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Personalistic View of John Paul II on the Humanizing Function of Art in the Context of Dialogue between the Church and Artists

Abstract

This article presents the way John Paul II, the head of the Vatican at the beginning of the third millennium, theologically and philosophically substantiates and establishes the principles of a new humanism through the dialogue between the Church and art as the most personalized sphere of human activity. The conceptual essence of the key idea of the humanizing function of art, in the personalistic philosophy of art of John Paul II is revealed from the methodological standpoint of religious studies. It determines the particular nature and tasks of the renewed dialogue between the Church and artists, aimed to overcome the processes of depersonalization and dehumanization of culture, caused by atheistic humanism and growing increasingly during the 20th century. The author ponders on *The Letter of Pope John Paul II to Artists* and *Towards a Pastoral Approach to Culture*, two papal documents. Their appearance on the eve of the 2000th anniversary of Christianity became symbolic. These documents draw attention because, firstly, although the idea of a dialogue between the Church and artists as a way of embodying spiritual values of a new humanism in the theological and philosophical discourse of John Paul II had been formed over several decades, it found its conceptual solution precisely in these two papal documents. Secondly, it is in these two documents that the essence of the cultural policy of the 264th Pope is consistently set forth, meant to overcome the consequences of atheistic humanism and create a new humanism, and

thus to overcome the civilizational anthropological crisis and develop a new ideological paradigm of the third millennium.

Keywords

Dialogue, humanism, person, depersonalization, dehumanization, philosophy of art.

1. Introduction

John Paul II, assessing the meaning and significance of the Second Vatican Council in the perspective of the third millennium, expressed the opinion in the main papal bestseller *Crossing the Threshold of Hope*, written in 1995, about the dialogue “with the whole world of culture and civilization”,¹ which manifested his style and spirit. The indicated style and spirit, according to the pontiff, will remain the essential truth about the Council, because they shape the face of the Church for generations yet to come. A quarter of a century later, these words became even more convincing, given that the 264th Pope not only formulated and actively implemented the main line of renewal of the Church as the largest and most authoritative transcultural institution in the globalized world at the beginning of the new millennium, but also represented a constitutive intention, the dialogue, which will determine the form and content of the new civilization. The last World Congress of Philosophy held in Beijing in 2018, was about “the formation of a dialogical civilization.”² Its theme *Learning to be Human* encouraged a discussion of the issue of transition to a communicative paradigm, determined by ethics, which, from the point of view of contemporary philosophers, is not only a methodological turn, but also a socio-ontological factor in the transition from a “labor society” to a “communication society.”³

¹ John Paul II, *Cross the Threshold of Hope: John Paul II Answers the Questions of Vittorio Messori*, Kyiv–Lviv 1995, Kairos–Svichado, pp. 126–127.

² A. Yermolenko, *Academic Philosophy as a ‘New Enlightenment’ for Dialogue-based Civilization*, “Journal of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine” 11 (2019), p. 9, <https://doi.org/10.15407/vsn2019.11.03> (20.02.2021).

³ A. Yermolenko, *Academic Philosophy as a ‘New Enlightenment’ for Dialogue-based Civilization*, “Journal of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine” 11 (2019), p. 9, <https://doi.org/10.15407/vsn2019.11.03> (20.02.2021).

John Paul II specifies the latest methods and forms of implementation of openness of the Church to dialogue, when introducing the “spirit and style”⁴ of the Second Vatican Council in his activities as head of the Vatican. He pays special attention to dialogue with culture, which, by his definition, is “the utmost and most humane good.”⁵ The idea of a dialogue between the Church and artists arises in this context. It is conceptualized in the *Letter of Pope John Paul II to Artists*, written on the occasion of the Great Jubilee of the 2000th Anniversary of Christianity.

This papal document has been attracting attention of scholars for more than two decades. Polish researchers are the persons who mainly studied it. Although, as noted by Przemyslaw Basinski, *A Message to Artists* generated a great interest among the art community.⁶ Obviously, this interest sets the priorities in his research work, since it is easy to identify certain consistency. Firstly, the authors of such in-depth studies are famous artists. Secondly, they apply either literary approaches or those of art criticism in the methodology of the *Message* research. Therefore, this document in terms of its context is considered chiefly in five aspects: 1) the artistic work of Karol Wojtyła; 2) artistic endeavors of other artists; 3) issues of sacred art; 4) aesthetic ideas of Karol Wojtyła; 5) modern demoralization of art.

Representative of the first approach is the fundamental works of Zofia Zarebianka, a famous Polish poetess and scientist. She considers the literary achievements of Karol Wojtyła, on the one hand, as an original phenomenon in the history of Polish literature, and, on the other hand, as an “intellectual laboratory”⁷ a kind of *praeparatio theologica* and *philosophica*. She insists that works of art preceded his philosophical reflection. Zarebianka interprets the *Message* in this context as a different way and form of materialization of creative intuition of Wojtyła, the artist.⁸ An example of the second approach is the

⁴ John Paul II, *Cross the Threshold of Hope: John Paul II Answers the Questions of Vittorio Messori*, Kyiv–Lviv 1995, Kairos–Svichado, p. 126.

⁵ John Paul II, *Memory and Identity: Conversations at the Turn of the Millennium*, Lviv 2005, Litopys, p. 92.

⁶ Prz. Basiński, *W służbie piękna. Karol Wojtyła o sztuce i artystach*, “Przewodnik Katolicki” 7 (2014), <https://www.przewodnik-katolicki.pl/Archiwum/2014/Przewodnik-Katolicki-7-2014/Wiara-i-Kosciol/W-sluzbie-piekna-Karol-Wojtyla-o-sztuce-i-artystach> (23.02.2021).

⁷ Z. Zarebianka, *Spotkanie w Słowie. O twórczości literackiej Karola Wojtyły*, Kraków 2018, Wydawnictwo Pasaże, p. 12.

⁸ Z. Zarebianka, *Spotkanie w Słowie. O twórczości literackiej Karola Wojtyły*, Kraków 2018, Wydawnictwo Pasaże, pp. 8, 10, 12–13.

article of Piotr Lasota, in which the analysis of the work of Joel Kirk Richards, the American artist, is based on one of the conceptual theses of the *Message* about art as a “meeting” with the living God in a word or image.⁹ An example of the third approach is the article by Paweł Bijak, who highlights the main ideas of the *Message* in the theological aspect of art and connects them with the activities of John Paul II, aimed at protecting the monuments of sacred art as a generally recognized cultural heritage of humankind.¹⁰ The fourth approach is presented in the article by Marek Mariusz Tytko, the renowned Polish poet and scholar, who studies the *Message* in the context of Wojtyła’s anthropology as one of the two main sources of his theological concept of a man artist.¹¹ The fifth approach is described in the article of Przemysław Basinski, the initiator and director of VERBA SACRA, a well-known interdisciplinary project, who illuminates the conceptual provisions of the *Message* in the aspect of the issue of art demoralization, which is relevant in modern realities. It is not only artists, but also organizers of art space and audience, who do not set appropriate requirements for either the artists or their aesthetic needs and tastes, are responsible for devaluation of art.¹² All these approaches are united by actualization of the artistic and aesthetic intuition of John Paul II, which, combined with faith, generates important concepts for contemporary aesthetic and theological discourses. Thus, it is clear that the researchers delve into the *Message* along with the *Gospel and Art. Recollections for the Artists*, written in 1962, published in 2011, though, as this text contains contemplations that were developed by the thinker later in the *Message*.

The emphasis in our in-depth study is made on the civilizational paradigmatic intuitions of John Paul II, which formed the philosophical and theological discourse, and theoretically and practically paved the way for new humanistic

⁹ P. Lasota, *Medytacyjne przedstawienia Boga w twórczości J. Kirka Richardsa*, “Archiwa, biblioteki i muzea kościelne” 109 (2018), p. 285, <https://doi.org/10.31743/abmk.2018.109.13> (27.02.2021).

¹⁰ P. Bijak, *Jan Paweł II jako Conservator Patrimonium Ecclesiae*, “Studia Gdańskie” 30 (2012), pp. 191–195, <http://cejsh.icm.edu.pl/cejsh/element/bwmeta1.element.desklight-7f7a0dba-e54b-4472-a32b-5596bd8767e7> (28.02.2021).

¹¹ M.M. Tytko, *Artysta w koncepcji Jana Pawła II w ‘Liście do artystów’*, “Religious and Sacred Poetry: An International Quarterly of Religion, Culture and Education” ½ (2013), p. 119.

¹² Prz. Basiński, *W służbie piękna. Karol Wojtyła o sztuce i artystach*, “Przewodnik Katolicki” 7 (2014), <https://www.przewodnik-katolicki.pl/Archiwum/2014/Przewodnik-Katolicki-7-2014/Wiara-i-Kosciol/W-sluzbie-piekna-Karol-Wojtyla-o-sztuce-i-artystach> (23.02.2021).

intentions of the dialogical civilization. Therefore, we clarify the conceptual meaning of the *Message* in the context of the dialogical consciousness of its author and the doctrine of dialogue with the world, formulated in the documents of the Second Vatican Council. To solve this problem, it is important to consider this papal document along with another one, namely, *Towards a Pastoral Approach to Culture*.

2. Relation of theological philosophical discourse of Karol Wojtyła to Christian Personalism of Nikolai Berdyaev, Jacques Maritain, and Emmanuel Mounier, under the aspect of anthropological crisis

The doctrine of dialogue with the world, developed in the documents of the Second Vatican Council, includes the dialogue of the Church with artists, the significance of which was emphasized by Paul VI in his speech to the artists at a special meeting between the second and third sessions of the Council. The documents of the Council raise the issue of the relationships between art and morality as a natural connection between aesthetics and ethics, because their combination is a complete comprehension of perfection and happiness by a human person, given that man is the only being called to moral heights, and art is a noble expression of human genius.¹³ The Pastoral Constitution insists on the freedom of culture from economism and ideologies, accessibility for the development of the talent of every person and every nation in the bosom of the national cultural tradition. It emphasizes the outstanding role of literature and art in studying the essence of man, his problems and experience to improve himself and the world, as well as stresses the high ability of artistic forms of culture to praise human life.¹⁴ The text of the pastoral Constitution clearly traces the presence of Karol Wojtyła's philosophical thought through the combination of the aesthetic attitudes of the Council with the aesthetic discourse of personalism as a means to "overcome the drama of atheistic humanism and create

¹³ H. Gengalo (ed.), *Documents of the Second Vatican Council: Constitutions, Decrees, Declarations*, Lviv 1996, Monastery of Monks of the Studio Charter *Svichado* Publishing Department, pp. 54, 64–65.

¹⁴ H. Gengalo (ed.), *Documents of the Second Vatican Council: Constitutions, Decrees, Declarations*, Lviv 1996, Monastery of Monks of the Studio Charter *Svichado* Publishing Department, pp. 573, 576.

a ‘new humanism’.¹² This attitude would determine the essence of the cultural policy of the 264th Pope, set forth in his *Letter to Artists*, written on 7 April 1999, in particular, and in *Towards a Pastoral Approach to Culture*, document of the Pontifical Commission for the Cultural Heritage, written on 23 May 1999. It would primarily lead to the opening of this commission in 1982, creation of the Coordinating Council of the Pontifical Academies in 1995 and establishment of the annual Prize of the Pontifical Academies in 1996, the purpose of which is “to support promising talents and initiatives, to cherish Christian humanism and its theological, philosophical, artistic manifestations.”¹⁵

Wojtyła argues in the letter, written in 1959 at the request of the Pontifical Commission for the Preparation of the Council and addressed to the bishops about the main issues of its schedule, that the dialogue on contemporaneity should include the issue of the anthropological crisis, which gave rise to the horrors of the 20th century through dehumanization and depersonalization of culture. Since salvation of the world is the central goal of the Church, it must resecure the project of Western humanism. Therefore, all key issues of the Council must be considered from the aspect of the anthropological crisis. The answer to the crisis of our time is to unite Christians and revive the proclamation of Gospel as the source of Christian humanism by joint efforts. The desire to create an adequate alternative to the epochal crisis was inherited by the Bishop of Kraków from philosophical personalism, which, according to John Paul II, determined his philosophical thought and pastoral practice.¹⁶ According to Czesław Stanisław Bartnik, who created the concept of realistic personalism, personalism became for Wojtyła as a philosopher the most effective way of embodying the highest, real values in human life.¹⁷

Paul Ricoeur, studying French personalism, believes that personalism was the first to respond to the crisis of consciousness of the era and set the goal to develop a vision of a new civilization.¹⁸ Jacques Maritain was the first to understand and accurately define the nature of the crisis of the 20th century as civilizational

¹⁵ O. Mandryka (ed.), *Towards a Pastoral Approach to Culture*, Lviv 2010, Svichado, p. 76.

¹⁶ Jan Paweł II, *Dar i Tajemnica*, Kraków 2005, Wydawnictwo Św. Stanisława BM Archidiecezji Krakowskiej, pp. 65–66, https://www.rodaknet.com/rp_sw_papiez_jpII_dar_i_tajemnica.pdf (07.03.2021).

¹⁷ C.S. Bartnik, *Personalizm teologiczny według kardynała Karola Wojtyły*, “Zeszyty Naukowe Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego” 22 (1979), no. 1–3, p. 53.

¹⁸ P. Ricoeur, *History and Truth*, Kyiv 2001, trans. V. Shovkun, KM Academy – Pulsary, p. 142.

in his *Religion and Culture* work, written in 1930–1933s. However, time has shown that the philosopher was mistaken in defining its ideological essence, considering the crisis as the decline of Christian civilization.¹⁹

Subsequently, Emmanuel Mounier asserts in *A Personalist Manifesto*, written in 1936, that bourgeois humanism, bourgeois morality and mainly bourgeois Christianity have gradually formed in the civilization, which has been developing since the Renaissance, due to the corruption of spiritual values. Therefore, the philosopher views personalism in the conquest of spiritual values and their direction towards the fight against the bourgeois-individualistic civilization, which contributed to the decline of Christianity.²⁰ Mounier believes that the rebellion of the individual against an inert, awkward social mechanism and hardened spirit, stood at the origins of this civilization. However, it lost its personalistic aspect and turned into a limited concept of individualism, which, firstly, symbolised decline of the individual, and, secondly, isolated people to the extent to which devalued them. Gradually, the replacement of industrial profits with speculative ones and the values of creativity with the values of comfort led to devaluation of the individualistic ideal, thus creating a bourgeois spirit that became the antipode of all spirituality. The philosopher reveals a common goal in the fascist and communist concepts, anti-personalistic in essence, – the subordination of persons with their unique destinies to centralized earthly power, which ascribes “spiritual omnipotence”²¹ to itself. Both concepts encroach on the civilizational mission, aggravating the crisis further on. Consequently, Mounier opposes them to a personalistic civilization, the structures and spirit of which are to ensure that every individual could realize himself as a personality, have the opportunity to live as a person, namely to develop the maximum of initiative, responsibility and spiritual life.²²

However, Berdyaev was the first to talk about the civilizational crisis as an anthropological one. The theme of the sociocultural crisis appears already in the writings of the 1900s. Since then, the analysis of the crisis processes has

¹⁹ J. Maritain, *Knowledge and Wisdom*, trans. L. Stepachev, Moscow 1999, Nauchnyi Mir, p. 97.

²⁰ R. Gorban, *Development Options for Personalistic Thought in the Countries of the Euro-Atlantic Region*. Polish version: Czeslaw Stanislaw Bartnik, Kyiv 2019, Bilyi Tyhr, p. 125.

²¹ E. Mounier, *Manifeste au service du personnalisme*, Paris 2003, p. 18, <http://dx.doi.org/doi:10.1522/cla.moe.man> (17.03.2021).

²² E. Mounier, *Manifeste au service du personnalisme*, Paris 2003, pp. 11–12, 38, <http://dx.doi.org/doi:10.1522/cla.moe.man> (17.03.2021).

become crosscutting in the philosophical and religious discourse of the Kyivan personalist. This thinker, examining the crisis processes in all socio-cultural spheres, such as art, science, philosophy, theology, social structure, and above all in religious consciousness, assesses them as the processes of decay, generated by the historical development of European culture and Christian religion, based on Cartesian and Kantian worldview, which splits the ontological integrity of the world and man. Berdyaev estimates the anthropological crisis as a result of the crisis of humanism. Unable to resist the processes of dehumanization, generated by it, humanism fatally turns into anti-humanism. The end of humanism is a moral catastrophe – the end of humanness. In *The Fate of Man in the Modern World: Understanding our Era* work, written in 1934, the philosopher warns that humanity is consciously entering a period of fundamental desolation, having gone through reflection and civilization, – “the image of man staggered and began to decay after it was revealed.”²³ A person disappears as an integral being internally centralized and spiritually focused. Since the formation of man as an integral being, a person rests on two paradigms, ancient Greek and Christian, which despite all their changes and transformations remained the spiritual basis of European culture, dehumanization is a reverse cosmic process, directed against Christianity and Greek culture, thus, global destruction of the idea of man. Dehumanization and depersonalization, in Berdyaev’s interpretation, are interdependent phenomena of a total anthropological crisis, the symptoms of ontological corruption which first appear in art.²⁴ He proves in his articles the Picasso, The Astral Novel, The Meaning of Creativity, The Crisis of Art, written in 1914–1918, that this crisis (you may call it either movement or process, whatever you like) is catastrophic not only for Europe, but for the whole world, that the process of decomposition of matter began in art: the objective, corporeal world is shaken in its foundations, its structure is destroyed and the world ceases to be substantial. This tendency takes place not through spiritual immersion, but proceeds from immersion in matter: “The spirit supposedly declines, and the flesh is dematerialized in contemporary art.”²⁵ All categories of art suffer disintegration of the crystalline structure of bodies, the flesh of the world, therefore, the rhythm of life, which leads to entropy. Art is dominated not

²³ N. Berdyaev, *Spirit and Reality*, Kharkiv 2003, Folio, p. 170.

²⁴ R. Gorban, *Eschatological Prospects of History Interpreted by Nikolai Berdyaev*, Ivano-Frankivsk 2014, Nova Zoria, p. 53.

²⁵ N. Berdyaev, *Crisis of Art*, Moscow 1990, Interprint, p. 32.

by the synthetic, but by analytical method, a tendency towards decomposition, not combination. The philosopher notes two interconnected processes in the art of the early 20th century: decrystallization as the loss of the structure of the world and its mechanization as a gap between spirit and matter. It is obvious for Berdyaev: the crisis of art confirms that culture is gradually separating from its vital and existential sources, and it even opposes itself to life and existence in the best works of artistic expression. Internal catastrophism in works of art continues to grow, which conceals changes in the ontological nature and indicates the transition to a new world eon.

3. Laying the basis for the new humanism by John Paul II through the dialogue between Church and art as the most personalized spheres of human activities

Considering understanding of the dehumanizing and depersonalizing nature of the anthropological crisis, developed by the representatives of the philosophy of personalism, the idea of humanizing function of art becomes basic in the *Letter of Pope John Paul II to Artists*. This idea is revealed through a number of provisions that are fundamental for the discourse of the philosophy of art of the Polish personalist, which was formed both in the philosophical texts as a Catholic thinker and in his papal documents.

Ultimately, this humanistic aspect is due to a special nature of the artistic vocation and lies in the fact that the human personality, called to be an artist, reveals himself as the image of God in artistic endeavors more than in any other activities. An artist is a reflection of the Personality of God as the Creator, and realizes this task by forming his own humanness.²⁶ The encyclicals of John Paul II consistently introduce the idea that creative activity of man, as a reflection of the creativity of God, has to humanize the life of man on earth, to make him “more human” and “more worthy of man.”²⁷

It is such human creativity that determines the real progress of humankind, conditioned by God’s “creative plan”, which “affects a living person and occupies

²⁶ John Paul II, *Letter of Pope John Paul II to Artists*, in: H. Dydyk-Meush (ed.), *Letter of Pope John Paul II*, Lviv 2001, Litopys, pp. 186–187.

²⁷ John Paul II, *The Redeemer of Man*, in: *Encyclicals of the Ecumenical Bishop John Paul II*, Toronto–Rome 1989c, Publishing House OO. Vasyliian, p. 30.

his entire life and history of all peoples”, under conditions of modern civilization, which requires a proportional development of technology and ethics.²⁸ “Real signs of greatness of man” reveal themselves as regards progress he “becomes better, spiritually mature, conscious of the dignity of his human nature, more responsible, open to others.”²⁹ The vocation of an artist, in the context of the philosopher’s understanding of vocation as the issue of anthropological eschatology, requires a special responsibility from the artist’s personality to Another through his direct relationship with beauty as a transcendental phenomenon. As interpreted by John Paul II, “beauty is a vocation that the artist is blessed with,”³⁰ therefore, his gift (talent) should serve the Beauty and all people through beauty, involving humanity in eternity, its saving transcendental dimension, because “beauty is the key to mystery and a call to transcendence.”³¹

John Paul II believes that the theme of beauty is decisive in the discourse of the philosophy of art. The idea that beauty is a visible form of good, and good is a metaphysical condition for beauty, is one of the main ideas of this discourse. Artistic activities, the specificity of which lies in “providing an aesthetic form to conceived ideas,”³² are most closely related to the practical implementation of kalokagaty. The ontological relationship between the ethical and aesthetical finds its authentic expression in the artist’s activity. Therefore, distinguishing the difference between the moral and artistic aspects in the artist’s vocation, the philosopher points to the special significance of the artist’s realization as a person of the interdependent connection between the ethical and aesthetical.

John Paul II considers art the most personalized sphere of human activity, in which the artist reveals his own face through works of art. “Creating a work,” says the Pope, “artists express themselves to such an extent that their work becomes a unique manifestation of their own existence, who they are and how

²⁸ John Paul II, *Apostles of the Slavs*, in: *Encyclicals of the Ecumenical Bishop John Paul II*, Toronto–Rome 1989a, Publishing House OO. Vasyliian, p. 194.

²⁹ John Paul II, *The Redeemer of Man*, in: *Encyclicals of the Ecumenical Bishop John Paul II*, Toronto–Rome 1989c, Publishing House OO. Vasyliian, p. 30.

³⁰ John Paul II, *Letter of Pope John Paul II to Artists*, in: H. Dydyk-Meush (ed.), *Letter of Pope John Paul II*, Lviv 2001, Litopys, p. 190.

³¹ John Paul II, *Letter of Pope John Paul II to Artists*, in: H. Dydyk-Meush (ed.), *Letter of Pope John Paul II*, Lviv 2001, Litopys, p. 212.

³² John Paul II, *Letter of Pope John Paul II to Artists*, in: H. Dydyk-Meush (ed.), *Letter of Pope John Paul II*, Lviv 2001, Litopys, p. 189.

they perceive themselves.”³³ The artist, like no other, is called to be a monadic person because art offers the artist both a new dimension and an exclusive way of expressing his spiritual growth. This person, according to the definition of the philosopher-personalist Serhiy Krymsky, represents his nation, culture, era, giving samples of actions, intelligence and growing conscience, and thus manifests an individual mode of universal experience.³⁴

Consequently, at the turn of the 20th–21st centuries John Paul II introduces into the philosophical and aesthetic discourse the idea of a personalistic history of art, which should not only be a story about the created masterpieces, but above all the history of personalities, artists, who, in their individual experience, represented the universal experience of their eras and national cultures. Such personalistic position is an alternative to the approach to the history of art, widespread in science, the concept of Hans Sedlmayr, one of the most influential art critics of the 20th century, in particular. Structuring the subject field of the historical and artistic research in the *Art and Truth: Theory and Method of the History of Art* work, written in 1958, the Austrian scientist focuses exclusively on the work and its historical and cultural ties, and does not take into account the personality of the artist.³⁵

John Paul argues in his *Letter to Artists* that true art has a genetic relationship with faith through a transcendental connection with beauty, freedom and truth, even outside of its typically religious expression, and therefore, it remains a bridge to religious experience. This gives the Church reliable grounds to conduct a fruitful dialogue with art in a post-secularized world and to insist, through joint efforts, using a “renewed dialogue,”³⁶ on a new kind of humanism on the threshold of the third millennium, in which human identity is measured by the spiritual value and dignity of every man, because “man as the image of God is a person.”³⁷ This new humanism is the antipode of humanism, which

³³ John Paul II, *Letter of Pope John Paul II to Artists*, in: H. Dydyk-Meush (ed.), *Letter of Pope John Paul II*, Lviv 2001, Litopys, p. 189.

³⁴ S. Krymsky, *Appeals to Spirituality of the 21st Century*, Kyiv 2003, KM Academy, pp. 13–14.

³⁵ H. Sedlmayr, *Kunst und Wahrheit: Zur Theorie und Methode der Kunstgeschichte*, Mittenwald 1978, Mäander, pp. 11–14.

³⁶ John Paul II, *Letter of Pope John Paul II to Artists*, in: H. Dydyk-Meush (ed.), *Letter of Pope John Paul II*, Lviv 2001, Litopys, p. 204.

³⁷ John Paul II, *From one's Own Work*, in: *Encyclicals of the Ecumenical Bishop John Paul II*, Publishing House Toronto–Rome 1989b, Publishing House OO. Vasyliian, p. 122.

led to an anthropological crisis, “characterized by the absence of God, and often opposition to God”,³⁸ as well as the denial of the “transcendence of the human person.”³⁹ It generated a view of a person not as a goal in itself, but as a means to achieve the objectives of other people, that is, an attitude towards man not as a person, but as a thing that either caused or led to destructive processes of dehumanization, depersonalization and alienation.

The tendency from a renewed dialogue with artists to the development of a new humanism was clearly declared in the Pastoral Constitution, the main document of the Council. According to this document, the practical implementation of this tendency is associated with monadic personalities, who are “creators and artists of the culture of their communities”, who, through their creative activities, are promoting a significant development of “a sense of autonomy and responsibility, which are of paramount importance for the spiritual and moral maturity of the human race” throughout the world.⁴⁰ Erich Fromm presents the analysis of theories and practices of humanism, that have been discovered in the history of European culture, in *The Soul of Man: Its Capacity for Good and Evil* work, which he wrote in 1964. It was the year before the adoption of the document by the fourth session of the Council.

Observing attempts to revive humanism, John Paul II puts forth a question as to the effectiveness of neo-humanistic ideas and development of close relationships between people, thanks to new means of communication, to stop manifestations of group egoism, since, the fate of humanity, in his opinion, depends on the answer to this question. The German philosopher believes that the revival of the humanistic tradition, based on mutual understanding, solidarity and responsibility, will mean significant progress in human development towards a purely human existence.⁴¹

³⁸ John Paul II, *Letter of Pope John Paul II to Artists*, in: H. Dydyk-Meush (ed.), *Letter of Pope John Paul II*, Lviv 2001, Litopys, p. 204.

³⁹ K. Wojtyła, *Participation or Alienation?*, in: D. Fedoryka (ed.), *The Experience of the Human Person: Essays on Philosophical Anthropology*, Lviv 2000, Svichado, p. 258.

⁴⁰ H. Gengalo (ed.), *Documents of the Second Vatican Council: Constitutions, Decrees, Declarations*, Lviv 1996, Monastery of Monks of the Studio Charter Svichado Publishing Department, p. 568.

⁴¹ E. Fromm, *Die Seele des Menschen: Ihre Fähigkeit zum Guten und zum Bösen*, Frankfurt/M.–Berlin–Wien 1981, Ullstein, pp. 43–44, http://www.irwish.de/PDF/Psychologie/Fromm/Fromm-Die_Seele_des_Menschen.pdf (19.04.2021).

The attitude of John Paul II to dialogue with artists found its logical continuation in the papal policy on culture and determined the content of the corresponding document, *Towards a Pastoral Approach to Culture*, which states that the pastoral approach to culture in all its various forms should help a person overcome the “drama of atheistic humanism” and create a “new humanism.”⁴²

4. Conclusions

John Paul II paid great attention to the dialogue between the Church and artists, guided in his pastoral activities as the head of the Vatican, firstly, by the category of dialogue, which determined the spirit and style of the Second Vatican Council, and secondly, by the opinion about the high ability of artistic forms of culture to humanize man's life, developed in the pastoral Constitution.

The idea of a dialogue between the Church and artists as a way to embody spiritual values of the new humanism in the theological and philosophical discourse of John Paul II has been formed over several decades. It found its conceptual solution in papal documents, the appearance of which became symbolic on the eve of the 2000th anniversary of Christianity: *The Letter of Pope John Paul II to Artists and Towards a Pastoral Approach to Culture*.

John Paul II, taking into account understanding of dehumanizing and depersonalizing nature of the anthropological crisis, developed by Berdyaev, Maritain and Mounier, interprets in his *Letter to Artists* creative activities of man as a reflection of the creativity of God, who has to humanize the life of man on earth, to make him more human and more worthy of a person, therefore, be able to resist the global processes of dehumanization and depersonalization. The thinker believes that art has a genetic relationship with faith through a transcendental connection with beauty, freedom and truth, even outside of its typically religious expression. Therefore, it remains a solid and tested bridge for a dialogue between the Church and the post-secularized world. Personal character of the artistic vocation, which in the light of the anthropological eschatology of John Paul II requires the artist's personality to be exclusively responsible to Another, has a great potential to create reliable foundations of a new humanism, which should determine the development of civilization in the new millennium.

⁴² O. Mandryka (ed.), *Towards a Pastoral Approach to Culture*, Lviv 2010, Svichado, p. 78.

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