great reliquary" of apostles and martyrs, which allows us to return to the beginnings of the Church (Speech to the participants of the First Diocesan Congress of Rome on the pastoral care of tourism, Rome 12 June 1969, "The Diocesan Monthly of Gdansk" (1971), vol. 15, no. 8–9, p. 265). John Paul II associated the visit of the Jerusalem Cenacle with the city of Rome. He spoke of St. Peter's successor residing in Rome, the capital of the Church – the place of martyrdom of the Prince of the Apostles – who should return to that space where the Apostle himself first heard the call to preach the good news. It allows the Pope to go back to history, to reach out to the very sources of the Church and the roots of her ministry. Cf. *Letter of pilgrimage...*, n. 8.

wrong. Yes, pilgrims will see many places, but their experience will be superficial and shallow. An interiorization of content and images always requires time.

The pastoral ministry has developed a number of service patterns adapted to relevant Biblical places. They help to “read the Holy Land as the Fifth Gospel.”⁵³ Other tools also serve this purpose. These are, for example, reconstructions and models of buildings and cities from biblical times, equipment and clothing.⁵⁴ It is important to bear in mind that very authentic items have survived to this day. On the other hand, among Orthodox Jews and in the liturgy held in today’s synagogues one can find customs, forms of prayer and equipment from the Old Testament times. However, these are not always accessible. There are films and multimedia presentations showcasing biblical issues. They are presented, among others, by the Commissariat for the Holy Land.⁵⁵ With the rapid development of technology, other forms and tools will definitely become available, especially those internet-related. It will be crucial to add centers offering such presentations to the pilgrimage program.

As for the Way of St. James, a few reflections come to mind as a conclusion. On one hand, the “Camino” has ample opportunities to encounter a land full of Christian monuments and customs – although in a Europe that moves away from Christianity – which is testament to the roots of the faith. His feet touch the land created by God and he can witness the signs of His presence in such a diverse and beautiful landscape, in the nature of different parts of our continent. On the other hand, one has to ask, to what extent does pastoral ministry help him in this Christian experience? Numerous written and internet guides have been created. But aren’t they limited to showcasing human culture, with little reference to faith which reverberates through Europe? To what extent does pastoral ministry itself meet the pilgrims and facilitates their spiritual experience, for example by preparing services and animating religious meetings in places of rest? Unfortunately there are many shortcomings in this regard. This is a broad topic, worthy of separate discussions and publications.

⁵³ Cf. „Pamiętka Pana” w Ziemi Świętej. Wybór tekstów i opracowanie J. Janicki, Pallotinum, Poznań 1993; *Śladami Jezusa. Przewodnik po sanktuariach Ziemi Świętej*, Edizioni Terra Santa, Milano 2012.

⁵⁴ Such reconstructions can be found in the Museum of Israel and in the David Fortress in Jerusalem.

⁵⁵ Cf. *Doświadczenie zmartwychwstania. Muzeum Grobu i Zmartwychwstania Jezusa Chrystusa w Jerozolimie*, CD issued by the Commissariat for the Holy Land.

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