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## **Karol Wojtyła as a model of a mature educator in the light of the concept of Zdzisław Chlewiński**

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### **Abstract**

The theme of the paper centres around role models in values education. The purpose of this paper is to answer the following research question: how was the model maturity of Karol Wojtyła as an educator manifested? Reference was made to the concept of mature personality by Zdzisław Chlewiński (1991), who listed three criteria for maturity: personal (personalistic) attitude towards another person, autonomy, and reliable insight into oneself. The results of the analysis showed that Karol Wojtyła's maturity manifested itself in an exemplary fulfilment of the aforementioned criteria, as demonstrated by examples from his life and teaching. Emphasis was placed on Wojtyła's authenticity as an educator who not only brought others up to maturity, but was also truly mature himself. Perfect correspondence between his life and teaching was emphasised as well. The author has used Wojtyła's biographies. Among the numerous studies and source texts on Wojtyła's life and teaching, those were selected that pertained to the determinants of maturity detailed by Chlewiński. The focus was on the adolescence and early youth of the future Pope John Paul II. Chlewiński's concept appears as a concise, coherent approach that can be used in subsequent analyses of the life and teaching of truly mature people.

### **Keywords**

maturity, Karol Wojtyła, personalism, educator, role model, Zdzisław Chlewiński

## Introduction

Karol Wojtyła, known around the world as Pope John Paul II, has had an enormous impact on the history of the world, which can be analysed in many dimensions, including religious, ethical, psychological or socio-national.<sup>1</sup> It would not have been possible had it not been for the Pope's fascinating personality. In the perception of many people around the world, the Pope has been (and still is) seen as a unique, captivating, holy man. This uniqueness was manifested in the courage to proclaim the highest values and, above all, in their realisation in everyday life.

The reference literature emphasises that in the process of upbringing others to values, the Pope can be treated as a role model, that is, someone worth emulating. According to Vincent Okoń, a role model is a person who, with his or her life, inspires others and mobilises others to follow.<sup>2</sup> The reference books emphasise the following essential qualities for a role model: open-mindedness, inner discipline, civil courage, the ability to admit error, the will to seek the truth, responsibility, sensitivity, a sense of humour, and a pro-social orientation.<sup>3</sup> Personalistic education additionally highlights the perfection of the life of the model man. Without a doubt, such a man was Karol Wojtyła.

A number of studies have examined the excellence of the Pope's life. Some are devoted to the issue of the Pope as a role model.<sup>4</sup> The novelty of this paper is the analysis of the person of Karol Wojtyła as a model of a mature educator considering the concept of Zdzisław Chlewiński.<sup>5</sup> This author listed three criteria for personality maturity: autonomy, treating the other as a person, and

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<sup>1</sup> J. Jaworski, *Podstawy patriotyzmu Jana Pawła II*, Lublin 2012, Norbertinum, p. 130; E. Osewska, J. Stala, K. Bochenek, *The relationship between religion and national culture in Poland in light of John Paul II's philosophical and theological reflections*, "Religions" 1 (2022), pp. 1–13.

<sup>2</sup> W. Okoń, *Słownik pedagogiczny*, Warszawa 2007, Wydawnictwo Akademickie Żak, p. 67.

<sup>3</sup> L. Bakiera, B. Harwas-Napierała, *Wzory osobowe w rozwoju człowieka*, Poznań 2016, Wydawnictwo UAM, p. 23; M. Ossowska, *Wzór demokracji. Cnoty i wartości*, Lublin 1992, Wydawnictwo Daimonion, pp. 15–37.

<sup>4</sup> T. Bilicki, *Dziecko i wychowanie w pedagogii Jana Pawła II*, Kraków 2005, Impuls; M. Kozubek, *Wartość wychowawcza światowych dni młodzieży z Janem Pawłem II*, in: M. Kozubek (ed.), *Starość – nie radość? Aktywność osób starszych i solidarność międzypokoleniowa*, Katowice 2013, Księgarnia Św. Jacka, pp. 112–122.

<sup>5</sup> Similar problems have been analysed in the following article: W. Juroszek, M. Kozubek, *Self-education into maturity in light of the theoretical approach of Zdzisław Chlewiński*, "Journal of Vasyl Stefanyk Precarpathian National University" 3 (2023), pp. 247–257.

reliable insight into oneself.<sup>6</sup> The purpose of this work is to demonstrate how the exemplarity of Wojtyła's actions as an educator was manifested in the context of these three criteria.

It should be emphasised that the analysis of Wojtyła's person and activities in the context of the listed characteristics by no means exhausts the fullness of his person. The crucial to understanding the person of Wojtyła is faith in God. This is accurately captured in a statement by George Weigel:

His faith is not one aspect of his personality or one dimension of his intellect.  
His faith is Karol Wojtyła at the deepest level of him being a person.<sup>7</sup>

This work refers to selected studies and source texts describing, first of all, the period of adolescence and early adulthood of the future Pope, since the main framework of personality is formed at these stages. In other words, Wojtyła's personality was already largely formed during his early youth.

In the formation of personality, genetic conditions, widely understood culture, education, upbringing in the family and own activity play an important role. The latter is important insofar as it can be constantly modified to develop in the desired direction. This development is continuous, uninterrupted and lasts until death. Wojtyła was an outstanding example of a man who fought for ideals until the last, suffering-filled hours of his life. When educating young people to maturity, it is worth promoting the figure of the Pope, including the excellence of his actions in terms of autonomy, personal approach to others and insight into oneself. The rest of the article refers to the concept of personality maturity according to Zdzisław Chlewiński, who analysed the importance of these factors in the formation of true maturity.

## **Zdzisław Chlewiński's concept of a mature personality**

In the reference literature, the issue of maturity can be approached in many ways. This paper takes an axiological point of view, which implies treating

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<sup>6</sup> Z. Chlewiński, *Dojrzałość. Osobowość, sumienie, religijność*, Poznań 1991, Wydawnictwo W drodze.

<sup>7</sup> G. Weigel, *Świadek nadziei*, Kraków 2012, Znak, p. 22.

maturity as something valuable, something worth striving for. This approach is characteristic of the concept of mature personality by Zdzisław Chlewiński.

Chlewiński (1929–2021) was a Polish clergyman, psychologist, professor of humanities, and long-time head of the Department of Experimental Psychology at the Catholic University of Lublin.<sup>8</sup> The research topics undertaken by Chlewiński concerned cognitive psychology, particularly the psychology of thinking, inference and decision-making. His other interests focused on experimental psychology and the psychological aspects of maturity: personality, conscience and religiosity.

Chlewiński is the author of the three-dimensional concept of personality maturity, which, as the author points out, is one of the possible.<sup>9</sup> Chlewiński defined personality as a relatively permanent and at the same time dynamic structure comprising cooperating motivational-emotional and cognitive substructures integrated by the centre of one's mental acts called *Ja [the Self]* (Chlewiński, 1991, p. 12). Personality determines certain characteristic thoughts, attitudes, feelings, behaviours and ways of dealing with difficult situations.

In this study, Chlewiński's concept was chosen primarily because it is firmly grounded in personalism. Chlewiński stressed that in one's development, a person should move towards higher goals and tasks, i.e., those that are oriented towards the other person and their well-being. Chlewiński thus adopted a personalistic vision of a human being, which assumes that a human being is the pinnacle manifestation of being.

Another important reason for choosing this particular concept of maturity is the importance Chlewiński gave to self-activity and the effort consciously made to overcome oneself. Chlewiński relied on the work of Gordon Allport in formulating his concept. Allport was a psychologist, the creator of the theory of so-called functional autonomy, for which concepts such as conscious and at the same time rational motivation and the coherence of human psychosocial functioning are crucial.<sup>10</sup> From Allport's work, Chlewiński took the importance of conscious effort in working on oneself.

Chlewiński developed his concept in the spirit of self-education, i.e., a person's spontaneous work to form their character, personality, life attitudes, and

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<sup>8</sup> P. Francuz, *Ksiądz Profesor Zdzisław Chlewiński*, "Roczniki Psychologiczne" 4 (2001), pp. 5–25.

<sup>9</sup> Z. Chlewiński, *Dojrzałość. Osobowość, sumienie, religijność*, p. 9.

<sup>10</sup> Z. Chlewiński, *Postawy a cechy osobowości*, Lublin 1987, Towarzystwo Naukowe KUL, p. 49.

views. Self-education has a versatile character, multiplies the educational influence of parents and school.

The work on oneself never ends; it lasts a lifetime and is often, as Chlewiński highlights, arduous.<sup>11</sup> From this perspective, Karol Wojtyła appears as a figure who inspires those around him to enjoy this arduous work. In this respect, Wojtyła was downright spectacular – and this will be emphasised in this study – how to remain a cheerful, graceful educator in a strenuous, ongoing process of constantly overcoming one's own self.

Chlewiński thus created his concept in the spirit of wanting to help others in their educational and self-educational work. He stressed that this work requires a morally valuable focus. Its goal is to achieve maturity, which consists of a personal relationship with another person, autonomy, and reliable insight into the motivation of one's thoughts and actions.<sup>12</sup>

This paper analyzes how Wojtyła's excellence as an educator manifested itself in the context of the listed criteria.

## **Karol Wojtyła as a model educator with a personal approach to the pupil**

Chlewiński stressed that the hallmark of maturity is a personal, empathetic, self-sacrificing approach to the other person manifested in the ability to treat them as an immeasurable, inconvertible value. In other words, in a way that minimises the danger of treating the other person as a tool.<sup>13</sup> This work analyzes how Wojtyła's personalistic approach to the other was manifested. There are many studies in the reference literature that address this issue.<sup>14</sup> In the following,

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<sup>11</sup> Z. Chlewiński, *Dojrzałość. Osobowość, sumienie, religijność*, p. 33.

<sup>12</sup> Chlewiński's concept has been used in the following publications (concerning well-known personalities): W. Juroszek, *General Fieldorf 'Nil' as a personal model in upbringing towards maturity*, "Kwartalnik Naukowy Fides et Ratio" 4 (2022), pp. 43–53; W. Juroszek, *General August Emil Fieldorf "Nil" jako wzór osoby dojrzałej w świetle koncepcji Zdzisława Chlewińskiego. Ujęcie psychopedagogiczne*, Kraków 2023, Impuls; W. Juroszek, M. Kozubek, *Self-education into maturity in light of the theoretical approach of Zdzisław Chlewiński*, pp. 247–257.

<sup>13</sup> Z. Chlewiński, *Dojrzałość. Osobowość, sumienie, religijność*, p. 21.

<sup>14</sup> Gorban R., *Personalistic view of John Paul II on the humanizing function of art in the context of dialogue between the Church and artists*, "The Person and the Challenges" 1 (2022), pp. 53–67.

the paper will cite those passages from Wojtyła's life that confirm that even as a young man he was filled with empathy and a personal approach to his fellow men.

No one wants to be treated as a tool, a means to an end. The dignity of a human person requires deep respect for them. From an early age, Karol Wojtyła manifested such an attitude towards others. Helpful and self-sacrificing, he enjoyed a great deal of affection from the people he was with. One of his best schoolmates, Jerzy Kluger, said years later (1997) in a conversation with George Weigel that he did not remember that Wojtyła, despite his very good academic performance, physical fitness and social skills, evoked feelings of envy in anyone.<sup>15</sup> He explained that the future Pope was always eager to help others, including, for example, in understanding material that was too difficult for them.

This attitude of constant readiness to help is a great clue for young people who often, especially today, feel lonely – a clue to how to act in order to become a person liked by those around him. Wojtyła was simply focused on others. He even persisted in the relationship with the other person realising the value of love for the other person. In school days, it was to persist in a relationship with, for example, a schoolmate who just needed help. During the Hitler occupation, it was to accompany others in bearing their plight.

This peculiar persistence in a relationship with another human being came to fruition during World War II under extremely difficult working conditions at the Solvay chemical plant in Kraków (first in a quarry in Zakrzówek, and then in a water treatment plant in Borek Fałęcki). As Wojtyła later related:

In the fall of 1939, I began working as a manual laborer in a quarry [...] associated with the Solvay chemical factory [...]. Those in charge of the quarry, who were Polish, tried to protect us students from the hardest work [...]. I met with hard-working people on a daily basis, got to know their environment, their families, their interests, their human value and dignity. I personally experienced a lot of kindness from them<sup>16</sup> [...]. I befriended many workers. More than once they invited me to their homes. Even as a priest and bishop, I baptized their children and grandchildren, blessed marriages and conducted funerals for many of them.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> G. Weigel, *Świadek nadziei*, p. 61.

<sup>16</sup> G. Weigel, *Świadek nadziei*, p. 60.

<sup>17</sup> Jan Paweł II, *Autobiografia*, Kraków 2002, Wydawnictwo Literackie, p. 24–26.

What speaks for emulating Wojtyła, therefore, are not only his views but also specific deeds in which he embodied love for others. This love was expressed in patience, kindness, and shying away from judging another person. The peculiar and fascinating thing about Wojtyła's biography is that he looked at other people very warmly and kindly. It was an outlook devoid of tart criticism. It would even seem that Wojtyła was surrounded only by kind people! This is impossible, people who are envious, selfish, and spiteful also had to live by him. Nevertheless, Wojtyła's personal attitude helped him focus on what is good in people. This became clear in the successive stages of his life – as a worker, student, priest, bishop and pope. The examples cited from the Pope's early youth confirm that this attitude towards the others was discernible in his biography very early on and was steadily materialised in the subsequent stages of his personal and priestly life.

John Paul II's exemplary pedagogy was evident in the perfect correspondence between his life (testimony) and teaching. The Pope lived the values he transmitted. This is why he is very compelling as an educator. His entire life was filled with a loving look at another human being, including his pupil:

understand and love: this is the unparalleled pedagogical rule.<sup>18</sup>

The other person should be loved – this is the message flowing from the personalist norm, which orders the protection of the dignity of a human, regardless of the circumstances.<sup>19</sup> In this sense, a disabled, ailing person is just as worth love as a healthy and resourceful person. It is therefore morally reprehensible to relativise the value of humanity. Every human life is equally important, and there is no human being whose life can be seen as meaningless. Karol Wojtyła, while calling for adherence to the personalist norm, always followed it himself. This is evidenced by the previously quoted excerpts from biographical records from his early youth, as well as later ones related to accompanying the sick and suffering as a bishop. The future Pope's personalistic attitude towards sick men was already evident in his first pastoral visits to the parishes he visited as the

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<sup>18</sup> Jan Paweł II, *Prawdziwy wychowawca rozumie młodych ludzi. Spotkanie z młodzieżą szkolną na Placu Maryi Wspomożycielki w Turynie, Turyn, 13.04.1980*, in: A. Dymier (ed.), *Szkola katolicka w nauczaniu Kościoła. Wybór dokumentów*, Szczecin–Warszawa 2002, Centrum Edukacyjne Archidiecezji Szczecińsko-Kamieńskiej, p. 115.

<sup>19</sup> Jan Paweł II, *Pamięć i tożsamość*, Znak, p. 138.

newly appointed bishop of Krakow. It is worth quoting the following words of John Paul II from his autobiography:

There was a Mass and visits to homes, especially to the sick [...]. I have always felt that suffering people are a fundamental support in the life of the Church. I remember that at the first contacts the sick intimidated me. It took a lot of courage to stand in front of the suffering person and, as it were, penetrate their physical and spiritual pain, not to be embarrassed and show at least a little loving compassion.<sup>20</sup>

The above passage shows how self-development plays an important role in educational work. As a newly appointed bishop, Wojtyła made a conscious effort to be co-present with the sick and overcome feelings of intimidation (“the sick intimidated me”). He admitted that courage was needed to activate such an attitude (“it took a lot of courage”). The passage confirms that being with the sick must be learned without giving in to feelings of discouragement and intimidation. Ultimately, Wojtyła, discovering the deep meaning of suffering, entrusted the sick with the affairs of the Church, so that they could offer their pain for his cause:

The profound meaning of the mystery of human suffering was revealed to me later. The sick, as it were, ‘provoke’ mercy. Through their prayer and sacrifice, they not only ask for mercy, but constitute a ‘mercy space’ [...]. With their illness and suffering, they call for and create opportunities for acts of mercy. I was in the habit of entrusting the sick with the affairs of the Church and it always brought good results.<sup>21</sup>

As a conclusion to this part of the article, it is worth noting that a personalistic attitude towards the other permeated the entire person of the Pope. This is also how he viewed the process of education – to become increasingly human. This is confirmed by his words during a speech in 1980 at the UNESCO headquarters. These words were later recalled many times by the Pope:

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<sup>20</sup> Jan Paweł II, *Wstańcie! Chodźmy!*, Kraków 2004, Wydawnictwo Św. Stanisława, pp. 64–65.

<sup>21</sup> Jan Paweł II, *Wstańcie! Chodźmy!*, p. 65.



Education [...] serves in a special sense to humanize a person. Human, being human from the first moment of conception in the womb, gradually learns to be human – and this basic knowledge is identified with education.<sup>22</sup>

### **Karol Wojtyła as a model of an educator who is autonomous in action and thought**

A mature person is characterised by inner autonomy, which means to transcend one's own needs and desires by engaging in pro-social action that directs life.<sup>23</sup> Autonomy is associated with effort, activity (the opposite of passivity), and self-reliance. Autonomy is about taking independent, free actions and resisting external pressures.

One of the conditions for being an autonomous person is the ability to exert effort, to overcome oneself. At this point, it should be added right away that not every effort and not every suffering ennobles. Zdzisław Chlewiński emphasises that what ennobles a person is what directs him/her towards higher goals, towards another human being. In Wojtyła's case, the hard work he did as a labourer in his early youth directed him towards other people, allowing him to get close to other people and understand their world.

I knew what physical labor was, as I was a laborer. I met hard working people on a daily basis, got to know their environment, their families, their interests, their human value and dignity.<sup>24</sup>

In commenting on the above quote from the Pope's autobiography, it is worth emphasising that Karol Wojtyła, by his example, confirmed the possibility of living out his time on earth in a dignified manner, devoid of a sense of superiority over others. His cooperation with workers on a professional level was imbued with the will to understand the others in the spirit of love.

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<sup>22</sup> Jan Paweł II, *Rodzinie zawdzięcza człowiek swe wychowanie. Homilia w czasie mszy św. dla rodzin, Braga, Portugalia, 15.05.1982*, in: C. Drążek, J. Kawecki (eds.), *Dziecko w nauczaniu Jana Pawła II. Antologia wypowiedzi*, Kraków 1985, Wydawnictwo Apostolstwa Modlitwy, p. 59.

<sup>23</sup> Z. Chlewiński, *Dojrzałość. Osobowość, sumienie, religijność*, p. 20.

<sup>24</sup> Jan Paweł II, *Autobiografia*, p. 39.

Zdzisław Chlewiński points out that the mere formation of a strong will cannot be a goal itself.<sup>25</sup> After all, there are people, very hard-working and conscientious, who through their stubbornness in action mainly pursue their own goals, trampling on the dignity of their fellow men on the way. For the future Pope, the work he did as a labourer was carried out in accordance with the principle of personalism, considering the welfare of the other.

Wojtyła's autonomy was manifested in his ability to make and carry out plans, including personal ones. This ability was accompanied by great humility. With simplicity and modesty, he accepted the fact that soon after beginning his dream studies in philology at the Jagiellonian University, right after the outbreak of war, he had to verify his life plans and take up the hard work of a labourer at the aforementioned Solvay factory. The future Pope accepted the fact that he became a worker instead of a student with humility and kindness towards those with whom he came to work. Despite his sincere desire and willingness to study, he started a four-year job as a labourer and did it without complaint. Many people in his position would resent his surroundings and perhaps even God himself for having such a difficult life. In Wojtyła's biography there is no even the slightest trace of complaining, grumbling, blaming people and God for his fate. A huge role was played here by the personality of the future Pope and, above all, trust in Divine Providence. The same trust and humility in accepting the hand of fate manifested itself when he was sent to the parish in Niegowić after studying for his doctorate in Rome.

Wojtyła spent eight months in this parish. He celebrated Masses for parishioners, taught religion to children from several nearby elementary schools, and heard confessions. The autonomy of his activities was manifested in the undertaking of many additional pastoral activities not necessarily practised by priests before. Among other things, he organised meetings: drama circle, premarital meetings for brides and grooms, and with young people (discussion, outdoor, sports).<sup>26</sup> The young vicar's activity was so high that it even attracted the attention of the Communist services.

Both the Masses he celebrated and his zeal in confessing confirmed the autonomy of Wojtyła's actions as a priest. His immense involvement in the confession began in Niegowić. As he recalled years later, it is the confessional that is the place where the priest meets the penitent in all the depths of humanity,

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<sup>25</sup> Z. Chlewiński, *Dojrzałość. Osobowość, sumienie, religijność*, p. 9

<sup>26</sup> G. Weigel, *Świadek nadziei*, p. 125.

helping to penetrate the drama of one's life.<sup>27</sup> When a priest stops confessing, he becomes a clerk or bureaucrat.

Karol Wojtyła's autonomy as an educator was constantly manifested at successive stages of his life, including when, as Pope, he made pilgrimages to various countries around the world. Meetings with pilgrims provided an opportunity to reflect on the problems of faith and socio-political issues. During his pilgrimages, he exhorted educators to be active, which, as a negation of discouragement (inaction, passivity, indifference), is crucial to autonomy.

You can't limit yourself to just looking, you can't remain passive or indifferent at all.<sup>28</sup>

John Paul II specifically said what an educator should do:

Let's go to the youth: here is the first and basic educational requirement.<sup>29</sup>

This "going to the youth" should be manifested by helping them realise the following autonomy-specific values: perseverance in overcoming adversity and developing talents, consistency in achieving goals, tirelessness in working on themselves, and conscientiousness in fulfilling daily responsibilities. Only such an attitude allows you to use your talents to the fullest.

## Karol Wojtyła as a model educator with reliable insight

Insight into oneself means being able to take an honest, close look at one's own motivation. It concerns understanding the true, unadulterated motives of one's behaviour and thus distancing oneself from the primitive mechanisms of self-deception. At this point, it is worth quoting the following words of Zdzisław Chlewiński:

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<sup>27</sup> G. Weigel, *Świadek nadziei*, p. 124.

<sup>28</sup> Jan Paweł II, *Prawdziwy wychowawca rozumie młodych ludzi. Spotkanie z młodzieżą szkolną na Placu Maryi Wspomożycielki w Turynie, Turyn, 13.04.1980*.

<sup>29</sup> Jan Paweł II, *List "Juvenum patris" do księdza Egidio Vigano, Przełożonego Generalnego Towarzystwa św. Franciszka Salezego, w setną rocznicę śmierci św. Jana Bosko*, in: C. Bissoli (ed.), *Jan Paweł II o systemie wychowawczym księdza Bosko*, Warszawa 2001, Wydawnictwo Salezjańskie.

The point here [...] is to emphasize the great self-educational value of seeing oneself in absolute truth. Obviously, this is not fully achievable. The actual experience of this state would allow the individual to break free of all mental masks and defensive armor.<sup>30</sup>

Chlewiński emphasises that this is about giving up appearances, pretending, and playing fictional life roles. It's all about honest and courageous insight into oneself.

A condition for the success of the education process is to base it on truth, including the truth about the person in question. The educator knows that the pupil often does not want to admit the real motives of the actions taken, whitewashes himself or herself, and pretends. The role of the educator is to help the young person stand in truth before himself or herself and thus take the effort of development. It is impossible to skip this step in growing to maturity. A lazy person, as long as this person continues to explain the laziness with illness or weakness, will not stand true to himself or herself. A liar who explains, justifies deceptions with "higher necessity" is far from accepting the truth about his or her own self. Like a prideful person, elevating himself or herself above others, or a driven individual, mistakenly explaining anger with energy, enterprise or activity.

Admitting one's faults to oneself is a step towards maturity. John Paul II called for such an attitude. He exhorted people to stand in truth before themselves.

I ask you to call these weaknesses, sins, defects, situations by name. For you to struggle with them.<sup>31</sup>

The ability to have an honest insight into ourselves presupposes a willingness to appreciate those who have done good things for us. Such an attitude is nothing less than an attitude of gratitude, understood in the sense of being able to see and appreciate a selfless, altruistic gift. Words of gratitude and thanks were exceptionally frequent in Wojtyła's speeches:

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<sup>30</sup> Z. Chlewiński, *Dojrzałość. Osobowość, sumienie, religijność*, p. 33.

<sup>31</sup> Jan Paweł II, *Homilia w czasie mszy św. beatyfikacyjnej o. Rafała Kalinowskiego i Brata Alberta – Adama Chmielowskiego odprawionej na Błoniach, Kraków, 22.06.1983*, in: Jan Paweł II (ed.), *Pielgrzymki do Ojczyzny*, Kraków 1999, Znak, p. 348.

During the difficult years of the war [...] I experienced a lot of good from people. I am specifically referring to a family, or even several families, with whom I became acquainted during the occupation.<sup>32</sup>

Wojtyła is an example of a mature, showing gratitude educator who enjoys the<sup>33</sup> blessings received from people and from God:

In the context of the great evil that was the war, somehow in my personal life everything worked towards the good that was the vocation. I can't forget the good experienced during that difficult period from the people God put in my path: both from my family and among my friends and colleagues.<sup>34</sup>

Karol Wojtyła suffered many misfortunes in his life, one of the first being the death of his family members. At the age of 21 years, he no longer had parents or any of his siblings. His father, as the last of his closest relatives, died during World War II. Many people in Wojtyła's position would complain about their fate. Furthermore, he did the opposite: he thanked Providence for having missed other violent events. As confirmation, it is worth quoting the following words of Wojtyła:

Well, I was spared much in the great and terrible theaters of World War II. After all, any day I could have been taken from the street, quarry or factory and taken to a concentration camp.<sup>35</sup>

Wojtyła constantly recognised the continuous, ongoing contribution of other people – whom Providence put in his way – to his salvation. He reacted with words of thanksgiving and could see, recognise the efforts and prayers of those around him made in his intentions. He responded with words of gratitude, thanking:

At times I even asked myself: so many of my peers died, and why not me? Today I know that it was not a coincidence [...]. I was spared these hardest

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<sup>32</sup> Jan Paweł II, *Autobiografia*, p. 48.

<sup>33</sup> W. Juroszek, M. Kozubek, *Self-education into maturity in light of the theoretical approach of Zdzisław Chlewiński*, p. 251.

<sup>34</sup> Jan Paweł II, *Autobiografia*, p. 51.

<sup>35</sup> Jan Paweł II, *Autobiografia*, p. 51.

experiences by Providence, but that is why I have an even greater sense of indebtedness to so many people I know, and even more numerous, those nameless, without distinction of nationality or language, who, with their sacrifice on the great altar of history, contributed in some way to my priestly vocation.<sup>36</sup>

Reliable self-insight involves the ability to see the gifts received from others. Only a proud and complacent person proclaims to owe everything to himself or herself. Thus, educating for gratitude involves developing in the pupil an attitude of thanking for the good experienced, which prevents depressive states, anxiety and feelings of jealousy, and helps to achieve serenity of mind.<sup>37</sup> Karol Wojtyła confirmed by his example that by being grateful to people and the Creator, even in difficult circumstances, one can remain a cheerful, mature educator.

## Conclusions

Karol Wojtyła's maturity as an educator was manifested in his exemplary fulfilment of the criteria for maturity detailed by Zdzisław Chlewiński: a personalistic attitude towards the others, autonomy and reliable insight into oneself.

Wojtyła was authentic as an educator because he not only raised others to maturity, but was also truly mature himself. There was a perfect correspondence between his life and his teaching.

This article refers to the concept of the Polish psychologist Zdzisław Chlewiński. His concept of maturity appears as a coherent yet concise approach that is worth using in subsequent analyses of the biographies of truly mature people.

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<sup>36</sup> Jan Paweł II, *Autobiografia*, p. 51.

<sup>37</sup> A. Wolanin, *Wdzięczność w psychologii – przegląd definicji, głównych ujęć i koncepcji*, "Polskie Forum Psychologiczne", 3 (2019), p. 362.

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