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Theological Reflection on Tourism and Leisure

Abstract

Tourism is one of the most popular leisure activities. In this article we intend to point out a few elements that may constitute the founding blocks of a theology of leisure and a theology of tourism: a theology of time, a theology of freedom, a theology of creation, a theology of leisure, a theology of joy, a theology of the journey (*homo viator, homo peregrinus*). There are many points both in the Bible and in the teachings of the Church that leave room for the development of this notion. According to the Second Vatican Council, tourism is classified as one of the contemporary phenomena which can be described as one of the signs of time. The Council recommends individuals and groups to study them carefully and incorporate them in the general context of pastoral work.

Keywords

Theology of tourism, Theology of leisure, Ethics of tourism, Christian values of tourism, Pastoral dimension of tourism.

The notions of tourism and leisure are closely connected. Tourism is one of the most popular leisure activities. In this article we intend to point out a few elements that may constitute the founding blocks of a theology of leisure and a theology of tourism. There are many points both in the Bible and in the teachings of the Church that leave room for the development of this notion. According to the Second Vatican Council, tourism is classified as one of the contemporary phenomena defined as the signs of time¹. The Council recommends that they be studied carefully and incorporate them in the general context of pastoral work. it states: “all the people should enjoy rest and leisure, in a way sufficient to have a family, cultural, social and

¹ *Gaudium et spes*, 54.

religious life. Furthermore, they should have the opportunity to develop their abilities and possibilities freely, and have the prospects that may not always be provided by a professional life”².

1. A Theology of time

First of all, our problem can be linked with the theological notion of time as such³. Earthly time is for man a gift of God and an obligation. Completion of every stage of life constitutes a step that brings a man closer to his ultimate redemption in eternity. Therefore, it would be wrong to assume that some moments of life – leisure, relax, tourism – should be excluded from this path. Also by living every moment of life with dignity, a man rises to eternity, fulfilling appropriately the vocation given by the Creator. Saint Paul writes: “So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God” (1 Cor 10, 31).

2. Theology of freedom

The concept of freedom is a vast notion, having deep theological roots. Just next to the notion of time we can place the word *free*, coming from the word *freedom*. Freedom, as John Paul II often said, is not just a gift of God; it is also given to us as a task. It constitutes one of the most important offerings of God. At the same time, man is obliged to use it responsibly and in accordance with the truth. In such a way, man can realize and develop his humanity. Freedom cannot be understood as a total liberty – lawlessness, and there can be no freedom without values either, that is without the pursuit of true goodness. The time of leisure (tourism) cannot therefore be a time to abandon ethical values and rules that always apply to man. Just the opposite, it is the time to realize new values.

² *Lumen gentium*, 67.

³ Cf. M. Ostrowski, *Duszpasterstwo wobec problemu wolnego czasu człowieka. Aspekt moralno-pastoralny ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem zagadnień turystyki*, Kraków 1996, p. 19–81.

3. Theology of creation

Let us examine the notion of creation, for the time of leisure (tourism) is often referred to as the time of recreation. The ideas of creation and recreation are tightly connected. God gave man a mission to cooperate with him by carrying on the work of creation (development, perfecting the world) – which means creating new values. This task is, first of all, aimed at the inner side of man, at the perfection of oneself. Sometimes, it may be a renewal of the body (renewing our physical and mental strength), transformation, conversion (or spiritual recreation). Some other time, it may be a formation of new values (creation). It is easy to spot the common goal. After all, man undertakes tourism to re-create his strength and to learn about the world (create and widen his mental horizons). One cannot ignore the fact that when a man engages himself in tourism, he enjoys the opportunity to meet the gift of creation directly, as a document of the Holy See states: “(man) is invited in a special way to offer thanksgiving for the gift of creation he experienced anew, through which the beauty of the Creator is reflected”⁴. He gets to know the world of culture that surrounds him. He creates (or regenerates, re-creates) new bonds with other people. Finally, he is given the opportunity to recreate his bond with God once again.

4. A Theology of leisure

The notion of leisure needs to be mentioned in view of our analyses. Man sets off on a tourist trail to rest. In the Bible the idea of resting (repose, leisure) is mentioned more than eighty times. Simple physical regeneration is by no means what those texts are about. The Bible joins earthly relaxation with the idea of resting *in* God, which is supposed to be the ultimate goal of man (eternal rest in God). The Promised Land – the land where the Israelites rested after their long-lasting exodus from Egypt, as well as every holy day, the day of leisure – becomes in biblical theology an anticipation, a foretaste of heaven, already here on the earth. The Epistle to the Hebrews exhorts us to hurry to enter that rest, making good use of every moment of our life (4, 11).

⁴ Pontificio Consiglio Della Pastorale Per I Migranti E Gli Itineranti, *Orientamenti per la pastorale del turismo*, 11 luglio 2001, n. 14.

5. A Theology of joy

Joy is connected with leisure and tourism. It turns out that the problem of joy is not that rarely discussed in a theological context. To make a reference to the Bible once again, we can say that the terms *joys*, *rejoice*, or *joyous* occur more than two hundred times and carry a deep theological message. Pope Paul VI devoted to this topic a separate and in-depth exhortation *Gaudete in Domino*, published on 8th December, 1975. Physical and spiritual joys that man experiences on earth are not only the gifts of God that enrich our earthly lives, but also indicate the permanent and eternal joy of the future Kingdom of Heaven, where we are all ultimately heading, and which cannot be taken away from us (cf. Jn 16, 22). Man has a right to be joyous, but here he should also be guided by responsibility. It can never become for him a source of evil (false joy), but should introduce into his life true cheerfulness and lightness.

6. *Homo viator, homo peregrinus*

In our discussion of the issue of tourism, the term “homo viator” (a travelling man) used to describe a human condition, and constitutes the most essential “theological point”. Man as a creature, inhabitant of the earth, exists “on the way”, aware of the fact that the earth is just a stage of the journey to the eternal happiness in heaven. Every moment of existence “here” is temporary, transitory – “For here we do not have an enduring city, but we are looking for the city that is to come” (Heb 13,14). For this reason man is called an eternal pilgrim (“homo peregrinus”⁵). Aspiration to holiness constitutes a special aspect of this pilgrimage, as it takes up the whole life of man (spiritual pilgrimage). The fullness of holiness will be attained in heaven by the union with God. Every journey taking place on the earth – tourism, pilgrimage – is a unique reflection of this spiritual voyage. It constitutes an exercise in achieving holiness, which is necessary to reach heaven, and at the same time helps man to earn new experience, which may further help him to develop in many directions – physically, culturally, socially and religiously.

⁵ Cf. *Lumen gentium*, 48–50.

7. Human personal development

The *Guidelines for Pastoral Tourism* enumerate the values of tourism with regard to the renewal of a human person⁶. The necessity to look at the human person from an integral perspective is strongly emphasised. It should be presented in all its dimensions, both physical and spiritual ones. The fundamental assertion of Christian anthropology stating that man can only find the fullness of his development through the relations with another person cannot be disregarded at this point. The term “another person” can denote another human being, but also God.

Life is one of the most basic gifts that man possesses in this world. It is our moral duty, confirmed by the fifth commandment of the Decalogue, to preserve it and take care of its development. It is incontrovertible that the negative effects of pollution on the natural environment, especially in big cities, the quick pace of life, which is at the same time full of stress and pressure but also sedentary, and limited to an office or school, pose a threat to human health and fitness. Obviously, leisure and tourism are not the only remedies to the aforementioned threats. They constitute a powerful antidote. They also constitute a part of broadly defined health education, seen as a concern for the gift of God⁷. What may help in the regeneration of reduced physical and mental energy is to take a break from everyday life, relax, take a breath of fresh air, or use the gifts of nature. Just as John Paul II used to say, people go to the mountains to regain strength through a healthy effort: climbing or skiing.

In the same speech the pope added that spiritual renewal is equally important. Following St. Paul’s terminology, he refers to it as “conceiving anew”, building “a new man” in all the dimensions of his humanity⁸. Catholic teaching emphasises that man is a creature of a corporeal and spiritual nature. Both spheres interact with each other. That is the reason why Pope Pius XII already indicated that tourism is a study of “a spiritual elevation... more moral, than physical in nature”⁹. Through the regeneration of his physical and spiritual strengths, man can realise his humanity to a greater extent.

⁶ Pontificio Consiglio della Pastorale per i Migranti e gli Itineranti, *Orientamenti per la pastorale del turismo*, 11 luglio 2001.

⁷ Konferencja Episkopatu Polski, List pasterski *O zagrożeniach zdrowia i sportu*, Jasna Góra, 30.11.1990.

⁸ Eucharistic Celebration in Nowy Targ – Homily (June 8, 1979).

⁹ *Discorso di Sua Santità Pio XII ai partecipanti al 60 Congresso Nazionale del Club Alpino Italiano*, 26 settembre 1948, *Discorsi, Radiomessaggi di sua Santità Pio XII*, Roma 1955, vol. 10, p. 219.

This process takes place at multiple levels. The term *asceticism of tourism* appears in papal utterances. The tourist needs to overcome many difficulties in order to cross some distance, climb up a hill, put up with the inconveniences of a journey and accommodation, bad weather conditions, shortages of food, etc. They are not only the trials for the body but also for the spirit. Every traveller, but first of all, the one who leads tourist groups knows that the internal barriers of sluggishness, laziness or reluctance are much more difficult to overcome than the physical ones. The ability to overcome these obstacles helps man to develop various positive features of character, such as courage, fortitude, breaking the habit of passivity and softening the personality. Tourism gives man an opportunity to develop some spiritual refinement and to seek the internal moral balance¹⁰. John Paul II used to say that with the efforts of tourism “the body toughens up and the whole man experiences the joy of self-control”. Therefore, tourism creates favourable conditions for man to get more mature and to strengthen his personality¹¹.

In tourism, not only can man fulfil his growing desire to move around, but also his desire for freedom. Limited by the confines of his duties, professional work, and sometimes literally confined to the four walls of a house, office or school, man may feel limited and depressed. He looks for a “new, small world” as a reaction to the technological civilisation and its “concrete jungles” that surround him. He needs the freedom to move away from it all: in the admiration of nature, in the pursuit of the extraordinary, and, first of all, in search of something out of this world¹². The tourism of open spaces releases the human spirit. That is where man can find the joy and a new lease of life, here his spiritual energy is awakened.

This new, unfamiliar experience of the world becomes for man an opportunity of a different freedom, which is fulfilled in the depths of the human spirit, and originates from the gift of God. It is here that man can experience his existence in a deeper manner, having the freedom to define and fulfil himself¹³. This

¹⁰ Pio XII, *Discorsi, Radiomessaggi*, vol. 14, p. 36; E. Clarizio, *Christliche Ausbildung zum Tourismus*, in: *Pastoral-Information XV*, Bonn 1977, p. 13.

¹¹ Eucharistic Celebration in Cogne (Aosta Valley), 21 August 1994; cf. also John Paul II, Apostolic Letter *Dilecti Amici To the Youth of the World on the Occasion of the International Youth Year* (31 March 1985 r.), 14.

¹² Cz. Bartnik, *Ręka i myśl. Teologia pracy, odpoczynku i świętowania*, Katowice 1982, p. 250.

¹³ A. Hertz, *Perspektiven christlicher Ethik zur Freizeitproblematik und zur Fragen der Musse*, in: *Handbuch der christlichen Ethik*, Freiburg/Br 1970, vol. 2., p. 385.

freedom is “not just a pure escape or a simple breather for the spirit, only to break the tedious monotony of the life of labour, but can provide a valuable charge for the man”. It becomes a type of “self-education and personal complementation”¹⁴. In tourism man does not only become free but also learns about freedom. He learns how to use it well to shape his humanity.

8. Creating a human community

Tourism helps to strengthen human bonds and the sense of togetherness with another man. The Second Vatican Council points out that leisure should be used to get to know each other and establish “fraternal relations among men of all conditions, nations and races”¹⁵. It is instrumental in creating social bonds, and particularly the ones among the members of a family¹⁶. Here, an opportunity to “fulfil one another in the closer ties between groups and even between peoples”¹⁷ arises.

Contemporary man becomes, more than ever before in history, a “citizen of the world”, and the entire world becomes “everybody’s homeland”. As a result of perfecting various means of communication, man can identify himself with events taking place in different parts of the world. Tourism plays a significant role in this process. We can mention at least some examples of situations in which human bonds are created through tourism: getting to know each other, coming into contact with other civilisations and cultures, the development of hospitality, enhancing the unity of the human family, overcoming prejudices and divisions, and reducing social frictions.

Bonds with another man can be built both on a local and global scale. Spending time together on a hiking trip helps to develop deeper friendships and feelings of unity. The factors which are conducive to the formation of these bonds are: sharing the hardship of travelling and getting to know the world, being close to each other and talking. In view of the lack of personal relationships and human alienation in the contemporary technological world,

¹⁴ *Directorium Generale pro Ministerio Pastoralis quoad „Turismum”*, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 61 (1969) 361–384: 1,3, c.

¹⁵ *Gaudium et spes*, 61.

¹⁶ *Gaudium et spes*, 67.

¹⁷ *Gravissimum educationis*, introduction.

these are the moments which become a specific type of “anapausis” – when we can raise each other’s spirit in the atmosphere of brotherhood and joy. The model for these moments can be found in the Bible¹⁸. They can introduce special values to a modern family, which is nowadays more often troubled by situations that are likely to lead to the disintegration of unity than its creation. The time spent together, e.g. on a Sunday excursion, becomes indispensable for a peaceful relationship between the married couple and their children. It creates favourable conditions for deeper understanding and helps to build up trust and family love¹⁹.

Tourism provides an opportunity to meet people from other countries, races and cultures face to face, learn about their lifestyles, habits and everyday problems. By “entering their home” the tourist is given a chance to verify the second-hand knowledge he has already had – discover the source of discrepancies, and judge other people fairly and accept the variety of the same human family²⁰.

Mutual contacts are first all an opportunity to enrich each other with the values that every man possesses, and which belong to entire nations. Every region of the world has its own historical, cultural, ethical and religious characteristics. Each makes its own contribution to the whole human civilisation with its own specificity and diversity. Through tourism, man is offered a chance to learn about alternative lifestyles, and take over what is good from other people. In such a way, he is also able to discover that he is a fellow-participant in the heritage of the entire human family²¹.

Finally, tourism gives us the opportunity to develop the virtue of hospitality. It teaches the hosts how to welcome guests, and the travellers learn how to enjoy the hospitality in a proper way. In one of his holiday speeches, John Paul II, addressing the hosts of holiday resorts, talked about “welcoming the travellers with open arms” and encouraged them to always make their

¹⁸ A. Deissler, *Fest und Feier – biblische „Freizeit“ als Modell für heute*, in: *Schöpferische Freizeit*, Wien 1974, p. 55, author quotes 1 Cor 16, 17–18 and 2 Cor 7, 13.

¹⁹ Cf. John XXIII, *Mater et magistra* (15 May 1961), 250; Konferencja Episkopatu Polski, *List o chrześcijańskich walorach turystyki* (16–18 marca 1995).

²⁰ J. Döpfner, *Päpstliche und Konziliare Dokumente über den Tourismus*, in: R. Bleistein, *Tourismus-Pastoral*, Würzburg 1973, p. 36 and 48.

²¹ Giovanni Paolo II, *Messaggio per la Giornata Mondiale del Turismo* (27 settembre 2001), “L’Osservatore Romano” 20 giugno 2001, p. 6.

homes “true oases of faith and hospitality”²². Tourism becomes for both parts a chance to give a striking testimony. Tourists seem to act as ambassadors of their country for all the people they meet on their way. Moreover, as the second Vatican Council says, “they are travelling messengers of Christ”²³.

In the age of developing ecumenism and inter-religious dialogue, tourism can play a significant role in the process of mutual rapprochement. The very fact of meeting real people and their religious customs constitutes the first step towards overcoming barriers and leads to mutual understanding. History records many frictions founded on these grounds that were based on irrational premises. The prohibition of contacts and a lack of understanding of other religious groups, as well as distorted views concerning the followers of these groups gave rise to many prejudices against them.

In conclusion, we can also say that relationships formed while engaging in tourism activities help on a global scale to spread peace and unify the nations. It can be assumed that these relationships, though taking place at a lower level, between the citizens of particular countries, prepare the ground for the peace process declared by the governments of these countries. Similarly, ecumenical dialogue is not only created among the church leaders and theologians, but stems from previous contacts between ordinary believers²⁴.

10. Contact with the world of nature and culture

Pope Paul VI, expounding on the meaning of Christian holidays, during which man goes to the bosom of nature, spoke about experiencing a unique sense of communion “with the earth, sky and sea, with open spaces, the brightness of the day and the silence of the night”. Not only does it provide solace, and is necessary to maintain the balance of body and soul, but it also inspires admiration for the works of nature and makes us “enter its mystery”. It also lets us contemplate the meaning of life itself²⁵. It constitutes an experience of the mystery of creation of the visible world, and the sense of human

²² Angelus, Demegge di Cadore (Belluno) – Domenica, 30 Agosto 1992.

²³ *Apostolicam actuositatem*, 14.

²⁴ Pontificio Consiglio della Pastorale per i Migranti e gli Itineranti, *Orientamenti per la pastorale del turismo*, 11 luglio 2001, n. 9, 19.

²⁵ *Wypowiedź o wakacjach*, 19 VII 1970, in: „Miesięcznik Diecezjalny Gdański” 15 (1971) 8–9, p. 267.

existence in this world as well. The tourist who is capable of contemplating the good and beauty of the created world, perceiving it as God's gift to the whole humanity, develops in himself an attitude of respect for the nature that surrounds him. From admiration and affirmation, a caring attitude towards the natural environment arises²⁶.

Tourism also creates an opportunity to encounter the works of human hands. Works of the human genius, manifested in cultural monuments (temples, museums, building complexes), modern architectural and industrial solutions become tourist destinations. Tourists get familiar with the habits and customs of other peoples. This knowledge is not only about satisfying pure human curiosity and gathering facts. John Paul II wished the youth to grow, develop their personality, through contact with the achievements of humanity over the ages of history. As it allows us to learn the truth about man and enrich the humanity of each one of us²⁷. The second Vatican Council points out that "throughout the course of time people express, communicate and conserve in (their) works, great spiritual experiences and desires, that might be of advantage to the progress of many, even of the whole human family"²⁸. This is the reason why the Church has supported culture for ages, seeing a great pedagogical tool in it. Tourism provides an irreplaceable opportunity to face the rich diversity of human culture and to be elevated to a more sublime understanding of truth, goodness, and beauty²⁹. The examination of the surrounding world helps man to form the right opinion of the world, but also develop a religious, moral and social sense³⁰. The contact with human works of art allows man to identify himself with the meaning they express. That is how he enters the history of humanity himself, as its participant and fellow-creator. He also learns respect for national shrines and patriotism.

11. The way to God

In the course of our analyses we have managed a few times to touch upon the issue of those values of tourism that point man towards supernatural

²⁶ John Paul II, *Centesimus annus* (1 May 1991), 37.

²⁷ Apostolic Letter *Dilecti Amici To the Youth of the World* (31 March 1985 r.), 14.

²⁸ *Gaudium et spes*, 53.

²⁹ *Gaudium et spes*, 57.

³⁰ *Gaudium et spes*, 59.

realities. It is not only the contact with nature and the works of man, but also a deeper experience of his own existence which directs the tourist to the Creator of the universe. He is the Creator of the entire beauty that can be found in the world. In a historical sense, tourist excursions are derived from pilgrimages, which are always aimed at forging closer bonds with God.

Tourism brings man to the bosom of nature. Catholic doctrine is convinced that contemplating the beauty of the natural world constitutes a way to experience the Creator. This lesson has repeatedly been confirmed by the Divine Revelation³¹. “Everything that is around us says: search for the truth above us” – as Paul VI used to teach in his catechesis on holidays³². Card. A. Casaroli in his letter to the United Nations World Tourism Organization wrote that tourism can help man to discover the natural desire that exists in him. This desire drives him to “search for the thing that is objectively higher as a primary goal, that is always present and working, that is to God”³³. Following John Paul II, we can speak of “an open book of nature” which is “a great mirror of the world” that reflects the “Creator’s covenant with his creature”. In this book man can read about the fundamental meaning of the world, and find God himself at its beginnings, the source for the existence of the entire universe³⁴.

Discovering God does not take place through nature alone. It is also the beauty of the works of art encountered on tourist trails that points to the Creator and the Source of all the beauty. Fine arts, and religious art in particular “by their very nature, are oriented toward the infinite beauty of God which they attempt in some way to portray by the work of human hands” and they are instrumental in turning “human souls devoutly toward God”³⁵. Paul VI spoke to the participants of the congress on the pastoral care of tourism about Rome, which as a city – the capital of Christianity – is a great “reliquary of apostles and martyrs”³⁶. When the restoration of Michelangelo’s “The Last Judgement” fresco was unveiled in the Sistine Chapel, John Paul II said that this picture “awakens within us the keen desire to profess our faith in God,

³¹ Ws 13,1.5; Rom 1,19–20; Cf. *Breviarium fidei* I, 42.

³² 24 July 1970, “L’Osservatore Romano” (French edition) 30 (1970).

³³ List z 14 września 1981 r., in: *Nauczanie papieskie*, Poznań 1981, vol. 4,2 (1981), p. 109.

³⁴ Apostolic Letter *Dilecti Amici To the Youth of the World* (31 March 1985 r.), n. 14; cf. John Paul II, *Eucharistic Celebration in Santo Stefano di Cadore* (Belluno – Italy), 11 July 1993.

³⁵ *Sacrosanctum concilium*, 122.

³⁶ Przemówienie do uczestników I Kongresu diecezjalnego Rzymu na temat duszpasterstwa turystyki, 12 VI 1969, „Miesięcznik Diecezjalny Gdański” 15 (1971) 8–9, p. 265.

Creator of all things seen and unseen ... in the risen Christ, who will come again on the Last Day as the supreme Judge of the living and the dead ... King of the ages, whose kingdom will have no end”³⁷.

The contact with works of culture and art, which so often takes place on tourist trips, entails reaching to the past and tradition. In our part of Europe, and in Poland especially, they have always been and are now immensely inspired by Christianity. It is impossible to read the message they convey properly and understand them disregarding their religious background. In order to understand the whole truth inscribed in them, it is essential to take into consideration the foundation of faith that inspired whole generations of artists³⁸. The tourist facing works of art can incorporate his own religiousness into many churches and shrines, the works of the cultural and artistic output of generations³⁹. Tourism therefore becomes for him a confirmation of faith.

12. Ethical implications

The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World points out that the man who is forced to migrate because of various circumstances, thereby changes also his way of life⁴⁰. Tourism offers new opportunities for personal and social development to people. However, you cannot disregard the many moral hazards it may generate. In tourism, as in any other way of life, human weaknesses become apparent. Every time man is standing at the crossroads of his life, the Church is given a mission to fulfil – a mission to show the truth that directs human ways of life. The Church, as a trustee of the divine law, feels obliged to evaluate the morality of any human behaviour and formulate ethical principles. It applies these both to individuals and to the community. Let us mention at least the most important problems.

³⁷ Celebration of the Unveiling of the Restorations of Michelangelo’s Frescos in the Sistine Chapel, 8 April 1994.

³⁸ Cf. Konferencja Episkopatu Polski, *List O obowiązkach katolików w Polsce wobec kultury narodowej i religijnej*, Warszawa, 8 III 1978, in: *Listy Pasterskie Prymasa Polski oraz Episkopatu 1975–1981*, Paris 1988, p. 337–342.

³⁹ Cf. Giovanni Paolo II, *Angelus*, Genova – Domenica, 14 ottobre 1990.

⁴⁰ *Gaudium et spes*, 6.

John Paul II warns tourists not to treat their free time as an opportunity to “take time off from moral standards”⁴¹. The Pope, in great probability, means eradicating all the things unethical from the world of tourism. What is even more important, however, is the emphasis put on the need to experience this time of life in a creative, productive way, so as not to let it become an “empty” and valueless period. It is crucial to form a man in such a way that he would be willing to take advantage of the opportunities that open before him. This task is not only entrusted to the Church, but to everyone who is somehow responsible for the development of tourism. The intention of the above analyses was to present the benefits of tourism, at least in a sketchy way. Neglecting the chance of personal development that is offered by the values of tourism, from the vantage point of Christian ethics, should be labelled as a moral negligence.

It is an important task to enhance a business ethic of the employers, the employees and all the people responsible for the development of the so-called tourist industry. The Holy See responded with hope to the Code of Ethics in Tourism proclaimed by the World Tourism Organization. The code of ethics, which in this case can be referred to as business ethics, resembles in broad outline any other professional ethics. However, it has its own specific features. It is essential to investigate carefully all the aspects of tourism to be able to come to the appropriate ethical conclusions. The aspects to be considered include: the seasonal character of work in tourism, irregular working hours, and the problems connected with the separation from families that tourist industry workers experience. Since tourism entails close contact with the natural environment, which is very often unique in its beauty, many ethical issues connected with the attitude to nature arise (so-called environmental issues): respecting the creation as God’s gift, reducing the destruction of the natural environment caused by the careless development of the tourist industry⁴². As it has been already observed, the ethical duty to protect the created world falls naturally on the tourists. It must be added at once, so does the duty to preserve cultural heritage.

As it has been noticed before, tourism constitutes a way of establishing relationships between people and different civilisations. Respect for different

⁴¹ *Messaggio per la Giornata Mondiale del Turismo* (27 settembre 2001), “L’Osservatore Romano” 20 giugno 2001, p. 4.

⁴² Giovanni Paolo II, *Messaggio per la Giornata Mondiale del Turismo* (27 settembre 2002), “L’Osservatore Romano” 26 giugno 2002, p. 5.

cultures, points of view and religions is necessary for these relationships to succeed. We should do our best to prevent the situations that destroy or distort local cultures by badly-understood tourism (e.g. making a grotesque spectacle of the locals, or treating them as a commodity for sale)⁴³.

With respect should come a good account of the local inhabitants that tourists are supposed to give. Having regard for the poorer nations is a delicate issue. Tourism may become a means of establishing solidarity with the poor⁴⁴. The practice of so-called sexual tourism is very harshly stigmatized in many statements of the Church. Finally, Christian social ethics warns against the situation in which tourism is treated solely as a product that can be sold profitably on the market, losing at the same time its crucial educational merits.

13. Pastoral initiatives

It has been pointed out earlier that it is the task of pastoral theology to develop a set of guidelines for the practical work of the Church. They should result in specific pastoral solutions. This is also a very extensive topic and it would deserve a separate study in its own right. It was the intention of the author to elucidate the theoretical aspect of this problem. We may only draw attention to the fact that the interest of the Church in tourism has resulted in its practical work in the creation of separate structures and pastoral initiatives. The *Guidelines for Pastoral Tourism*, quoted a few times in the previous chapter, offer a synthetic approach to the matter in hand. On the scale of the entire Church, the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerants is responsible for pastoral tourism. Episcopates of individual countries should create analogous institutions (in Poland there is the Council of the Episcopate of Poland for Migration, Tourism and Pilgrimages). Every diocese should appoint a committee responsible for this kind of pastoral work with its own priest, or alternatively a clerk. It is recommended to develop this type of pastoral work in regions and parishes with a high volume of tourist activity. Separate chaplains

⁴³ Giovanni Paolo II, *Messaggio per la Giornata Mondiale del Turismo* (27 settembre 2001), "L'Osservatore Romano" 20 giugno 2001, p. 5.

⁴⁴ Giovanni Paolo II, *Messaggio per la Giornata Mondiale del Turismo* (27 settembre 2003), "L'Osservatore Romano" 27 giugno 2003, p. 7.

for ocean cruise ships, harbours and airports are appointed. It is advocated that each parish, through its daily work, should instruct the congregation to spend their free time, and enjoy tourism in a worthwhile way. Furthermore, the dioceses and parishes located in tourist regions should develop separate programs addressed to their own parishioners (preparing them for the contact with tourist activity) and the visiting guests. The workers of the tourist industry, who are mostly deprived of regular contact with the Church, should be taken care of. The education of the clergy, with the emphasis put on the problems of this way of life, and appropriate lay co-workers should become a long-term task. Because of the fact that tourism crosses boundaries, the cooperation between parishes, dioceses, regions and Churches in different countries is highly recommended. It also has an ecumenical and interreligious character. It is necessary to cooperate at every level with the secular institutions involved in the world of tourism, in order to be able to collaborate on the projects that allow us to reap the benefits of tourism.

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