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The Person and the Challenges

The Journal of Theology, Education, Canon Law and Social Studies Inspired by Pope John Paul II

The Pontifical University of John Paul II in Krakow

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Contents

Articles

Reports ▪ Forum

Reviews

The Person and the Challenges Volume 15 (2025) Number 1, pp. 5–7
ISSN 2083-8018 (print) ▪ ISSN 2391-6559 (online)

In gratitude to the founders and editorial team

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With the passing of Rev. Prof. Józef Stala, an important chapter in the history of "The Person and the Challenges. The Journal of Theology, Education, Canon Law and Social Studies Inspired by Pope John Paul II" has inevitably come to an end.

It was Rev. Professor Stala, who first envisioned, established, and served as the driving force behind this remarkable endeavor, which over the past 14 years has grown into the journal we know today. The creation of a periodical with a theological and humanities profile – giving voice to scholars from Poland and, more broadly, Central and Eastern Europe, who had been underrepresented in the international academic discourse – was, at the time, a true phenomenon.

Only a few close collaborators are aware of the initial challenges that Rev. Józef navigated during the journal's formative period. The early years presented natural hurdles, from administrative complexities to the gradual development of resources and institutional structures that would later become instrumental in securing the journal's continued growth and academic standing. Nevertheless, thanks to the perseverance and immense dedication of Rev. Prof. Józef Stala and Prof. Elżbieta Osewska, it was possible not only to maintain the continuity of publication but also to steadily raise the academic quality and reputation of the journal, ultimately securing its strong position both in the Polish scholarly community and internationally. A tangible confirmation of this success is the high rating received from the Ministry of Education and Science – the highest among theological journals in Poland – which, at its peak in 2023, reached the maximum possible score in the Ministry's evaluation.

High rankings and scores are important from an academic point of view, but the mission of the journal is what matters most. From the very beginning, “The Person and the Challenges” was conceived by Rev. Prof. Józef Stala as a journal with a clear goal, as reflected in its very title: “The Journal of Theology, Education, Canon Law and Social Studies Inspired by Pope John Paul II.” The journal’s main objective is to foster the exchange of ideas, research, reviews, and reports concerning the role of the human being in a rapidly changing world, bringing together scholars from diverse disciplines and backgrounds who are guided by the values promoted by John Paul II.

By upholding high academic standards, the journal has created a space for freedom of expression and open scholarly dialogue. While drawing inspiration from the ethical and cultural heritage of the Catholic tradition, it remains open to various viewpoints and approaches. The editorial team believes that by promoting the universal values of Western civilization, the journal offers meaningful responses to many of the challenges facing people today, regardless of their religious affiliation or lack thereof.

Fully aware of the magnitude of the work initiated by the late Rev. Prof. Józef Stala, we humbly take on the responsibility of continuing his legacy. As members of the new editorial team, we recognize the challenge of maintaining the high standards that have been set. It is with this sense of responsibility that we wish to begin our tenure by expressing our deepest gratitude and remembrance for the founder and long-serving Editor-in-Chief of “The Person and the Challenges.”

We acknowledge that, without the invaluable support of Prof. Elżbieta Osewska, this journal would probably not exist. From the very first issue to the present, Prof. Osewska was deeply involved in initiating, editing, and promoting the journal. Tirelessly navigating often complex administrative pathways, she played a pivotal role in both its establishment and development. For her invaluable assistance, we extend our heartfelt thanks. Similarly, we would like to express our profound respect and gratitude to all the other members of the editorial team for their hard work, dedication, and commitment to this scholarly endeavor.

No academic journal can exist without the generous support of the scholarly community. We extend our sincere thanks to both the national and international academic communities, who have supported “The Person and the Challenges” by undertaking the demanding tasks of reviewing articles, providing consultations, and offering expert opinions as members of the Scientific Council.

While expressing our deep gratitude to the previous editorial team, we would also like to invite all former collaborators, partner institutions, as well as new universities and research centers to continue and expand their cooperation with "The Person and the Challenges," whether through editing, reviewing, publishing, or other forms of scholarly engagement.

We warmly invite all friends and colleagues of the late Rev. Prof. Józef, as well as everyone who values the contribution of "The Person and the Challenges" to the academic community, to actively engage in the ongoing development and enhancement of our journal.

The Editorial Board

Articles

The Person and the Challenges Volume 15 (2025) Number 1, pp. 11–25
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Rev. Prof. Józef Stala (1966–2025): In the service of science and the pursuit of purpose – perspectives, challenges, and academic achievements

https://doi.org/10.15633/pch.15102

Abstract

Rev. Prof. Józef Stala (1966–2025) was a prominent Polish theologian, educator, and editor whose work significantly shaped catechetics, religious education, and family studies. Ordained in 1991, he pursued advanced theological studies and dedicated his academic career to the Pontifical University of John Paul II in Krakow, where he held leadership roles and fostered international collaboration. His scholarly achievements include numerous monographs, edited volumes, and educational resources, with a focus on the practical application of catechesis and family pedagogy. Stala contributed to curriculum development, participated in national and international research projects, and organized major academic conferences. Beyond academia, he served the Church and society through roles in diocesan bodies, acting as an expert and consultant to commissions and working groups appointed by the Polish Bishops' Conference and to governmental committees, influencing educational policy and standards. As founder and editor-in-chief of the journal "The Person and the Challenges", he promoted international and interdisciplinary dialogue inspired by John Paul II. Stala's legacy endures through his mentorship, service, and lasting impact on religious education and scholarship.

Keywords

Józef Stala, catechetics, religious education, family studies, The Pontifical University of John Paul II in Krakow, The Person and the Challenges

The passing of Rev. Prof. Józef Stala is a great loss to the academic community and to all those associated with the journal *The Person and the Challenges. The Journal of Theology, Education, Canon Law and Social Studies Inspired by Pope John Paul II*. As the founder and longtime editor of the journal, he played a key role in shaping its vision and promoting the values that became the foundation of its mission. In honoring the memory of the Reverend Professor, we wish to recall the most significant moments of his life and career, which left a lasting impact on the development of science, education, and pastoral ministry in Poland and beyond. The following biographical note commemorates this legacy.

Early life and education

Rev. Józef Stala was born on December 6, 1966, in Mielec, as the son of Edward and Helena (née Gajek). The future priest came from the parish of Borowa near Mielec and completed his secondary education in 1985 in Mielec. After finishing philosophical-theological studies at the Higher Theological Seminary in Tarnów, Stala was ordained to the priesthood by Bishop Józef Życiński of Tarnów on May 25, 1991.[1] The young cleric's first assignment as a vicar was in the parish of Bolesław (from July 15, 1991), followed by service at St. Kazimierz parish in Nowy Sącz (from June 30, 1992).

Between 1993 and 1998, Rev. Stala pursued specialized licentiate-doctoral studies in catechetics at the Faculty of Theology of the Academy of Catholic Theology (ATK) in Warsaw. He completed his doctoral studies in theological sciences with a dissertation titled "Theological-Anthropological Foundations of Family Catechesis," (*Podstawy teologiczno-antropologiczne katechezy rodzinnej*) written under the supervision of Rev. prof. dr hab. Jerzy Bajda.[2]

In 2005, Rev. Stala was awarded a habilitation degree in theological sciences with a specialization in catechetics by the Council of the Faculty of Theology at the Pontifical Academy of Theology. This recognition came following the

[1] Kuria Diecezjalna w Tarnowie, *Schematyzm diecezji tarnowskiej*, Tarnów 2009, Wydawnictwo Diecezji Tarnowskiej, p. 295.

[2] J. Stala, *Podstawy teologiczno-antropologiczne katechezy rodzinnej. Na podstawie dokumentów Magisterium soborowego i posoborowego*, Tarnów 1998, Mała Poligrafia redemptorystów Tuchowie.

evaluation of his scholarly contributions and his habilitation dissertation titled "Catechesis on Marriage and Family in Poland after the Second Vatican Council: An Evaluation Attempt," (*Katecheza o małżeństwie i rodzinie w Polsce po Soborze Watykańskim. Próba oceny*) published in 2004.[3]

The full professor title in Theological Sciences was conferred upon him by Cardinal Stanisław Dziwisz, the Grand Chancellor of the Pontifical University of John Paul II, in 2011. His professorial book was titled "Towards Integral Religious Education in the Family: An Attempt at Reflection on the Teaching of John Paul II in the Context of Polish Conditions" (*W kierunku integralnej edukacji religijnej w rodzinie. Próba refleksji nad nauczaniem Jana Pawła II w kontekście polskich uwarunkowań*), Tarnów 2010.[4]

Academic career

Since 1998, Rev. Stala maintained a continuous affiliation with the Pontifical University of John Paul II in Krakow (formerly the Pontifical Academy of Theology). His academic journey began at the Theological Institute in Tarnów, which later became the Faculty of Theology Section in Tarnów (WTST), where he served as the head of the Department of Pedagogical and Catechetical Sciences. Upon his appointment as Associate Professor at UPJPII in 2008, the distinguished scholar assumed numerous administrative responsibilities, including the Erasmus program coordinator for the faculty in WTST (2008–2014 and from 2020),[5] a member and subsequently chairman (2010–2020) of the Senate Commission for Supporting Scientific Activities at UPJPII in Krakow, Vice-Dean for Science, Development and International Cooperation at WTST (2011–2014),[6] and later

[3] J. Stala, *Katecheza o małżeństwie i rodzinie w Polsce po Soborze Watykańskim II. Próba oceny*, Tarnów 2004, Biblos.

[4] J. Stala, *W kierunku integralnej edukacji religijnej w rodzinie. Próba refleksji nad nauczaniem Jana Pawła II w kontekście polskich uwarunkowań*, Tarnów 2010, Polihymnia.

[5] J. Stala, *Aktualne możliwości kształcenia polskich studentów za granicą w kontekście 25. rocznicy powołania programu "Erasmus"*, "Tarnowskie Studia Teologiczne" 32 (2013) no. 2, pp. 103–112.

[6] J. Stala, *Uniwersytecka "melodia". Tarnowski przyczynek do współpracy międzynarodowej Uniwersytetu Papieskiego Jana Pawła II w Krakowie*, "Tarnowskie Studia Teologiczne" 33 (2014) no. 2, pp. 193–203.

Vice-Rector for Scientific Potential and International Cooperation at UPJPII in Krakow (2014–2020).

As the university's ambassador for internationalization, Rev. Stala not only established numerous bilateral cooperation agreements with foreign institutions but also personally engaged in collaborative academic work, delivering lectures and conducting teaching activities at academic centers across Europe, including those in Ružomberok and Banská Bystrica (Slovakia), Ljubljana (Slovenia), Prague (Czech Republic), Tbilisi (Georgia), and Kaunas (Lithuania).

Scholarly and educational achievements

Students were always of paramount importance to Rev. Professor Stala, who consistently supported their academic development and educational advancement. Throughout his career, he supervised 72 master's theses and 8 doctoral dissertations across various disciplines, including theological sciences, pedagogy, family studies, and sociology. His academic mentorship expanded through his role as a reviewer for 16 doctoral proceedings and 4 habilitation reviews for the conferment of the habilitation degree in theological sciences.

The scholarly output of Rev. Prof. Józef Stala is remarkable, both in terms of volume and interdisciplinary scope. He authored or co-authored 12 scientific monographs and served as the editor for 56 collective volumes. In addition, he published 138 articles in scientific journals, 122 chapters in multiauthor monographs, and 13 entries in dictionaries and encyclopedias. His bibliography also includes 68 book reviews published in scientific periodicals and 28 conference reports.[7] His work has appeared in Polish, English, German, Portuguese, Slovenian, Croatian, and Slovak. In collaboration with Prof. Elżbieta Osewska, he developed 9 packages for religious education in preschools and 22 packages for primary schools and co-authored 26 other religious education resources.

Rev. Stala distinguished himself through his active participation in numerous scientific projects, expert groups, and scholarly forums where he addressed pastoral challenges emerging within the context of ongoing social transformations. His work focused on developing innovative approaches to

[7] *ks. prof. dr hab. Józef Stala*, http://oldwww.upjp2.edu.pl/edumod/pracownik/331/ [10.05.2025]

catechesis[8] and family pedagogy,[9] age-appropriate religious instruction,[10] and Christian formation in the postmodern context.[11] His scholarly interests also included family dynamics[12] and approaches to marriage preparation.[13] Beyond academic inquiry, his organizational leadership resulted in the successful coordination of 13 international scientific conferences, 17 national symposia, and 12 regional academic gatherings.[14] His scholarly influence extended through his

8 J. Stala (ed.), *Dzisiejszy katecheta: stan aktualny i wyzwania: praca zbiorowa*, Kraków 2002, WAM; J. Stala (ed.), *Katechizować dzisiaj: problemy i wyzwania: praca zbiorowa*, Kielce 2004, Jedność.

9 J. Stala, *Familienkatechese in Polen um die Jahrhundertwende: Probleme und Herausforderungen*, Tarnów 2008, Biblos; J. Stala, E. Osewska (eds.), *Religious Education/Catechesis in the Family: A European Perspective*, Warszawa 2010, Wydawnictwo Naukowe UKSW; J. Stala (ed.), *Dzisiejsi rodzice: problemy i wyzwania: praca zbiorowa*, Tarnów–Lublin 2009, Polihymnia.

10 R. Chałupniak, E. Osewska, J. Stala (eds.), *Wychowanie dzieci w wieku przedszkolnym*, Tarnów 2005, Biblos; A. Hajduk, J. Stala (eds.), *Wychowanie dzieci w młodszym wieku szkolnym. Cz. 2: Wychowanie religijne i katecheza*, Tarnów 2006, Biblos; H. Iwaniuk, J. Stala (eds.), *Wychowanie młodzieży w średnim wieku szkolnym. Cz. 2: Wychowanie religijne i katecheza*, Tarnów 2007, Biblos; R. Czekalski, J. Stala (eds.), *Wychowanie młodzieży na poziomie szkół ponadgimnazjalnych. Cz. 2: Wychowanie religijne i katecheza*, Tarnów 2007, Biblos; K. Misiaszek, J. Stala (eds.), *Katecheza dorosłych*, Tarnów 2009, Biblos.

11 E. Osewska, J. Stala, *Die katholische Schule zu Beginn des XXI. Jahrhunderts am Beispiel Polens und Englands*, Warszawa 2015, Wydawnictwo Naukowe UKSW; J. Stala, E. Osewska, *Anders erziehen in Polen. Der Erziehungs und Bildungsbegriff im Kontext eines sich ständig verändernden Europas des XXI. Jahrhunderts*, Tarnów 2009, Polihymnia; E. Osewska, J. Stala, *Les transformations socio-politiques et l'éducation religieuse et morale dans l'école Polonaise*, "Studia Pastoralne" 8 (2012), pp. 140–147.

12 J. Stala, E. Osewska (eds.), *The contemporary family. Local and European perspectives*, Kraków 2015, Uniwersytet Papieski Jana Pawła II w Krakowie Wydawnictwo Naukowe; J. Garmaz, J. Stala (eds.), *Strengthening Families*, Kraków 2016, Uniwersytet Papieski Jana Pawła II w Krakowie Wydawnictwo Naukowe; E. Osewska, J. Stala, C. Rossi (eds.), *Families: Opportunities and challenges*, Kraków 2019, Uniwersytet Papieski Jana Pawła II w Krakowie Wydawnictow Naukowe.

13 J. Stala (ed.), *Nauki o rodzinie w służbie rodziny: praca zbiorowa*, Kraków 2014, Uniwersytet Papieski Jana Pawła II w Krakowie Wydawnictwo Naukowe.

14 J. Stala, *VII ogólnopolska konferencja naukowa Współpraca rodziny i szkoły w procesie wychowania (Tarnów, 21 maja 2012)*, "Polonia Sacra" 16 (2012) no. 2; J. Stala, *Bericht über die Gesamtpolnische Wissenschaftskonferenz "Familienwissenschaften – Gegenwart und Zukunft", Hauptversammlung der Polnischen Gesellschaft für Familiologie, Päpstliche Universität Johannes Paul II. in Krakau, 13. Januar 2017*, "The Person and the Challenges" 7 (2017) no. 1, pp. 255–261; E. Osewska, *International conference: Educating Young People for the 21st Century*, "The Person and the Challenges" 8 (2018) no. 1, pp. 227–230; J. Stala, *Internationale polnisch-kroatische Konferenz: "Wpływ papieża Polaka, św. Jana Pawła II na*

contributions as a presenter at 41 international, 47 national, and 57 regional scientific conferences, demonstrating his sustained commitment to academic dialogue and knowledge dissemination.

Recognized for his scholarly accomplishments, Rev. Prof. Stala led both domestic and international scientific and popular science projects supported by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education.[15] During 2021–2022, he coordinated the "We Cherish Family Life" (Pielęgnujemy życie rodzinne) initiative under the "Excellent Science – Support for Scientific Conferences" program. Simultaneously, he oversaw "In Service to Society: Poland in Defense of Human Rights at Home and Abroad" (W służbie społeczeństwu. Polska w obronie praw człowieka na świecie i w kraju) as part of the "Excellent Science – Support for Scientific Monographs" program, culminating in a multi-author publication from the Pontifical University of John Paul II Press in Kraków.[16] From 2023 to 2024, his third ministerial project focused on enhancing the international scholarly journal "The Person and the Challenges" through the "Development of Scientific Journals" program. In addition, Rev. Stala was involved in numerous other projects and initiatives, of which examples are mentioned below. In 2008, he directed

społeczność chorwacką" (Der Einfluss des polnischen Papstes, des hl. Johannes Paul II., auf die kroatische Gesellschaft), "The Person and the Challenges" 8 (2018) no. 1, pp. 231–236. E. Osewska, *Bericht Über Die Internationale Konferenz: "Polonia Restituta", Krakau, 29. April 2019*, "The Person and the Challenges" 9 (2019) no. 2, pp. 257–259; J. Stala, *Bericht über die Gesamtpolnische Konferenz: "Rodzina – Wychowanie – Przyszłość" (Familie – Erziehung – Zukunft) und die Hauptversammlung der Polnischen Gesellschaft für Familiologie, Päpstliche Universität Johannes Paul II., Krakau, 27. Februar 2020*, "The Person and the Challenges" 11 (2020) no. 2, pp. 259–264; J. Stala, *Bericht über die Internationale Konferenz: "Europa między nihilizmem post-oświeceniowym a kwestią islamską"*, "The Person and the Challenges" 10 (2020) no. 1, pp. 319–323; B. Obelenienė, *The most relevant topic of our time at the International Conference 'Dignity and Vocation of Woman' on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the birth of Pope John Paul II*, "The Person and the Challenges" 11 (2021) no. 1, pp. 291–295; E. Osewska, *A report from the International Academic Conference We Cherish Family Life (Pielęgnujemy życie rodzinne) organised by the Pontifical University of John Paul II in Krakow and Polskie Stowarzyszenie Familiologiczne, Krakow, 21–22 October 2022*, "The Person and the Challenges" 13 (2023) 1, pp. 307–311.

15 Completed Projects Funded by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education, Office of Scientific Projects, Pontifical University of John Paul II in Krakow, accessed May 10, 2025, https://bpn.upjp2.edu.pl/projekty/ze-srodkow-budzetu-panstwa/ministerstwo-nauki-i-szkolnictwa-wyzszego/zakonczone.

16 M. Butrymowicz, J. Stala (eds.), *W służbie społeczeństwu: Polska w obronie praw człowieka na świecie i w kraju: praca zbiorowa*, Kraków 2022, Uniwersytet Papieski Jana Pawła II w Krakowie Wydawnictwo Naukowe.

the project "Towards Integral Religious Education in the Family An Attempt at Reflection on the Teaching of John Paul II in the Context of Polish Conditions" (W kierunku integralnej edukacji religijnej w rodzinie. Próba refleksji nad nauczaniem Jana Pawła II w kontekście polskich uwarunkowań). In 2011, he led the "Children with John Paul II" (Dzieci z Janem Pawłem II) project, and in 2013, "Modern Family: Local and European Perspectives" (Współczesna rodzina: perspektywy lokalne i europejskie). He directed the "World Youth Day: Sources and Development of the Idea" (Światowe Dni Młodzieży. Źródła i rozwój idei) project in 2016, and two years later, he led the project "Strong Family as the Foundation of a Healthy Society" (Mocna rodzina fundamentem zdrowego społeczeństwa).

His scholarly reputation extended well beyond Poland, as Rev. Prof. Stala was invited to participate in the European Project ETHOS conducted by the Catholic University College Graz in Austria from 2012 to 2014. Subsequently, from 2018 to 2022, he was entrusted with the chairmanship of the Steering Committee for the "Consolidated Development Plan of UPJPII" (Skonsolidowany Plan Rozwoju UPJPII) project co-financed by the European Social Fund. Between 2020 and 2023, he coordinated the implementation of the international research project "Dynamics of Alcoholism and Addiction in the Family System and Relational Family Therapy."

Service, honors, and professional affiliations

Rev. Professor Stala combined his academic work with various functions in service to both his local diocese and the broader Church in Poland. He served as a staff member of the Catechetical Department of the Diocesan Curia in Tarnów and held the position of diocesan visitor for religious education (1998–2005). For many years, he was active in the Archbishop Jerzy Ablewicz Foundation, which provided scholarships to support children and youth from poor or large families, where he served as a member and secretary of the board. His diocesan responsibilities also included participation in the Program Council of "Dobra Nowina" Radio, acting as a delegate of the Bishop of Tarnów for the evaluation of books with religious content (from 2000), and involvement in both the Presbyteral Council and the V Synod of the Diocese of Tarnów.[17]

[17] P. Madej, *Memento. Śp. ks. prof. dr hab. Józef Stala*, accessed May 10, 2025, https://diecezjatarnow.pl/memento/sp-ks-prof-dr-hab-jozef-stala/92

From 2002, Rev. Stala evaluated religious education curricula and catechetical textbooks as an Expert Consultant for the Catholic Education Commission (Komisja Wychowania Katolickiego) of the Polish Bishops' Conference. During 2003–2004, he co-developed a parish catechesis program for youth, aligning it with Poland's educational reforms. Later, in 2009–2010, he contributed to revising the "Core Curriculum for Catechesis" (Podstawa programowa katechezy) and the "Religious Education Program" (Program nauczania religii), focusing on preschool education and responding to Poland's 2010 educational reforms.[18]

Recognition of academic expertise extended beyond ecclesiastical circles to state authorities, resulting in several significant appointments for Prof. Stala in educational policy development. He collaborated with the Ministry of Education and Science and served on important governmental committees focused on family studies and educational development. Between 2012 and 2019, he served as an expert assessor in theological sciences and family studies for the Humanities and Theological Sciences Section of the Polish Accreditation Committee (Polska Komisja Akredytacyjna). His contributions were further acknowledged in 2022 when the Minister's Plenipotentiary for Family Affairs appointed him to the "Team for developing directions for family sciences" (Zespół do spraw opracowania kierunków rozwoju nauk o rodzinie)[19] in March, followed by his appointment to the Council of the Foundation for the Development of the Education System (Rada Fundacji Rozwoju Systemu Edukacji)[20] in May.

His academic expertise was recognized by numerous associations that invited him to join their ranks. He was a member of the Association of Polish Catechists (Stowarzyszenie Katechetyków Polskich) (1997), the Polish Theological Society (Polskie Towarzystwo Teologiczne) (2005), the Tarnów Scientific Society (Tarnowskie Towarzystwo Naukowe) (2007), the European Catechetical Team – EEC

[18] P. Tomasik, *Powstanie i ewolucja polskich programowych dokumentów katechetycznych w latach 2001–2018*, "Studia Katechetyczne" 15 (2019), pp. 11–28.

[19] Kluz M., *Ks. prof. dr hab. Józef Stala powołany do Zespołu ds. opracowania kierunków rozwoju nauk o rodzinie*, [Rev. prof. dr hab. Józef Stala appointed to the Team for the Development of Family Sciences], accessed May 10, 2025, https://upjp2.edu.pl/aktualnosci/ks-prof-dr-hab-jozef-stala-powolany-do-zespolu-ds-opracowania-kierunkow-rozwoju-nauk-o-rodzinie-1949.html.

[20] *Ks. prof. dr hab. Józef Stala członkiem Rady Fundacji Rozwoju Systemu Edukacji 9 V 2022*, accessed May 10, 2025, https://upjp2.edu.pl/aktualnosci/ks-prof-dr-hab-jozef-stala-czlonkiem-rady-fundacji-rozwoju-systemu-edukacji-9-v-2022-2022.html.

(2010), the Polish Family Association (Polskie Stowarzyszenie Familiologiczne) (2011), and the European Society for Catholic Theology – ESCT (2012).[21]

Rev. Józef's commitment and outstanding achievements were acknowledged with several awards and honors. In recognition of his devoted service to the diocese, Rev. Stala was appointed Honorary Canon of the Collegiate Chapter in Wojnicz in 2014.[22] His exceptional and creative scientific, didactic, and organizational contributions earned him the Rector's Award three times (2010, 2013, 2018). The year 2019 brought two distinctions: the Medal of the National Education Commission (Medal Komisji Edukacji Narodowej) and the Silver Cross of Merit (Srebrny Krzyż Zasługi).[23] Later, in 2021, the Minister of Education and Science, Prof. Przemysław Czarnek, presented him with a lifetime achievement award.[24] The crowning recognition came in 2023, when, on the order of the President of the Republic of Poland, Andrzej Duda, he was presented with the Medal of the Centenary of Regained Independence (Medal Stulecia Odzyskanej Niepodległości).[25] Posthumously, on April 17, 2025, he was further honored by the President with the Gold Cross of Merit (Złoty Krzyż Zasługi).[26]

Editorial work and journal leadership

Rev. Stala collaborated with the editorial boards of many scientific journals, serving as a member of the editorial team or scientific council for "Studia Pastoralne," "Melita Theologica," "Bogoslovni vestnik," "Perspectiva. Legnickie Studia

[21] *Ks. prof. dr hab. Józef Stala*, accessed May 10, 2025, http://oldwww.upjp2.edu.pl/edumod/pracownik/331/

[22] Parish of Wojnicz, "Skład Kapituły" [Chapter Members], official website of the Collegiate Chapter in Wojnicz, accessed May 10, 2025, https://wojnicz.diecezjatarnow.pl/sklad-kapituly/

[23] J. Szczurek, *Chronica*, "Analecta Cracoviensia" 52 (2020), https://doi.org/10.15633/acr.4055.

[24] M. Kluz, *Ks. prof. Józef Stala uhonorowany Nagrodą Ministra Edukacji i Nauki*, December 23, 2021, accessed May 10, 2025, https://upjp2.edu.pl/aktualnosci/ks-prof-jozef-stala-uhonorowany-nagroda-ministra-edukacji-i-nauki-1884.html

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Teologiczno-Historyczne," "Studia Teologiczno-Historyczne Śląska Opolskiego," "Tarnowskie Studia Teologiczne," "Studia Teologiczne. Białystok–Drohiczyn–Łomża," "Roczniki Pedagogiczne," "Studia regionalne," and "Saeculum Christianum." He edited the following publication series: "Education Today. Problems and Challenges" (Edukacja dzisiaj. Problemy i wyzwania), "Family Sciences" (Nauki o rodzinie), "Social Formation" (Formacja socjalna), and also co-edited the publication series "Academica" and "Bibliotheca Tarnoviensis."

A major achievement and lasting legacy of Rev. Prof. Józef Stala was the establishment and management, together with Prof. Elżbieta Osewska, of the international scientific periodical "The Person and the Challenges: The Journal of Theology, Education, Canon Law and Social Studies Inspired by Pope John Paul II." This journal was founded in 2011, the year of Pope John Paul II's beatification, and from the beginning was conceived as an intellectual tribute to this saintly compatriot, visionary, and thinker.[27] It was the kind of monument that the Holy Father himself desired: not material, but an initiative that genuinely changed the world for the better.[28]

The mission of the established periodical was to diagnose the state of contemporary culture and the spiritual condition of humanity and to analyze the broader socio-cultural situation while promoting Christian values. From its inception, the journal was conceived as a voice directed to the world, which is why it was published in congress languages (English, German, Spanish, Italian, and French), and the editorial board fostered collaboration with academic institutions across multiple disciplines, both domestically and internationally.

A significant step toward the openness and popularization of the journal was the introduction of an open access model in 2012 using the Creative Commons license (CC BY 4.0) and indexing in numerous international databases, such as: The Central European Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities (CEJSH), Central and Eastern European Online Library (CEEOL), Directory of Open

[27] J. Stala, *Die Person und die Herausforderungen der Gegenwart im Licht der Nachfolge und der Lehre des Heiligen Vaters Johannes Pauls II. "The Person and the Challenges" – ein internationales wissenschaftliches Periodikum*, "The Person and the Challenges" 1 (2011) no. 1, pp. 13–23.

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Access Journals (DOAJ), ERIH PLUS, Web of Science (Emerging Sources Citation Index), Polish Scientific Bibliography (POLON), and Science Library.

From the founding of the journal in 2011 until his death, Rev. Prof. Józef Stala served as the Editor-in-Chief of "The Person and the Challenges: The Journal of Theology, Education, Canon Law and Social Studies Inspired by Pope John Paul II." Through his meticulous oversight, he ensured the journal's continuous development, its recognition on the international stage, and the building of a strong academic brand. In this capacity, he left the current Editorial Board an unsurpassed model of scholarly commitment and editorial dedication.

Memory and legacy

The scholarly legacy of Rev. Prof. Józef Stala represents an extraordinary breadth of academic achievement rarely found in a single career. His body of work exemplifies the intellectual rigor and unwavering commitment that defined his academic persona. Through methodical research, innovative thinking, and strategic vision, he made valuable contributions to multiple disciplines – catechetics, religious pedagogy, and family education – with recognition extending to academic circles beyond Poland. Rev. Stala embodied the integration of scholarly excellence with practical engagement, demonstrating exceptional organizational leadership in conference development, research team coordination, and editorial stewardship. Perhaps most significantly, his impact as an educator transcended the classroom; he cultivated meaningful mentoring relationships with students and doctoral candidates while maintaining collaborative partnerships with colleagues across the academic community.

Rev. Józef perceived the fulfillment of his duties not merely as performing professional obligations, but primarily as fulfilling a life vocation. The inspiration from John Paul II's teaching, which permeated his activities, was for him an ideal that he wished to instill in society, supporting the building of the individual, the family, and the school community on solid religious foundations. Pastoral care was present in most initiatives he undertook, both theoretical and practical. The religious education of children and youth, as well as strengthening marriages and families, constituted a constant point of reference for his scientific, popularizing, and pastoral activities.

Rev. prof. dr hab. Józef Stala passed away on February 6, 2025, after battling a persistent illness for several years. The funeral ceremonies occurred on February 11 at the parish church of St. Nicholas in his hometown of Borowa near Mielec, where the body of the deceased was laid to rest in the local cemetery. In the memory of many people, Rev. Józef will remain as a kind and good person, and his scientific achievements and numerous works that he co-created or initiated will become a lasting testimony to his life and devotion to others.

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Specificity of Luke's description of the mission of John the Baptist. An analysis of Luke 3:3–9,16–17

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Abstract

The aim of this article is to highlight Luke's editorial work in Luke 3:1–20, when he refers to John the Baptist. Undoubtedly, in his Gospel, the activity and teaching of the son of Zechariah are subordinated to Jesus, whom John the Baptist calls "the mightier", the one who "is coming". One can surely notice that the Evangelists look at John and his ministry in various ways. While telling the story of John the Baptist and Jesus, Luke selects and "edits" the materials available to him in order to emphasise the significance of Jesus and His mission. He focuses not so much upon the truth that the last of the Old Testament prophets is the predecessor of the Messiah, but rather upon God's salvation that is drawing near. It could well be that he did this to contribute to a proper relationship between John's disciples and the community of the early Church.

Keywords

Jesus, Messiah, Christological titles, community of John the Baptist, St. Luke

St. Luke's actual narrative begins with the description of the activity of John the Baptist.[1] The Evangelist considered it important to give a short account of the life and teaching of Zechariah's son.[2] By editing the source material, Luke emphasises the role and significance of Jesus and His mission. We will briefly discuss the tradition and editing of the narrative with respect to the activity of John the Baptist in the Gospel of St. Luke. Subsequently, we will demonstrate what Luke did in order to outline, specifically, the mission of Zechariah's son.[3] It seems that his intention was to emphasise the significance of salvation and the Messiah who brings it.

1. The tradition and editing of Luke 3:1–20

The message regarding Zechariah's son opens with a historical background.[4] The narrative with respect to the activity of John the Baptist begins with the characteristic phrase: *egeneto hrēma theou epi Iōannēn ton Zachariou*[5], which refers to the Old Testament texts.[6] In this way, Luke emphasises that God assigns John, similarly to the prophets of the Old Covenant, a special task, thus situating him among the prophets of the Old Law. Another part of Luke's Gospel, in which the focus shifts from John to Jesus,[7] starts with the words *egeneto de*. This is to emphasise the beginning of a new message.[8]

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1 The historical background and the figure of St. John the Baptist in Luke 3:1–20 are, as it were, independent of the events described in Luke 1–2. Cf. J.A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel according to Luke (I–IX)*, New York 1981, Doubleday, p. 450 (The Anchor Yale Bible Commentaries, 28).

2 Luke 3:1–20.

3 More on this issue in P. Łabuda, *Eliasz w chrystologii Łukasza*, Tarnów 2012, Biblos, pp. 143–201.

4 Luke uses a synchronism in 3:1–2 to create a literary background for introducing John at the beginning of Jesus's time in which salvation will occur. See J.A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel according to Luke (I–IX)*, pp. 452–453; J. Nolland, *Luke (1–9,20)*, Dallas 1989, Word Books, p. 137 (Word Biblical Commentary, 35a); F. Bovon, *Das Evangelium nach Lukas 1. Teilband Luke 1,1–9,50*, Zürich–Neukirchen-Vluyn 1989, Benzinger–Neukirchener, p. 165 (Evangelisch-Katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament, III/1).

5 Luke 3:2.

6 Jer 1:1 LXX, Cf. Isa 38:4.

7 Luke 3:21.

8 See A. Malina, *Chrzest Jezusa w czterech Ewangeliach. Studium narracji i teologii*, Katowice 2007, pp. 277–330 (Studia i Materiały Wydziału Teologicznego w Katowicach, 34).

Having delineated the historical background, Luke includes a narrative emanating from his own materials or from a source similar to Mark's message.[9] The next passage[10] may have originally been the beginning of the Q source. The subsequent texts: a general reference to John's activity, his arrest, and the baptism of Jesus,[11] seem to have functioned as one in the Q source. Luke added an introduction to the baptismal speech[12] and the baptismal preaching of John.[13]

While writing about the activity of John the Baptist, Luke complements the material from the Q source with texts borrowed from Mark's source and other traditions. Perhaps while imparting information with regard to John and his activity, these texts revealed his relationship with Jesus. It seems that they were well-known to the community of the early Church.[14] Luke arranged them according to his theological ideas. Individual *logia* might have been expanded by him and attributed to the historical John. For Zechariah's son likely spoke only about the fire of judgement, not the fire of the spirit, and the term "the mightier" referred rather to God than to the Messiah. It seems that John's speeches were expanded due to the Christian outlook on the relationship between him and Jesus.[15] This may be part of Luke's intention to shape the readers' understanding of the relationship between John the Baptist and Jesus, and even more so, to contribute to a proper relationship between the community of the Baptist's disciples and the community of the Church.

It is difficult to determine who the recipients of John's instructions were. According to the third Gospel, his teaching is directed to the crowds.[16] In the parallel text by Matthew, the speech is addressed to the Pharisees and Sadducees, while in Mark, it refers to the inhabitants of Judea and Jerusalem.[17] Commentators acknowledge that the interpretation of the first Gospels is more original and find it hard to understand Luke's narrative in which those who come to the

9 Luke 3:3–6.
10 Luke 3:7–9 as well as 3:16–17.
11 Luke 3:18–22.
12 Luke 3:7–9 Cf. Matt 3:7–9.
13 Luke 3:10–14. See F. Mickiewicz, *Ewangelia według św. Łukasza, rozdziały 1–11*, Częstochowa 2011, Edycja św. Pawła, p. 216, 222 (Nowy Komentarz Biblijny. Nowy Testament, III/1). Others indicate that Luke might have combined Mark's material with those from the dual tradition and his own source. See J.A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel according to Luke (I–IX)*, p. 464.
14 See Acts 10:37–38.
15 See F. Bovon, *Das Evangelium nach Lukas*, p. 167.
16 See Luke 3:7.10.15.18.
17 See Matt 3:7; Mark 1:5.

Jordan to be baptised are called “the brood of vipers”.[18] However, we must remember that John accuses them of being full of venom that cannot be washed simply by immersion in the waters of the Jordan. He finds the radical *metanoia* of the interior to be indispensable.[19]

The entire message, which consists of *logia* with one common theme (John the Baptist's teaching), is related to the Old Testament historiographies or the description of God's intervention through a prophet. The entire narrative regarding John the Baptist seems to contain essentially historical accounts. Some of them emanate from the tradition of John's disciples, some from the Christian tradition.

2. The beginning of John the Baptist's activity (Luke 3:3–6)

Biblical exegetes still reflect upon the origin of the narrative containing “John's sayings.”[20] Some of them believe that Luke must have drawn on the Q source.[21] Others see the prevailing influence on Luke in the Gospel of the Mark.[22] It seems that the latter opinion is more justified, as there is a similar order of events in both narratives (John the Baptist's activity – baptism – temptation). However, while adopting the tradition of Mark, Luke passes over the quotation from the Book of Malachi[23] while extending the quotation from Isaiah.[24] Thus, the Evangelist seems to explain the character of the baptism and the message of John and underscore the theme of God's salvation. Similar to the Qumran literature, while referring to the prophet Isaiah, Luke interprets historical events considering salvation. Undoubtedly, he considers John's administering baptism and

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18 See Luke 3:7.

19 See A. Paciorek, “*Wydajcie godny owoc nawrócenia…*” *Janowe głoszenie nad Jordanem (Mt 3,7–12)*, in: *Ku liturgii nadziei*, edited by R. Biel, Tarnów 2005, Biblos, p. 142.

20 Luke 3:3–6.

21 Similar to Matt 3:1–6. See E. Lohmeyer, *Das Evangelium des Markus*, KEK 1, Göttingen 1967, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, p. 34; H. Schürmann, *Das Lukasevangelium. 1. Teil: Kommentar zu Kap. 1,1–9,50*, Freiburg–Basel–Wien 1969, Herder, p. 161 (Herders theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament, 3.1).

22 See J. Ernst, *Johannes der Täufer. Interpretation – Geschichte – Wirkungsgeschichte*, Berlin–New York 1989, W. de Gruyter, p. 90 (Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft, 53); F. Mickiewicz, *Ewangelia według św. Łukasza*, p. 209.

23 Mal 3:1; por. Mark 1:2.

24 Isa 40:5.

preaching to be the fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy (unlike Mark who thought it to be the fulfilment of the prophecies of Malachi and Isaiah).

In Luke 3:6, the evangelist relies entirely upon the Septuagint, from which he elicits the excerpt Isa 40:5. Luke uses the term "salvation" (Greek *sōtērion* – "healing", "rescue", "salvation"), which is characteristic only of the Greek Old Testament.[25] Interestingly, he borrows only a fragment of the text from Isa 40:5 and makes several lexical alterations. Perhaps he does this to emphasise the universal character of salvation. Luke does not want to emphasise God's glory and connect it with the coming Messiah. To him, God's glory is not a characteristic trait of Jesus' public activity,[26] but the result of His suffering[27] and an element of His Parousia.[28]

It seems that Luke omits the excerpt from the prophet Malachi, which was most probably present in Mark's text or pre-Mark materials, because he wants to limit the too far-reaching identification of John the Baptist with Elijah. Some commentators claim that Luke might have wanted to correct the mistake the Mark made when he attributed Malachi's quotation to Isaiah. Also, unlike Mark, Luke fails to mention what the Baptist wore and ate.[29]

Undoubtedly, while focusing on Isa 40:5, Luke shifts the emphasis from the mission of Zechariah's son to the salvation that all people will see. Luke stresses that John is a herald who proclaims the necessity of baptism if sins are to be forgiven.[30] He also claims that one's consent to be baptised is a sign of one's decision to submit one's entire life to God's judgement while waiting for forgiveness. In so doing, he draws attention to the individual's responsibility.[31]

The reference to Isa 40:3 and the background of the entire narrative does not mean, as some claim, that John was a member of the community in Qumran from which he set out on a mission to prepare the way for the Lord. Some

[25] Cf. M. Rese, *Alttestamentliche Motive in der Christologie des Lukas*, Gütersloher 1969, Gütersloher Verlagshaus G. Mohn, p. 170 (Studien zum Neuen Testament, 1).

[26] See Luke 9:32.

[27] See Luke 24:26.

[28] See Luke 21:27; J. Nolland, *Luke*, p. 144.

[29] See Mark 1:6. Some commentators claim that Luke intended to introduce information about John's asceticism in subsequent parts (Luke 7:25.33); J. Ernst, *Johannes*, p. 83.

[30] Luke 3:3b; Mark 1:4b.

[31] Emphasising the eschatology of an individual is a characteristic trait of Luke's entire work. See more on this issue in P. Łabuda, *Śmierć i życie po śmierci wg Ewangelii św. Łukasza*, Tarnów 2007, Biblos; F. Bovon, *Das Evangelium nach Lukas*, p. 170.

commentators also suggest that the tradition of this community was the origin of John's administering baptism.[32] While there may be some analogies, there are also distinct differences between the activity of John and the baptismal practices and rules of the Qumran. A thorough analysis questions the connection between John and the Dead Sea community, or John's dependence on it.[33]

Surely, Luke's account of the activity of John the Baptist, set in a specific historical framework, emphasises primarily not the truth that John is Jesus' predecessor, but the truth that God's salvation is drawing near. Luke writes that John's cry was heard in the wilderness, and perhaps he alludes to the symbolical association of the wilderness and sin while emphasising the necessity of repentance and baptism. Undoubtedly, this is also an encouragement to watch while waiting for the Lord. John is a voice in the wilderness, a prophet of the salvation to come. His task is to prepare people for the coming of the Messiah, that is, Jesus. Those who believe the Good News will see salvation, which in the Semitic culture means they will "experience" it.[34]

3. John's calling (Luke 3:7–9)

The passage Luke 3:7–9 can be seen as a threat that announces the coming judgement. John's message is a stern warning against God's coming wrath. This wrath is the primary element of the historical preaching of John the Baptist. It draws upon the Old Testament tradition to connect the eschatological God's judgement with the Day of the Lord.[35] John preached the imminence and inevitability of wrath and judgement. Salvation can be found only in conversion.[36]

John's message the Baptist is consistent with the message of the prophets in which the threat of judgement and calling to conversion are one.[37] In John's

32 See e.g. 1QS 5:8.13.
33 See H. Stegemann, *Esseńczycy z Qumran, Jan Chrzciciel i Jezus*, Kraków 2002, Enigma Press, p. 264 (Biblioteka Zwojów, 9); F. Mickiewicz, *Ewangelia według św. Łukasza*, p. 213.
34 See F. Bovon, *Das Evangelium nach Lukas*, p. 170.
35 See Isa 13:9; Zeph 1:14–16; 2:2; Ezek 7:19.
36 Some think that the fruit of conversion is baptism. See H. Merklein, *Die Umkehrpredigt bei Johannes dem Täufer und Jesus von Nazaret*, "Biblische Zeitschrift" 25 (1981), pp. 36–37. Others claim that one's ethical attitude and behaviour is the fruit of conversion. See J. Ernst, *Johannes*, p. 45.
37 See e.g. Mal 2:3; 3:24.

calling to repent, there is yet another Old Testament motif: the rejection of the nation that should not count on avoiding wrath and punishment just because it is the chosen nation.[38] The author of the third Gospel, through John's message, emphasises that on the Day of Jahweh, this choice may not apply because God can raise his children even from stones and they will be more faithful than Israel.[39] Some commentators claim that in John's preaching, one can discern the influence of Christian teaching and its dispute with Judaism. One of its main topics was the question of the rejection of Israel, Abraham's descendants.[40]

John the Baptist's words from Luke 3:9 refer to Luke 3:8a and emphasise the approach of the time of wrath. This reference may confirm the assumption that the excerpt about rejecting those who say "we have Abraham as our father" was[41] added secondarily within the Christian community. The announcement of cutting down the tree and throwing it into the fire means that the judgement may come at any time and cannot be stopped.[42]

In the second part of the ninth verse, the Evangelist introduces another image that may be a Christian gloss to the Baptist's saying.[43] John says that bad trees that do not bear good fruit will be burnt. The Greek term *pyr* "fire" connects Luke 3:7 with Luke 3:9. The first excerpt speaks about God's wrath that is coming and that is described as fire in Luke 3:9.[44] This entire eschatological narrative is in the prophetic spirit of the Old Testament: punishment may be avoided, but the good fruit of conversion is necessary.

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38 The Israelites emphasised that God was faithful to His covenant with the patriarchs, which was confirmed by the prophets (Cf. Isa 41:8–11; 51:2–3; Jer 33:23–26; Dan 3:35). It seems they believed that on the Day of Judgement, the fact that they belonged to the chosen nation would save them, regardless of their deeds. (See Testament of Levi 15:4). See F. Mickiewicz, *Orędzie Jana Chrzciciela o Królestwie Bożym (Mt 3,2.7–12; Luke 3,7–9.6–18) i jego wypełnienie w działalności Jezusa*, in: *Ewangelia o Królestwie*, edited by A. Paciorek et al., Lublin 2009, Wydawnictwo KUL, pp. 136–137.

39 See Luke 3:8.

40 Cf. John 6:26nn.; 8:31n.; Acts 3:25; Rom 4; 9:8; Gal 3:6–29; J.A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel according to Luke (I–IX)*, p. 465.

41 Luke 3:8b.

42 See H. Schürmann, *Das Lukasevangelium*, p. 166; J. Nolland, *Luke*, p. 149.

43 See F. Bovon, *Das Evangelium nach Lukas*, p. 173.

44 Cf. Isa 9:18; 66:15–16.24; Ezek 21:36; 22:21.31; 38:22; 39,6; Amos 1:4.7.10 etc.; PsSal 15:4–5; 2Bar 37:1; 44:15; F. Mickiewicz, *Orędzie Jana*, pp. 138–141.

4. Announcing the Messiah (Luke 3:16–17)

In the second part of his speech,[45] John announces the coming and activity of the Mightier One, who is superior to John in everything – John finds himself unworthy to serve Him as a slave serves his master. This excerpt is an example of the messianic or Christological teaching of the Baptist in which we may find three titles that refer to Jesus: "Messiah," the one who "will come" and who is "more powerful".

According to commentators, the narratives from Luke 3:7–9 and Luke 3:16–19 are historical messages regarding the Baptist. They share the theme of judgement and its terminology.[46] Moreover, they correspond to the tradition in the fourth Gospel, which poses the question regarding the messianic and prophetic identity of John connected with words about baptism and "the Mightier."[47] In the Gospel of St. John, the Baptist explicitly states that he is not the Messiah.[48] In the Gospel of St. Luke, John does not say it directly, but alludesit in Luke 3:15. Luke might have found the trace of the idea of the chosen nation waiting for the "Coming of the Mightier" (very vivid in its tradition) in accounts also known to John. Perhaps the words from Luke 3:15 refer to the messianic outlook on John by his community.[49]

The beginning of John's message,[50] which is addressed to the whole nation, reveals the manner in which conversion may occur. It begins with water baptism, which is the external sign of conversion. John compares the baptism he administers to baptising with the Holy Spirit and fire. Thus, he connects his own mission with the mission of the "Mightier". Perhaps the excerpt in which John speaks of the Holy Spirit comes from the Christian tradition, in which the experience of the Holy Spirit was a particularly important motif.[51] How-

45 Luke 3:16–17.
46 See M. Öhler, *Elia im Neuen Testament. Untersuchungen zur Bedeutung des alttestamentlichen Propheten im frühen Christentum*, Berlin–New York 1997, Walter de Gruyter, p. 49 (Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft, 88).
47 See John 1:19–27.
48 John 1:20.
49 See H. Schürmann, *Das Lukasevangelium*, p. 170.
50 Luke 3:16. Luke seems to follow the Q material, which he compares with Mark's material. See F. Mickiewicz, *Ewangelia według św. Łukasza*, p. 223.
51 See P. Pajor, *Znaczenie chrztu Duchem Świętym i ogniem*, "Roczniki Teologiczno-Kanoniczne" 14 (1967) no 1, pp. 49–64.

ever, the question of whether baptising with the Holy Spirit can be understood as judgement is problematic. If we assume that in the Greek term *pneuma* we have the equivalent of the Hebrew *ruach*, then we might say that what the Baptist means is the judgmental breath that comes from the mouth of a judge.[52] If this is the case, the term *hagios*, which describes the Spirit, must have been added by the community of Christ's disciples. It seems more justified to assume that for Christians, Jesus was the announced "Mightier" whose coming was connected not so much with baptising with fire, but with the Holy Spirit. Then, the entire expression *en pneumati hagiōi* may be considered as a Christian addition.[53] The parallel in Luke 3:16a supports this assumption. In the third Gospel, John juxtaposes the baptism with the water that he gives to the coming baptism of fire. John expected that judgement and Christian interpretation that spoke about the baptism with the Spirit would draw attention to salvation. For the Spirit of God was to be the gift of messianic times.[54]

Another passage whose aim may be to subordinate John to the coming Messiah might be the one that speaks about *Ischyroteros*, who is coming after John. In Luke 3:16a and Luke 3:16b, we have a juxtaposition not so much of the two kinds of baptism, but of those who baptise. The relationship between John and "Mightier than he" is shown differently in the Gospel of St. Matthew, which[55] strongly emphasises John's role as the predecessor. Luke seems to juxtapose the two figures. Even though, chronologically speaking, Jesus is coming after John,[56] He does not follow him in the same way that a disciple follows his master. Luke's expression *ischyteros mou* is reinforced in Luke 3:16c when John speaks of himself as being unworthy of the role of a slave to this "Mightier". The one who is coming is much greater than John. His superiority is the superiority of the baptism with fire to the baptism with water, of judgement to prophetic warnings.

We should understand the term *erchomenos* in the same vein as *ischyteros*. This seems to emanate not so much from the teaching of John the Baptist, but rather from the Christian reference of this term to the Baptist's saying. In Biblical texts and extra-biblical traditions, the term *erchomenos* appears many times and

52 Cf. Isa 29:6; 30:27–28; 66:15; 4 Ezra 13:10–11; 1 QS 28b; 2 Thess 2:8; J. Nolland, *Luke*, p. 153.

53 See H. Merklein, *Die Umkehrpredigt bei Johannes dem Täufer und Jesus von Nazaret*, p. 32; J. Nolland, *Luke*, p. 147.

54 See Isa 32:15; 44:3; Ezek 36:26; Joel 3:1; Zech 12:10, Testament of Levi 18:26–28; Testament of Judah 24:2–3; See M. Öhler, *Elia im Neuen Testament*, p. 53.

55 See Matt 3:11 that is taken from Mark 1:7.

56 See Acts 13:24–25.

denotes, apart from the ordinary "coming", also reaching one's aim, a pilgrim's arriving in Jerusalem,[57] the coming of the King expected by Daughter Zion,[58] or the coming of the prophet like Moses or the Messiah.[59] Also, in the Book of Daniel, the Son of Man is called *hōs hios anthrōpou erchomenos*.[60] In the New Testament texts, the term *erchomenos* refers to Jesus, for He is the one to be the judge, one who will baptise with the Holy Spirit and fire. In the Gospel of Luke, John is the one who announces the coming of the "Mightier" who is arriving soon. Undoubtedly, John is "more than a prophet",[61] but his role is diminished by Luke. The Evangelist offers a general account of the subsequent activity of John, alludes to his imprisonment,[62] and then definitely concludes the story of Zechariah's son. He begins Jesus's story, "the One who is to come."[63]

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Luke's narrative 3:1–20 is a testimony that Luke, apart from being a true and reliable historian, is primarily a theologian of salvation. That is why, perhaps, bearing in mind certain false convictions prevalent in the communities close to John the Baptist, Luke presents carefully selected parts of the Baptist's life and activity. He focuses not so much upon the mission of John, but on the figure of the One who is coming, who is Mightier and more important in every respect than Zechariah's son. The task of John, which is powerfully stressed by Luke in the infancy narrative, is to prepare the way of the Lord, the time when people will see God's salvation. What matters is the coming Salvation, not John, who is to prepare for its coming.

57 See Ps 117:26 (118:26).
58 See Zech 9:9.
59 See John 6:14; 1QS 9:11; 4Q 252:3; 4Q 775:1–8; Cf. Deut 18:15–18.
60 See Theodotius' version of Dan 7:13.
61 See Luke 7:26.
62 Luke 3:19–20.
63 See Luke 16:16; See J.A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel according to Luke (I–IX)*, p. 466.

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The Nicene Christology: “Homoousion to Patri”

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Abstract

Pagan Rome persecuted the Church for nearly 300 years. The apogee of that persecution occurred during the times of Diocletian and Galerius in the late 3rd and early 4th centuries. Hence, it is hard to imagine that the next emperor, Constantine the Great (+337), embraced the Christian faith and proclaimed the freedom to practice this religion. At the same time, Arius (+336) sparked a great theological dispute with his understanding of the singularity and transcendence of God, which concerned the central question: is Jesus Christ a creature, subordinate to God, or is he God? Emperor Constantine became personally involved in this dispute, convened a council, and proposed the decisive word of the Nicene Creed: *homoousios*. Where did the emperor get this word? He probably borrowed it from Bishop Hosius of the Córdoba (+359). To more fully understand the meaning of this central concept, it is necessary to delve, on the one hand, into the earlier – Gnostic – understanding of the word, and, on the other, into the erroneous teaching of Arius, which the Council of Nicaea condemned. In its Creed, it stated that the Son of God is begotten, not made, and is of one substance with the Father, that is *homoousion to Patri*.

Keywords

Council of Nicaea, Jesus Christ, Son of God, homoousios, Arius, gnosis

1. Introduction

2025 will mark the 1,700th anniversary of the first ecumenical council, the Council of Nicaea. It seemed that the Edict of Milan of Emperor Constantine the Great and Emperor Licinius in 313, which proclaimed religious freedom in the Roman Empire, would bring about peaceful times for Christianity. However, it was then that theological discussions broke out and serious disputes regarding the essence of the Christian faith that turned into Christological and Trinitarian errors and heresies.

In the early Church, the baptismal creed spoke about the great and at the same time difficult truth of Christianity that God is one in three Persons. Attempts were made to express this truth in various ways. However, there was no proper terminology that everyone could understand. This is how erroneous ideas about the proper relationship within Godemergedas regards the relationship of the Son to the Father in particular. While searching for the right words that would reflect the essence of this relationship, Christian thinkers found the concepts from Greek philosophy useful, i.e., capable of expressing the essential relationship between the nature of the Father and the Son in the Holy Trinity. Since the 3rd century, three such ideas have taken shape: *homoousios*, equal in essence (consubstantial), *homoiusios*, similar in essence, and *homoios*, similar in everything.[1]

It was already in the 2nd century that the term *homoousios* appeared in the Gnostic writings, where it denoted the community of the basic substance or being. However, this understanding was rejected because of the errors of Sabellius (+260) and Paul of Samosata (+275) at the synods of Antioch (263–268). The latter thinker thought that "Jesus was only externally related to the Logos (Prenestorianism).Being a man, he was adopted as the Son of God; It is only the Logos that is consubstantial (*homousios*) with the Father, and it is not the same as Jesus. There is, therefore, no identity between Jesus of Nazareth and the Logos (Christ)."[2]

The term*homoiusios*, on the other hand, comes from the Alexandrian school and was also used by Origen (+254) and Clement of Alexandria (+212). The First Council of Nicaea (325; DH 125) used the concept of *homoousios* (consubstantial) to express the substantial equality of the Father and the Son.[3] This

1 J. Kopiec, *Homousios*, in: *Encyklopedia katolicka* 6, col. 1196.
2 C. S. Bartnik, *Dogmatyka katolicka*, vol. I, Lublin 2012, Wydawnictwo KUL, p. 205.
3 C. Kannengiesser, *Homo(o)usios*, in: Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche (Sonderausgabe 2006), vol. 5, col. 252–253.

also meant rejecting the heresy of Arius, who did not recognise equality in the divinity of the Father and the Son. According to Arius, Christ is only the noblest creation of the Father.

The groundbreaking character oftheCouncil's declarationwill become clearer if, on the one hand, the Gnostic understanding of the concept of *homoousios* is explained, and on the other, Arius's erroneous understanding of it is explained.

2. Gnostic understanding of *homoousios*

At the turn of the 2nd and 3rd centuries, the secular context of the concept of *homoousios* referred to the material rather than the spiritual dimension. It meant, for example, the species identity of parents and children. However, while looking for ways to apply this concept to God the Father and the Son, a material reference was not enough. Gnostic thinkers gave it a religious connotation that expressed the relationship between entities composed of related substances. Ptolemy thought in a similar vein and thus defined God: "the good by nature engenders and producesthe things that are similar to itself and of the same essence […] a principle that exists andes confessed and believed in by sand which is unengendered andincorruptible and good."[4] Christian writers, such as Clement of Alexandria and Epiphanius (+403), also used the concept of *homoousios* in the Gnostic sense. Their aim, however, was to fight against this understanding of the term. Origen autoworker in the context of Gnostic thought as regards the Son of God, though he believed that He was begotten, not created, that His nature was united with the nature of the Father and that He is a reflection of the Father's glory. The term *homoousios*as used by Origen does not refer to the Trinity but only to the corporeal emanation of the Son from the Father. This well illustrates the colloquial understanding of the word: for example, water in a river and spring is *homoousios*,[5]and so is the steam that arises from water.

4 Ptolemy, *Letter to Flora* in: *The Gnostic Scriptures*, transl. by Bentley Layton, London 2021, New Haven, pp. 446–447.

5 Cf. E. Kotkowska, *Nicejskie ὍΜΟΟΎΣΙΟΣ w procesie inkulturacji wiary w Bóstwo Syna. Studium teologicznofundamentalne na tle tradycji*, Poznań 2015, Uniwersytet im. Adama Mickiewicza. Wydział Teologiczny, p. 138.

Similarly, Bishop Paul of Samosata (+275) from Antioch used the term *homoousios* to express an incomplete unityof the Father and the Son. In his view, the Son is *homoousios* with the Father, i.e. Jesus is identical to the Father, yet he acquired his distinct personhood, anywhen He became human.[6]Also, the Son originated from the human substance of Mary; He is divine because he was adopted by God. From 263 to 269, three synods in Antioch condemned Paul of Samosata's[7] teachings. In the end, he was excommunicated from the Church.

The linguistic struggles regarding the term *homoousios* eventually took on a more theological character. This was largely due to the influence of two theologians: Dionysius of Rome (d. 268) and Dionysius of Alexandria (d. 264/5). The Western representative, Dionysius of Rome, adhered to a form of moderate Monarchianism and opposed the theology of Logos of his Eastern counterpart, which was rooted in the idea of three divine hypostases. He believed that this divides the Father from the Son too much and, consequently, recognizes three distinct deities. In other words, the Logos theology of the East clashed with Western Monarchianism, revealing a deeper problem: reconciling the personhoods of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (three hypostases in the East) with the divine monarchy (one God in the West).This linguistic misunderstanding referred not only to different views of divine wisdom. It was also the translation issue: equating the Greek term *hypostasis* with the Latin *substantia*. In Greek, *hypostasis* referred to an individual being, while the Latin *substantia* denoted a generic being. In the Greek word, both the oneness of God and the distinction between the Father, the Son, and the Spirit were maintained. On the other hand, the Latin idea of three *substantiae* would imply the existence of three gods, a notion that Dionysius of Rome (d. 268) firmly rejected (+268).[8]

However, according to Dionysius of Rome, the real "bone of contention" was not the concept of *hypostasis* itself. Rather, it was Dionysius of Alexandria's rejection of the idea of the divine monarchy. In response, the Alexandrian theologian defended his doctrine of the Logos and the three *hypostases*, rejecting the charge that he was separating the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. He unequivocally

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6 Cf. E. Kotkowska, *Nicejskie ὍΜΟΟΎΣΙΟΣ*, p. 139.

7 *Sobór Nicejski I (325)*, in: *Dokumenty soborów powszechnych. Tekst grecki, łaciński, polski*, arranged and compiled by A. Baron, H. Pietras, Kraków 2002, Wydawnictwo WAM, vol. I, p. 45, footnote 29.

8 Cf. E. Kotkowska, *Nicejskie ὍΜΟΟΎΣΙΟΣ*, p. 153.

affirmed that the Son is eternal. He avoided using the term *homoousios* because it was not biblical, but he interpreted the concept the way it was commonly understood as"sharing the same nature."[9] Dionysius of Alexandria's crucial words are known to us because Athanasius the Great (+373)quotes them: "Thus then we extend the Monad indivisibly into the Triad, and conversely gather together the Triad without diminution into the Monad."[10]

3. Arius' Miscomprehension

The Council of Nicaea's statement regarding the relationship of the Son – Logos to God the Father was a reaction to the errors of Arius and his followers:[11]"We believe in one God the Father… and in one our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten of the Father, only begotten, that is, of the substance of the Father, God of God… begotten, not created, consubstantial with the Father" (DH 125; BF IX,7).The above words were a response to Arius, who confessed"One God, the only and unbegotten, the only eternal, the only one who is without beginning and is the only true God" (BF IX 7, introduction, p. 610). He also believed that "the Son, therefore, is not eternal." God was not the Father eternally […] The Son cannot be God if there was a time when He did not exist, for he could not exist unless he was begotten" (BFN, p. 30). The Son was created like other creatures from nothing to become an instrument of creation for the Father. He is nothing more than one of God's powers. He is not the true God, "consubstantial" with the Father, but only the Son of God by grace, by adoption, which took place during His baptism in the Jordan (NBF, p. 30).

Even though the Bible, and the Gospel of John in particular, speak about the Son of God (e.g. John 3:35; 10:30; 12:27, etc.), Arius considered reexpression metaphorical. His understanding of "sonship" boils down to three points:

1. The Son is the creation and his existence, like the existence of other creatures, is due to the will of God.

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9 E. Kotkowska, *Nicejskie ΌΜΟΟΎΣΙΟΣ*, p. 155.

10 Athanasius the Great, *De sententia Dionysii* 17, transl. by A. Robertson, *From Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Second Series, Vol. 4. Edited by P. Schaff and H. Wace, Buffalo, NY, 1892.https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/2810.htm (2.11.2024).

11 Cf. A. Grillmeier, *Jesus Chistus im Glauben der Kirche*, vol. 1, Freiburg i. Br. 1989, Herder, p. 403.

2. The term "Son" is honorary, and even though the rank of the "Son" is higher than that of other creatures, it does not mean that his position equals God's.
3. Last but not least, the status of the Son is not the result of his nature, but of the Father's will.

Athanasius disagreed with such a concept of the Son's creation and put forward two theses. The first one says that the salvation of creation may come solely from God and not from the creation. The second thesisstresses the fact that Christians worship Jesus Christ and pray to Him, i.e., there is official worship,[12] i.e., the Eucharist.

Where does Arius's understanding of the Son of God come from? It does not come from the interpretation of the Holy Scripture, but from the philosophy prevalent at that time, i.e. Gnosticism and the Platonic school. They spoke about a metaphysical gradation of existence: the Primal One (*to 'En, Hen*), the Logos, the Soul of the world (*Psyche*) up to Matter. This metaphysics is then expanded by Plotinus (+270), who claimed that the principle of reality is something more primary: it is the One.[13] In line with the concept of the gradation of being and the principle of absolute reality, the Logos is lower than God as the Primal One. Logos indeed comes from the Primal One – God but is not equal to the Primal One. Logos is, therefore,inferior to the One (*ho Theos*), and therefore is a "second God" (*deuteros Theos*), or an "inferior God."Should the Son be equal in divinity to the Father, then the Primal One would be divided into two. The Son therefore appears in time, not in eternity. Arius says, "There was a time when the Logos did not exist." "Before He was begotten, He was not." "The Logos was created from nothing" (DH 126).[14] Thus, the title "God"must be ascribed solely to the One. As a result, Arius explicitly proclaimed Subordinationism, in which Christ is the "second God," subordinate to the "primal God."[15]

Bishop Alexander from Alexandria (+328) reacted to these errors by excommunicating Arius and writing a letter to Bishop Alexander of Constantinople

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[12] A. E. McGrath, *Der Weg der christlichen Theologie*, München 1997, C.H. Beck, p. 342.

[13] Cf. J. Hirschberger, *Geschichte der Philosophie*, vol. 1, Freiburg i. Br. 1981, Herder, p. 303; G. Reale, *Historia filozofii starożytnej*, vol. IV, transl. E.I. Zieliński, Lublin 1999, p. 511; M. Górecka, *Memoria Dei et hominis. Christliche Gedächtniskultur der Literatur des deutschen Frühmittelalters*, Lublin 2019, Wydawnictwo KUL, pp. 35–37.

[14] C. S. Bartnik, *Dogmatyka katolicka*, vol. I, p. 789.

[15] Cf. J. Auer, *Kleine Katholische Dogmatik*, vol. IV/1, Regensburg 1986, Verlag Friedrich Pustet, p. 177.

(+337) where he gave the following anti-Arian arguments: according to the Scriptures, the Son is eternally in the Father's bosom, and therefore is indivisibly and essentially united with Him; as Co-Creator he is beyond and above creation; through Him time came into being; therefore,He could not come into being in time. Moreover, Christ is eternal as the Father is eternal and is beyond all time; the divine sonship of Jesus is an essential, natural sonship; while the divine childhood of men is only an adopted childhood by grace.[16]

Emperor Constantine tried in vain to resolve the above conflict by writing letters to Bishop Alexander of Alexandria and Arius, also asking for the personal intervention of Bishop Hosius of Córdoba. Finally, the emperor convened a synod in Nicaea in 325, which he led himself. The synod was recognised by the Church as the first ecumenical council. During the synod, there were violent disputes between the vast majority of bishops and Arius and his supporters (ca. 17 bishops), and two parties (Eusebius of Nicomedia [+341] supported Arius and Eusebius of Caesarea [+339] was against Arius) who wanted to mediate in these struggles. In the end, all 318 bishops present signed the profession of faith (DH 125).

Thus, the Nicene Creed was a response to Arius's heretical teaching. Three main issues were dogmatically highlighted regarding Jesus, the Son of God:

1. He is "begotten" and not created.
2. He is "true God from true God" and not "second God."
3. He is "consubstantial with the Father" and not subordinated to Him.

Through the eternal generation, the Father fully gives His essence to the Son, so the Father and the Son not only constitute a divine essence but also have it. The Father and the Son are one (cf. Jn 14:9). The Son, like the Father, is omnipotent, eternal, indivisible, and unchangeable. With the help of philosophical word, *homoousios*, the theological truth about Jesus's divinity was expressed. This allowed for the further development of the dogmatic teaching about God.

4. Nicaea

When Emperor Constantine the Great (+337) realised that his Roman Empire was becoming religiously divided between Catholics and Arians, he convened a church assembly (synod/council) in Nicaea in 325. The primary objective was

[16] Cf. J. Auer, *Kleine Katholische Dogmatik*.

The Person and the Challenges
Volume 15 (2025) Number 1, pp. 27–37

to resolve the religious schism by defining theologically how the Father and the Son relate to each other. In opposition to Arius, the doctrine of the Logos-Christ as "consubstantial," "of the same essence" (*homoousios*) with the Father, was adopted: *homoousion to Patri*; *unius substantiae cum Patre* (DH 125). Thus, the fundamental theological concept of *homoousios* was formulated, which points to the "consubstantiality," or "co-essentiality" of the Persons within God, particularly the unity of substance (*ousia* or *hypostasis*) of the Father and the Son, i.e., their substantial identity. The Council synonymously used the terms *ousia* (substance, self-subsisting essence) and *hypostasis* (an individual, person) (DH 126). However, the dispute was not fully resolved, as the council did not clarify whether the Father and the Son were "two distinct Persons," nor did it state that there were no "two Gods."[17]

The Council of Nicaea taught that the Son comes from the essence of the Father and is consubstantial with Him (*homoousios*). Thus, it was professed for the first time that the Son is the true God, begotten and not created. At the same time, the main theses of Arius were rejected: that the Son was created in time out of nothing, or that He was created from a different substance (*hypostasis*) or essence (*ousia*) than the Father's, or that He is subject to change. DH 126 puts Arius' erroneous assertions in the following order: «"There was a time when he was not," or "Before he was begotten, he was not," or "He was made out of nothing," or "He originates from another hypostasis, or from another substance [than the Father]," or "The Son of God is changeable and alterable."»[18] We can clearly see that Arius professed "the one God, the only unbegotten, the only eternal, the only one without beginning or end, and the only true God." And yet, here the Son is not eternal, for he was created like other creatures from nothing and became a tool for the Father. The Son of God is such by grace, adoption, and designation, which occurred during His baptism in the Jordan.[19] This monarchism of God completely obscured the image of the Son of God. That is why the Council of Nicaea was of such great importance because it solidified the Church's faith that Christ is the true God and true Son of God. The council expressed this truth through the crucial term *homoousios*.

[17] J. Auer, *Kleine Katholische Dogmatik*, p. 209.

[18] *Sobór Nicejski I (325)*, in: *Dokumenty soborów powszechnych. Tekst grecki, łaciński, polski*, arranged and compiled by A. Baron, H. Pietras, Kraków 2002, Wydawnictwo WAM, vol. I, p. 45.

[19] Cf. *Sobor Nicejski I (325)*, in: *Dokumenty soborow powszechnych*, p. 30.

The term *homoousios*, however, had been distorted by Gnosticism.[20] Literally, it implies that the essence of the Son is not different from the essence of the Father. Thus, Jesus Christ is a distinct (*eigene*) Son of God, i.e. He is begotten from the essence of the Father, and not solely from His will. As such, he is consubstantial with the Father. It is strongly asserted here that there is one and only God, i.e. the Father, and the essence of the Son is equal to the essence of the Father. This implies the oneness or singularity of the essence of the Father and the Son: the divinity of the Son is derived from the divinity of the Father, with the Father as its foundation. Significantly, the council used the term "God" in relation to the Father, whereas the Son is depicted as consubstantial with the Father, and as such, He is the Son of God.[21]

Moreover, the council referred to the one God as *Pantokrator*, the ruler of the universe. It did not choose the word "omnipotent" that has static connotations, but one that points to a certain dynamism: God is the Creator of visible and invisible things. Jesus Himself is called the Lord and the Son of this God. The biblical teaching on the relationship between the Father and the Son is expressed in a metaphysical language but retains its salvific historical purpose.[22]

Thus, the teaching about the Son of God was dogmatised by the Nicene Council: we believe in "one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten from the Father, the Only Begotten, that is, from the essence of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father, through whom all things were made" (DH 125: *homoousion to Patri; unius substantiae cum Patre* [quod grece dicunt homousion]; BF IX, 7; BFN 30). This dogmatic formula expresses the Biblical notion and the faith of the Church in the language of Greek philosophy. It speaks of the Son of God as begotten and not created. "God is the Begetter and Christ is the Begotten." They are the Father and the Son. Being begotten implies the identity of their nature (God from God). At the same time, their personal distinction is maintained, even though the Father and the Son both share the same divine essence.[23] It was already Athanasius who differentiated between the notions of γεννητός (begotten), and γενητός – (became). This distinction emphasises

[20] Cf. M. Schmaus, *Glaube der Kirche*, vol. 2, St. Ottilien 1979, EOS Verlag, p. 152.
[21] Cf. M. Schmaus, *Glaube der Kirche*, vol. 4/2, St. Ottilien 1980, EOS Verlag, p. 114.
[22] Cf. M. Schmaus, *Glaube der Kirche*, p. 115.
[23] C. S. Bartnik, *Syn Boży. W teologii*, in: *Encyklopedia katolicka*, vol. 18, col. 1320.

that "begetting brings forth the same, while creating brings forth something inferior." Thus, the Son must be "begotten" and cannot be described as "created."[24]

The statement of the council points to a certain dynamism: first, it says "God from God," which even the Arians could accept; next, there is the expression "True God from true God," which the Arians could not accept; then we have the term "begotten," and finally there is the highest level of defining the relationship between the Son and the Father: "consubstantial." This statement, with its dynamic connotation, has been one of the most significant events in the Church and one of its most famous creeds. It is part of the doctrine that established the framework for understanding the Holy Trinity, which was further developed in the subsequent centuries. Furthermore, the Council itself became the prototype for all subsequent councils of the Catholic Church.

The statement of the Council of Nicaea regarding the relationship between Logos – the Son and God the Father – was preceded by other events in the history of the Church. On the one hand, these were synods and the writing of Alexander of Alexandria (especially the synod in Antioch in 268 against Paul of Samosata and the synod of 324/325). On the other hand, these were the symbols of the faith based on the baptismal symbols. The synodal creed from Antioch addressed significant Arian theses and subsequently rejected them. Even though it lacks the typical formula from Nicaea, "of the essence of the Father," (*homoousios*), it does contain an important statement that Jesus Christ is the Son begotten of the Father and is entirely His image (DH 50).[25]

Today, it is impossible to precisely resolve which of the ancient symbols was the basis for the discussions in Nicaea: whether it was the baptismal symbol of the Church of Eusebius of Caesarea, a symbol from Jerusalem, or a symbol from Palestine.[26] There is, however, a consensus that the text of the Nicene symbol (DH 125–130) is perceived as a compromise between the two schools, the Antiochene and the Alexandrian, rather than between individual theologians, such as Eusebius of Caesarea and Alexander of Alexandria. Nevertheless, the declaration of the Council is seen as the victory of the Antiochene school because the attribute *homoousios to Patri* that is ascribed to the Logos resembles

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24 A. Ziegenaus, *Jesus Christus, Die Fülle des Heils. Christologie und Erlösungslehre* (*Katholische Dogmatik*, vol. IV), Aachen 2000, Michael Müller Verlag, pp. 221–222.

25 A. Grillmeier, *Jesus Christus im Glauben der Kirche*, vol. I, p. 404.

26 Cf. A. Grillmeier, *Jesus Christus im Glauben der Kirche*, p. 406.

more the Modalist teaching on the Trinity of Paul of Samosata and Marcellus of Ancyra (+374) than Origen's economic-salvific teaching on the Trinity.[27]

The main achievement of the Council of Nicaea, without undermining the belief in one God, was the confession that Jesus is the only and true Son of the Father, and not His creation. The council clarified the faith of the Church with the following statements (words) that express the oneness of the essence of the Son and the Father:[28]

1. The Son is "begotten" and the "onlybegotten."
2. The Son is "begotten from the essence of the Father" (*homoousios*).
3. The Son is "true God from true God."

Even though the crucial Christological question of the relationship of divine Logos to the human nature of Christ was not settled in Nicaea (this was done at Chalcedon), the Nicene Council did formulate three main statements regarding the relationship of the Son of God to God the Father:[29]

1. The Son stands with the Creator, not with creation: DH 126: «Those who say, "There was a time when he was not," or "Before he was begotten, he was not," or "He was made out of nothing," or "He originates from another hypostasis, or from another substance [than the Father]," or "The Son of God is changeable and alterable" are excluded from the communion by the universal and apostolic Church.» With this statement, the council is against Platonic subordinationism, which had already been challenged earlier by Justin (+163–167), Paul of Samosata, and later by Marcellus of Ancyra.
2. The eternal Son of God is begotten from the Father: "We believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten of the Father, the only-begotten, that is, of the essence of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made" (DH 125). The term "begotten" indicates that the Son derives from the Father, unlike the contingent creation that came into being through a creative act. Although the Son originates from the Father, there is no ontological or chronological "prior to" of the unbegotten Father to the begotten Son.

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[27] Cf. K.H. Menke, *Jesus ist Gott der Sohn. Denkformen und Brennpunkte der Christologie*, Regensburg 2012^2, Verlag Friedrich Pustet, p. 247.

[28] Cf. A. Grillmeier, *Jesus Christus im Glauben der Kirche*, vol. I, pp. 407–408.

[29] Cf. A. Grillmeier, *Jesus Christus im Glauben der Kirche*, p. 248.

The Person and the Challenges
Volume 15 (2025) Number 1, pp. 27–37

3. The Father and the Son are identical in their essence but relationally distinct: "We believe in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, consubstantial with the Father, through whom all things were made, who for us men and for our salvation descended and took on flesh, became man, suffered, and rose again on the third day; He ascended into heaven and will come to judge the living and the dead" (DH 125). This text opposes the doctrine of the Trinity put forward by Origen and his Alexandrian epigones, especially the teaching of three hypostases by Eusebius of Caesarea and Alexander of Alexandria.

It is worth emphasising that at the Council of Nicaea, the Greek terms *ousia* (essence) and *hypostasis* (entity) were not explicitly distinguished. Perhaps this is why the council could not defeat Arianism, which equated these terms. The Arians found it illogical to assert that the Son could be consubstantial with the Father while still being another (distinct, subordinated to the Father) *hypostasis*, i.e., entity.

The formula *homoousios to Patri* became problematic in a twofold manner. Should it be understood as denoting "the same essence with the Father", then dyotheism (two Gods) cannot be excluded. When, on the other hand, it is to denote "one essence with the Father", then the Son is so closely aligned with the Father that we risk the charge of professing Sabellianism or Modalism. It is exactly this objection that the Arians raised against the Council of Nicaea.[30]

5. Conclusion

Today, various societies, inherently Christian, largely reject God from their lives, destroying temples and removing crosses from public spaces. Perhaps one of the most important words of our faith, *homoousios*, may contribute to the renewal of the Christian dimension in the world. This significant theological concept, with its rich history and tradition of 17 centuries, may demonstrate that "of one essence" pertains primarily to the Son of God in relation to God the Father. However, it also points to our sonship in relation to the Triune God as baptised individuals in the name of the Holy Trinity. Embracing the term *homoousios* implies both an ancient and a contemporary confession of faith.

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[30] Cf. A. Grillmeier, *Jesus Christus im Glauben der Kirche*, p. 249.

In 325, great disputes, if not battles, raged over this truth to establish the foundations of Christianity. Today, we need to revive that struggle for the truth that the Logos is the incarnate Son of God, consubstantial with God the Father.

The significance of celebrating the 1700 anniversary of the Nicene Council may not merely lie in reminding of this historical event, but instanding – much like during the sessions of the Council – against errors and reaffirming the apostolic faith in the divinity of Jesus Christ in a new way, appropriate to the spirit of our contemporary era. Such a stance should emphasise the uniqueness of the Christian religion, which, from a theological perspective, is a secure (true) path to salvation, i.e., the attainment of the gift of supernatural life within the Holy Trinity. The ancient battle for the revealed truth expressed with the term *homoousios* understood theologically reveals that various religions cannot be perceived as equal, let alone that they all lead to God in the same way. Various images of God do not translate into one common path, nor can they be a quest for the same God who has revealed Himself in His Son, Jesus Christ. Recently, Cardinal Charles Chaput OFM Cap, the retired Archbishop of Philadelphia, emphasised this while stating: "Some religions are as false as they are dangerous, materially and spiritually."[31] Moreover, from the very beginning, the Catholic faith has consistently taught that salvation comes solely through the Son of God, Jesus Christ (DI 13; cf. Acts 4:12; 1 Cor 8:5–6; 1 Tim 2:4–6; GS 10).

The significance of the Council of Nicaea's resolution to apply the term *homoousios* is twofold: enshrining the divinity of the Son and rejecting the philosophical understanding of God, on which, for example, Arius relied. The incorporation of the philosophical term *homoousios* into theology is a different issue (the term has meant something else in philosophy). Over the subsequent centuries of the history of the Church, the understanding of this basic concept developed, contributing to the creation of an increasingly systematic theology. The formula *homoousios* could be interpreted in two ways: the first clearly expressed "the unity of essence with the Father," while the second indicated that the Son and the Father are of the same essence, yet there exists a numerical distinction between the Father and the Son (Origen), i.e., there is a "numerical identity of essence." For many years, the Nicene formula was understood in this second sense.[32]

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[31] https://www.kath.net/news/85576 (access19.9.2024).
[32] Cf. B. Lohse, *Epochen der Dogmengeschichte*, Stuttgart 1988, Kreuz Verlag, p. 61.

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El bautismo y la "logiké latreía" en Joseph Ratzinger-Benedicto XVI y san Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer

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Abstract

Baptism and the "logiké latreía" in Joseph Ratzinger-Benedict XVI and St. Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer

In Rom 12:1, Christians are called to worship God as logikē latreia—a new form of New Covenant worship rooted in Christ's sacrifice. Believers offer themselves as a spiritual sacrifice. While often linked to the Eucharist, baptism also plays a key role as the gateway to Christian life, the universal priesthood, and the worship of God. This study shows that both Joseph Ratzinger–Benedict XVI and St Josemaría present spiritual worship as grounded in the baptismal vocation. For Ratzinger, baptism is a call to logikē latreia through identification with Christ and consecration to God. For St Josemaría, it marks the beginning of Christian life and the possession of a "priestly soul" for sanctifying the world. Their views align with the teachings of the Second Vatican Council.

Keywords

baptism, common priesthood, identification, *logiké latreía*, sacrifice, worship

Introducción

El término *logiké latreía* que se encuentra en Rm 12, 1 es difícil de traducir en las lenguas modernas. Esto sucede porque el vocablo λογικός puede traducirse de diferentes maneras.[1] Por eso, el concepto de *logiké latreía* puede traducirse como culto racional[2], verdadero culto[3], culto conforme al Logos[4] o culto espiritual[5]. La *logiké latreía* se define como el sacrificio espiritual de la persona y su existencia a la gloria de Dios y, por eso, como una adoración y una liturgia, que no se limita a la *actio liturgica*, sino que deriva de ella y se extiende a la vida cotidiana. El creyente, identificándose con Cristo e incorporándose al sacrificio de Jesús a través de la Eucaristía, responde al amor divino con su amor que produce una entrega total al Señor. En otras palabras, san Pablo quiere afirmar que el verdadero culto espiritual no consiste en el ritualismo del templo (como en el Antiguo Testamento), sino que se realiza mediante la entrega al Señor en la propia existencia, que adquiere un carácter sagrado.[6]

En general, el culto espiritual se relaciona con la Santa Misa; sin embargo, para los cristianos el bautismo es *vitae spiritualis ianua*, es decir, lleva a la incorporación al Cuerpo Místico de Cristo y se presenta como puerta de entrada

1 Cfr. G. Kittel, *λογικός*, en: G. Kittel (ed.), *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, IV, Grand Rapids 1957, Eerdmans, pp. 142–143. En el sentido bíblico, λογος significa también la “palabra” que tiene poder creador (cfr. P. Blanco Sarto, *La teología de Joseph Ratzinger. Una introducción*, Madrid: Palabra, 2011, p. 164).

2 Cfr. T. R. Schreiner, *Romans*, 2 ed., Grand Rapids 2018, Baker Academic, pp. 627–628. Peterson explica que la traducción referida a la racionalidad indica el carácter racional del cristianismo, procedente de la fe en el Logos, que se opone al irracionalismo (cfr. E. Peterson, *Der Brief an die Römer. Aus dem Nachlaß herausgegeben von Barbara Nichtweiß unter Mitarbeit von Ferdinand Hahn*, Würzburg 2012, Echter, p. 332).

3 Cfr. D. J. Moo, *Comentario a la Epístola de Romanos*, Viladecavalls 2014, CLIE, p. 827. Wilckens presenta una opinión similar. Para recoger el término paulino, usa los adjetivos “wahr” y “eigentlich”, que se traducen como verdadero (cfr. U. Wilckens, *La carta a los Romanos*, II: *Rm 6–16*, Salamanca 1992, Sígueme, pp. 341–342).

4 Este concepto se encuentra en los autores alemanes y en su idioma se presenta como “logoshafter Gottesdienst”. Los ejemplos pueden verse en: J. Ratzinger, *Eucaristía y misión*, en: *Obras completas*, XI: *Teología de la liturgia. La fundamentación sacramental de la existencia cristiana*, Madrid 2012, BAC [en adelante JROC XI], p. 296; G. L. Müller, *Λογική λατρεία – logoshafter Gottesdienst*, “Mitteilungen. Institut Papst Benedikt XVI.” 1 (2008), pp. 53–58.

5 Cfr. C. Reynier, *La Carta a los Romanos*, Estella 2012, Verbo Divino, p. 116.

6 Cfr. D. Attinger, *Lettera ai Romani, La misteriosa compassione di Dio*, Magnano 2013, Qiqajon: Comunità di Bose, p. 286; C. Reynier, *La Carta a los Romanos*, p. 116.

a la vida cristiana.[7] Así pues, la base de la condición cultual del hombre hay que buscarla en la vocación bautismal. Esto recuerda *Lumen Gentium*: "Los bautizados son consagrados como casa espiritual y sacerdocio santo por la regeneración y por la unción del Espíritu Santo, [y] han de ofrecerse a sí mismos como hostia viva, santa y grata a Dios."[8]

Por tanto, en este estudio se analizarán y compararán los textos de Joseph Ratzinger-Benedicto XVI y de san Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer, para quienes el tema del culto espiritual en el contexto de la vocación bautismal ocupó un lugar destacado.[9] Se observa que la yuxtaposición de ambos pensamientos también puede ser interesante. Confrontaremos los textos de un teólogo y los escritos de un santo que, aunque tuvo una formación teológica, no dejó escritos sistemáticos, sino espirituales. Para ello, es necesario aplicar una metodología adecuada, que respete la aportación de los textos de los santos a la reflexión teológica sistemática y, al mismo tiempo, reconoce que "la sabiduría teológica y la sabiduría mística son formalmente distintas. [...] Sin embargo, que existen vínculos fuertes entre estas dos formas de sabiduría cristiana."[10] Es así, porque a través de la experiencia espiritual "la inteligencia del creyente, como fruto del amor ejercitado en la contemplación, penetra más profundamente en la verdad contemplada."[11]

En primer lugar, se analizará el pensamiento más sistemático del teólogo alemán, para dar paso, a continuación, al estudio de los textos espirituales de san Josemaría. La investigación terminará con algunas conclusiones.

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7 Cfr. *Catecismo de la Iglesia Católica*, Madrid 2015, Asociación de Editores del Catecismo [en adelante CCE], n. 1213. Vid. O. Semmelroth, *El sentido de los sacramentos*, Madrid 1965, Fax, p. 123.

8 Concilio Vaticano II, *Constitución dogmática sobre la Iglesia "Lumen Gentium"*, en: *Concilio Vaticano II. Constituciones. Decretos. Declaraciones. Documentos pontificios complementarios*, Madrid 1965, BAC, pp. 9–123 [en adelante LG], n. 10.

9 Como hemos señalado, en el estudio del culto espiritual se encuentran profundamente relacionados eucaristía y bautismo. En este sentido, remitimos como complemento a nuestro artículo: P. Marti, M. Biedron, *La Eucaristía y la «logiké latreía» en Joseph Ratzinger-Benedicto XVI y san Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer*, "Scripta Theologica" 56 (2024), pp. 345–375

10 Comisión Teológica Internacional, *La teología hoy: perspectivas, principios y criterios*, Madrid 2012, BAC, n. 92.

11 A. Aranda, *La teología y la experiencia espiritual de los santos. En torno a la enseñanza de san Josemaría Escrivá*, "Scripta Theologica" 43 (2011), p. 39.

1. El pensamiento de Joseph Ratzinger-Benedicto XVI: el bautismo como llamada a la *logiké latreía*

Ratzinger trata numerosos aspectos de la vida cristiana en el contexto del sacramento del bautismo.[12] Aunque el autor, en el contexto del culto espiritual, se concentra mayormente en la Eucaristía, el análisis de sus textos destaca dos elementos que se desprenden del sacramento del bautismo para el carácter cultual de la vida cristiana: la unión con el Logos (subraya el culto cristiano como conforme al Logos) y la consagración de la persona y de su vida (destaca el carácter sacrificial de la vida).

En primer lugar, el bautismo une al cristiano con Cristo y con su sacrificio. Siguiendo a Benedicto XVI, se puede afirmar que gracias a este sacramento "entramos en una comunión existencial con él [Cristo], que su ser y el nuestro confluyen, se compenetran mutuamente."[13] El bautismo establece, pues, una estrecha compenetración del ser de Cristo y del ser del cristiano, hasta el punto de crear una unidad y una reciprocidad permanentes. El cristiano entra en el "movimiento del Hijo"[14] y se une al Logos, dejándose también conformar por el Logos. La novedad del sacramento del bautismo radica en que el ser humano ya pertenece a Cristo, vive con Él y en Él, vive gracias a Él.[15] El grado de esta unión es tan íntimo que Él "a través del bautismo, ha cambiado mi identidad esencial y yo sigo existiendo solo en este cambio. Mi *yo* desaparece y se inserta en un nuevo sujeto más grande, en el que mi yo está presente de nuevo, pero transformado, purificado, «abierto» mediante la inserción en el otro."[16] Esa

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12 Cfr. J. Ratzinger, *Das Licht des Lebens. Über das Geheimnis der Taufe, München, 15. April 1979*, en *Gesammelte Schriften*, XIV/1: *Predigten. Homilien – Ansprachen – Meditationem*, Freiburg–Basel–Wien 2019, Herder, pp. 449–453.

13 Benedicto XVI, *Homilía de la Santa Misa crismal*, en *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* [en adelante AAS] 99 (2007), p. 228.

14 Benedicto XVI, *Encuentro con los párrocos, sacerdotes y diáconos de Roma*, en AAS 100 (2008), p. 157.

15 Cfr. Benedicto XVI, *Homilía de la Vigilia Pascual*, en AAS 99 (2007), p. 328. Esta idea indica que, al igual que la Eucaristía tiene un lugar central en la vida, también el bautismo, por ser comienzo de la vida en Cristo y del culto existencial, crece gracias a la Eucaristía, que ayuda a realizar en plenitud la vocación bautismal (cfr. Benedicto XVI, *Al primer grupo de obispos de Canadá, región eclesiástica de Quebec, en visita "ad limina Apostolorum"*, en *Insegnamenti di Benedetto XVI* [en adelante InsB16], II/1, Città del Vaticano 2006, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, p. 573).

16 Benedicto XVI, *Visita pastoral a Verona: Discurso a los participantes en el IV Congreso Eclesial Nacional italiano*, en AAS 98 (2006), p. 806.

estrecha unión con el Hijo de Dios hace que la persona humana se abra al culto de Dios conforme al Logos. Se trata, pues, de una gracia que el hombre recibe, una vida nueva que le permite entrar en una relación personal con el Creador en la vida temporal y por la eternidad. Esto es así porque la extensión del culto a la vida humana implica las perspectivas terrenal y celestial.[17]

Afirmar las dimensiones terrenal y celestial indica que, para Ratzinger, el culto que el cristiano ofrece en y de su vida no se detiene solo en la esfera del individuo, sino que se extiende a la dimensión cósmica del culto cristiano. Esto se hace presente en el simbolismo de la oración *ad orientem*, que tiene un significado especial en la liturgia eucarística, pero también en el bautismo. Benedicto XVI relacionó este simbolismo de Oriente con el antiguo rito bautismal. La persona que recibía este sacramento se dirigía hacia el Oriente, que es el signo de Cristo, el nuevo sol. Esto indicaba que la existencia tomaba una nueva dirección; a partir de entonces, era cristiana y, por tanto, fiel a la Trinidad por medio de Cristo. La persona que recibía el bautismo se entregaba completamente al Señor.[18] Mediante esta unión con el Logos encarnado y su sacrificio la persona humana entra también en el gran movimiento del universo, cuya dinámica se dirige hacia Dios, espera su divinización y alaba a su Creador.[19]

En segundo lugar, del don del sacramento del bautismo surge la consagración de la persona y la vida a Dios. Benedicto XVI subrayó que, gracias al sacramento del bautismo, cada miembro de la Iglesia tiene carácter sacerdotal. Al participar en el sacerdocio común, puede ofrecer sacrificios espirituales a Dios y entregarse completamente al Señor.[20] "Quien renace por el agua y el Espíritu Santo, es decir, en el Bautismo, entra en una relación real con Dios, una relación filial, y puede adorarlo «en espíritu y en verdad»."[21]

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17 Cfr. Benedicto XVI, *Homilía de la Fiesta del Bautismo del Señor*, en AAS 100 (2008), p. 65.

18 Cfr. Benedicto XVI, *Homilía de la Vigilia Pascual*, en AAS 102 (2010), p. 274; J. Ratzinger, *Balance y perspectivas*, en JROC XI, p. 503.

19 Cfr. Benedicto XVI, *Homilía de la Hora Tercia durante la primera Congregación general de la XII Asamblea General Ordinaria del Sínodo de los Obispos*, en AAS 100 (2008), p. 759.

20 "Él nos llama, como pueblo sacerdotal de la nueva y eterna Alianza, a ofrecer en unión con Él nuestros sacrificios cotidianos para la salvación del mundo" (Benedicto XVI, *Homilía Santa Misa con los obispos australianos, con los seminaristas y con los novicios y las novicias. Consagración del nuevo altar en la catedral de Santa María (Sídney)*, en AAS 100 (2008), p. 540).

21 Benedicto XVI, *Ángelus, 27 de marzo de 2011*, en InsB16 VII/1, p. 390; Jn 4, 23–24.

Aunque el sacerdocio de Jesucristo no elimina la dimensión ritual, "ya no es principalmente ritual, sino existencial."[22] El bautismo, por tanto, es una llamada y una habilitación para consagrarse a Dios; es decir, como sostiene Benedicto XVI, para ofrecerse en un sacrificio que consiste en una conversión continua, una transformación de la mente y del corazón y una adhesión total al Señor.[23] La consagración de la vida presupone su santificación. Asimismo, subraya la estrecha e íntima unión con Dios en las dimensiones ontológica, volitiva y de acción: "conformarse siempre a la voluntad de Dios para querer y hacerlo todo solo y siempre para su gloria."[24] Así queda destacado el carácter sacramental de la vida cristiana, porque el cristiano, como Cristo, se convierte a la vez en sacerdote y en ofrenda santificada y dedicada a Dios. El bautismo es, en consecuencia, el sacramento por el que "la «fe que actúa por el amor» se convierte en un nuevo criterio de pensamiento y de acción que cambia toda la vida del hombre"[25], para que pueda ser un sacrificio agradable para Dios.

2. El pensamiento de san Josemaría: ser *ipse Christus* y "alma sacerdotal"

Como se ha mostrado hasta ahora, Ratzinger subraya dos elementos del bautismo cuando habla de la condición cultual del cristiano: la conformidad con el Logos y la consagración de la persona que se concreta en una entrega total al Señor. Ideas similares se descubren en los textos de san Josemaría, que parte del bautismo y de la vocación bautismal para exponer sus enseñanzas. Sin embargo, el estudio detallado de sus textos permite afirmar que su pensamiento sobre el pilar bautismal del culto espiritual se fundamenta en tres puntos importantes.

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22 Benedicto XVI, *Homilía Santa Misa para la clausura de la II Asamblea especial para África del Sínodo de los Obispos*, en AAS 101 (2009), p. 917. Vid. Benedicto XVI, *Homilía de la Fiesta del Bautismo del Señor*, en AAS 101 (2009), p. 110.

23 Cfr. Benedicto XVI, *Homilía Santa Misa con los obispos australianos, con los seminaristas y con los novicios y las novicias. Consagración del nuevo altar en la catedral de Santa María (Sídney)*, en AAS 100 (2008), p. 541.

24 Benedicto XVI, *Audiencia general del 24 de marzo de 2010: San Alberto Magno*, en InsB16 VI/1, p. 399.

25 Benedicto XVI, *Carta Apostólica en forma de Motu Proprio "Porta fidei" con la que se convoca el Año de la fe*, en AAS 103 (2011) 723–724, n. 6.

Para trazar este camino que ofrece san Josemaría, vale la pena utilizar el esquema deductivo presentado por Antonio Aranda que conduce a declarar la vocación cultual existencial del cristiano: "El cristiano es contemplado en la perspectiva de su sacerdocio bautismal. Esto podría significar […] que *alter Christus*, *ipse Christus* tienen siempre, sea cual sea su sujeto, sustancia sacerdotal."[26] Señalando los pasos sucesivamente, puede decirse que el bautismo es una llamada a ser *alter*, *ipse Christus* (1), cuyo rasgo constitutivo principal es la capacidad sacerdotal (2) para ofrecer sacrificios espirituales a Dios en la vida cristiana (3).

En relación con el primer nivel, es decir, la vocación de ser *alter Christus*, *ipse Christus*, se constata que la espiritualidad de san Josemaría es fuertemente cristocéntrica. Tiene su base en una estrecha relación e intimidad con Cristo, de carácter místico, pero, al mismo tiempo, abierta a todo cristiano.[27] El autor emplea dos términos en sus textos para describir la identificación con Cristo: *alter Christus* e *ipse Christus*. Ambos términos significan esencialmente la misma realidad, es decir, la vida de Cristo en el cristiano. Se trata de una realidad que el cristiano ya posee pero que a lo largo de su vida espiritual está llamado a desarrollar. "La identificación con Cristo de la que habla san Josemaría –imperfecta en esta vida y abierta a un crecimiento que solo alcanzará su plenitud en el cielo– podría ser expresada como la progresiva realización del vivir del cristiano en Cristo, así como Cristo vive en él."[28] En última instancia, podría inferirse que ambos términos apuntan al mismo contenido, aunque *alter Christus* podría entenderse como haciendo énfasis en el punto de partida e *ipse Christus*, en la meta de la vida cristiana.[29]

La conformidad con Cristo es un camino de fe iniciado en el sacramento del bautismo. Así, fundamentando sus fuerzas en la gracia de Dios y en la acción

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[26] A. Aranda, *El cristiano, "alter Christus, ipse Christus" en el pensamiento del Beato Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer*, "Scripta Theologica" 26 (1994), p. 546–547.

[27] Cfr. G. Pell, *Blessed Josemaría Escrivá's Christocentrism*, en *La grandezza della vita quotidiana*, I: *Vocazione e missione del cristiano in mezzo al mondo*, Roma 2002, Edizioni Università della Santa Croce, p. 147.

[28] A. Aranda, *Identificación con Cristo*, en J. L. Illanes, (coord.), *Diccionario de San Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer*, Burgos: Monte Carmelo, 2013, p. 611.

[29] Cfr. A. Aranda, *El cristiano, "alter Christus, ipse Christus" en el pensamiento del Beato Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer*, p. 545. Vid. J. Escrivá de Balaguer, *Obras completas*, I/4: *Es Cristo que pasa. Edición crítico-histórica preparada por Antonio Aranda*, Madrid 2013, Rialp [en adelante JEOC I/4], n. 104c.

del Espíritu Santo, se esfuerza por alcanzar la perfección en Cristo.[30] Se puede ver aquí la relación recíproca entre la filiación divina y la identificación con Cristo, que se puede resumir señalando que "somos hijos de Dios en la medida en que somos el mismo Cristo, *ipse Christus*."[31]

Sobre el segundo nivel, es decir, la dignidad de participar en el único y perfecto sacerdocio de Cristo, ser *ipse Christus* implica una identificación con el ser y también una configuración con la función de Jesucristo. Y aquí se sitúa la parte más importante de la investigación sobre el fundamento bautismal de la *logiké latreía* en los textos del fundador del Opus Dei. Así como es imposible separar a Cristo de su misión redentora, también es inviable separar al sujeto cristiano como *ipse Christus* de su misión.[32] Esta misión del cristiano en conformidad con Cristo se define como *deputatio ad cultum Dei*, y fluye del sacerdocio común recibido en el don del bautismo.[33] Por tanto, por ser *ipse Christus* se entiende, en primer lugar, la participación en el sacerdocio de Jesucristo.[34]

En virtud del bautismo, el cristiano es hijo amado de Dios y heredero del mundo, y también es sacerdote en medio del mundo. El lugar de realización de la vocación sacerdotal cristiana es, pues, el mundo y la realidad de la vida humana, ya que la plenitud del sacerdocio de Cristo del que participa el bautizado indica que las esferas de lo sagrado y lo profano no pueden estar completamente incomunicadas entre sí. Lo profano, sin perder su naturaleza, adquiere

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30 Cfr. J. Escrivá de Balaguer, *Obras completas*, I/3: *Conversaciones con Monseñor Escrivá de Balaguer. Edición crítico-histórica preparada por José Luis Illanes y Alfredo Méndiz*, Madrid 2012, Rialp [en adelante JEOC I/3], n. 58a; J. Escrivá de Balaguer, *Obras completas*, I/6*: Amigos de Dios. Edición crítico-histórica preparada por Antonio Aranda*, Madrid 2019, Rialp, nn. 13a, 128a, 198c; J. Escrivá de Balaguer, *Sacerdote para la eternidad*, en *Obras completas*, I/8: *Escritos varios. Edición crítico-histórica preparada por Philip Goyret, Fernando Puig y Alfredo Méndiz*, Madrid 2018, Rialp [en adelante JEOC I/8], n. 15; J. Escrivá de Balaguer, *Surco*, 3 ed., Madrid 1986, Rialp, n. 166.

31 F. Ocáriz, *La filiación divina, realidad central en la vida y en la enseñanza de Mons. Escrivá de Balaguer*, "Scripta Theologica" 13 (1981), p. 170.

32 Cfr. E. Burkhart, J. López, *Vida cotidiana y santidad en la enseñanza de San Josemaría. Estudio de teología espiritual*, I, Madrid 2010, Rialp, p. 102; A. Aranda, *El cristiano, "alter Christus, ipse Christus" en el pensamiento del Beato Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer*, p. 548.

33 Cfr. *Summa Theologiae*, III, q. 63, a. 3. Vid. A. Aranda, *El cristiano, "alter Christus, ipse Christus" en el pensamiento del Beato Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer*, p. 530.

34 Cfr. F. Ocáriz, *La filiación divina, realidad central en la vida y en la enseñanza de Mons. Escrivá de Balaguer*, p. 190.

una dimensión sobrenatural en la vida del cristiano que vive en Cristo y en su sacerdocio por la gracia del bautismo.[35]

Para explicar esta dignidad del creyente, san Josemaría utiliza el término “alma sacerdotal.”[36] El alma sacerdotal es un término esencial para comprender el culto espiritual, porque designa “la disposición habitual de ejercer la propia participación en el sacerdocio eterno de Cristo.”[37]

Sin embargo, para hacer justicia al concepto de sacerdocio común, es necesario añadir un comentario. Tal como han señalado Burkhart y López, el sacerdocio perfecto de Cristo, o más precisamente su mediación sacerdotal, se entiende en dos dimensiones: ascendente (su sacrificio redentor por los pecados) y descendente (el ofrecimiento de la vida sobrenatural a través de su *tria munera*).[38] Puesto que el cristiano es *ipse Christus*, el mismo Cristo, se concluye lógicamente que, al participar en el sacerdocio de Cristo, colabora en ambas dimensiones, que puede llamarse “corredentora” y “apostólica”.

Ha llegado el momento de avanzar un tercer paso en el presente estudio: hacia la consecuencia práctica de tener alma sacerdotal. Ser *ipse Christus* y, por eso, tener alma sacerdotal significa, en la práctica de la vida cristiana, estar siempre en unión estrecha con el Hijo de Dios para ofrecer con Él al Padre todas las realidades y todas las cosas de la vida; puede decirse que se le ofrece la vida misma.[39]

La enseñanza del santo sobre el sacrificio espiritual de la vida se centra en santificar el trabajo y todas las acciones ordinarias. De este modo el creyente

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[35] Cfr. C. González-Ayesta, *El trabajo como una Misa. Reflexiones sobre la participación de los laicos en el “munus sacerdotale” en los escritos del Fundador del Opus Dei*, “Romana. Boletín de la Prelatura de la Santa Cruz y Opus Dei” 26 (2010), p. 210. San Josemaría distingue perfectamente en el sacerdocio cristiano, el sacerdocio común y el sacerdocio ministerial, como realidades que participan del único sacerdocio de Jesucristo. Como ha subrayado el magisterio implican una diferencia no sólo de grado sino de esencia (cfr. J. Escrivá de Balaguer, *Sacerdote para la eternidad*, en JEOC I/8, n. 23).

[36] La referencia directa a este término se encuentra en: J. Escrivá de Balaguer, *Forja*, nn. 369, 882; J. Escrivá de Balaguer, *Surco*, n. 499. En JEOC I/3, n. 23a se dirige a la doctrina del Concilio Vaticano II y a 1 P 2, 5.

[37] M. M. Otero Tomé, *¿Un alma para el trabajo profesional?: el alma sacerdotal*, en J. López Díaz, F. M. Requena (eds.), *Atti del Convegno “The Heart of Work”. Pontificia Università della Santa Croce. Roma, 19–20 ottobre 2017*, III/5: *Verso una spiritualità del lavoro professionale. Teologia, Antropologia e Storia a 500 anni dalla Riforma*, Roma 2018, EDUSC, p. 141.

[38] Cfr. J. López Díaz, *Sacerdocio común*, en J. L. Illanes, (coord.), *Diccionario de San Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer*, p. 1081–1082; C. Izquierdo, *Jesucristo*, en J. L. Illanes, (coord.), *Diccionario de San Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer*, p. 690–692.

[39] Cfr. JEOC I/4, n. 120 d.

puede hacerse sacerdote de la propia existencia y conformarse con el propio Cristo. Jesús hizo lo mismo durante su vida, especialmente durante sus años ocultos en Nazaret, que fueron expresión de su – no tan conocido – pero sí santo y salvífico sacrificio, al Padre.[40] La humanidad de Jesucristo vivida en medio del mundo se presenta aquí como sacramento, es decir, como instrumento y signo de su divinidad y de la obra de salvación que se realiza en cada acción del Hijo de Dios.[41] El bautizado, siendo *alter, ipse Christus*, actúa en su vida *in modo Christi*, ya que participa en el misterio de la vida del mismo Hijo de Dios y está llamado a hacer de su vida cotidiana una realidad sacramental. "Todos, por el Bautismo, hemos sido constituidos sacerdotes de nuestra propia existencia, «para ofrecer víctimas espirituales, que sean agradables a Dios por Jesucristo»."[42]

En los escritos del santo, la *logiké latreía* se entiende como el ofrecimiento de la existencia mediante sacrificios espirituales y, sobre todo, siempre en el contexto de la doble dimensión del sacerdocio común: la redención y el apostolado.[43] Si se sigue la enseñanza de san Josemaría, puede advertirse que ésta no constituye una desviación, sino una profundización en el concepto de culto espiritual. Esto es así porque la misión corredentora y el apostolado, que son elementos característicos del acto de sacrificio espiritual a causa de las dos dimensiones del sacerdocio de Cristo, expresan la participación del cristiano

40 Cfr. JEOC I/4, n. 150b. Vid. J. Adame Goddard, *Contenido y significado de la vida cotidiana en los escritos del Beato Josemaría Escrivá*, en G. Faro (ed.), *La grandezza della vita quotidiana*, IV: *Lavoro e vita quotidiana*, Roma 2003, Edizioni Università della Santa Croce, p. 188; G. Tanzella-Nitti, *"Perfectus Deus, perfectus homo". Reflexiones sobre la ejemplaridad del misterio de la Encarnación del Verbo en las enseñanzas del Beato Josemaría Escrivá*, "Romana. Boletín de la Prelatura de la Santa Cruz y Opus Dei" 13 (1997), p. 369.

41 Cfr. CCE, n. 515. Vid. A. M. Sanguineti, *Dimensión sacramental de la vida cotidiana de los hijos de Dios en su Iglesia: un aporte teológico*, en F. De Andrés (ed.), *La grandezza della vita quotidiana*, V/2: *Figli di Dio nella Chiesa. Reflessioni sul messaggio di San Josemaría Escrivá. Aspetti culturali ed ecclesiastici*, Roma 2004, Edizioni Università della Santa Croce, p. 216.

42 JEOC I/4, n. 96b.

43 En sus escritos, la referencia a Rm 12, 1 o al versículo relacionado de Rm 12, 2 se encuentra en: J. Escrivá de Balaguer, *Ahora que comienza el año (diciembre de 1970)*, en *Obras completas*, V/1: *En diálogo con el Señor. Textos de la predicación oral. Edición crítico-histórica preparada por Luis Cano y Francesc Castells, con la colaboración de José Antonio Loarte*, Madrid: Rialp, 2017, n. 2c; J. Escrivá de Balaguer, *Carta 06.05.1945, n. 27*, en E. Burkhart, J. López, *Vida cotidiana y santidad en la enseñanza de San Josemaría. Estudio de teología espiritual*, III, Madrid 2013, Rialp, p. 109; JEOC I/4, n. 155b. El autor se refiere con más frecuencia al versículo similar: 1 P 2, 5.

en el misterio pascual y, por tanto, en el sacrificio de Jesús, que es, al fin y al cabo, el cumplimiento del culto conforme al Logos. En otras palabras, la condición sacerdotal del cristiano está estrechamente vinculada a la llamada a continuar la misión de Cristo, es decir, a prolongar su obra redentora.[44]

Conclusión

En la enseñanza de los autores el bautismo aparece como un sacramento que constituye la dignidad de la participación de los cristianos en el sacerdocio común, a través del cual pueden ofrecer sacrificios espirituales a Dios en sus vidas.

Examinando los textos de Joseph Ratzinger-Benedicto XVI – que tienen mucho interés por el culto espiritual – se ha demostrado que concentra su atención en la Eucaristía, pero no elude el tema del fundamento bautismal de la *logiké latreía*, que ha explicado especialmente en su Magisterio Pontificio. Para él, el bautismo es una llamada a realizar el culto espiritual, porque transforma ontológicamente al hombre, haciéndolo hijo de Dios y conformándolo con Cristo. Esto se explica por dos efectos del bautismo relacionados con la condición cúltica del cristiano sobre los que el teólogo alemán llama la atención: la conformidad con Cristo y la consagración, es decir, el ofrecimiento de la persona al Señor.

En los escritos de san Josemaría que, considerados como espirituales aportan en la reflexión sistemática de la teología, se aprecia un interés mucho mayor por el bautismo. Esta es una de las diferencias fundamentales entre los pensamientos de ambos autores al respecto. Aunque sus textos no figuran entre los ejemplos de los clásicos de la teología, un estudio de los mismos y una profunda reflexión sobre ellos podría llevar a la conclusión de que el fundador del Opus Dei tiene una concepción muy original del bautismo. No la formula en términos técnicamente teológicos, pero se fundamenta en ideas de este carácter y muestra continuidad con la doctrina del Vaticano II sobre el sacerdocio común.[45] Puede decirse que el santo centra en el bautismo la reflexión

[44] Cfr. A. Aranda, *Identidad cristiana y configuración del mundo. La fuerza configuradora de la secularidad y del trabajo santificado*, en *La grandeza della vita quotidiana*, I: *Vocazione e missione del cristiano in mezzo al mondo*, Roma 2002, Edizioni Università della Santa Croce, p. 177.

[45] Cfr. D. Le Tourneau, *Das Opus Dei. Kurzporträt seiner Entwicklung, Spiritualität, Organisation und Tätigkeit*, Stein am Rhein 1988, Christiana–Verlag, p. 86–90.

sobre la condición cúltica del cristiano. Por eso, encontramos en sus textos más referencias a 1 P 2, 5 o 1 P 2, 9, que a Rm 12, 1, donde aparece una alusión directa a la *logiké latreía*.[46] Sin embargo, los pasajes de la Carta de san Pedro apuntan también a la *logiké latreía*, es decir, al culto abierto a los bautizados mediante el sacrificio de Cristo – Sumo y Eterno Sacerdote – y, en consecuencia, mediante la participación en su único sacerdocio y en su *tria munera*. Es importante destacar que san Josemaría entiende el culto cristiano en dos aspectos funcionales que se corresponden a la naturaleza del único sacerdocio de Cristo, descritos como descendente y ascendente. Por tanto, lo destacable en los textos de san Josemaría comparados con los escritos de Joseph Ratzinger-Benedicto XVI, es el énfasis en la dimensión corredentora y apostólica de la *logiké latreía*.

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[46] Las referencias directas a 1 P 2, 5 o 1 P 2, 9 son las siguientes:
a) 1 P 2, 5: JEOC, I/4, nn. 96b. En JEOC I/3, n. 23a el autor emplea directamente el término "el entero Pueblo sacerdotal de Dios" haciendo referencia a LG, n. 10 y a LG, n. 11 donde aparece la expresión similar "la comunidad sacerdotal".
b) 1 P 2, 9: JEOC I/4, n. 98a; J. Escrivá de Balaguer, *Lealtad a la Iglesia*, en JEOC I/8, n. 16; J. Escrivá de Balaguer, *Sacerdote para la eternidad*, en JEOC I/8, n. 10.

Benedicto XVI, *Homilía de la Fiesta del Bautismo del Señor*, en *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 101 (2009), pp. 108–110.

Benedicto XVI, *Homilía de la Vigilia Pascual*, en *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 102 (2010), pp. 272–275.

Benedicto XVI, *Audiencia general del 16 de mayo de 2012 – La oración en las Cartas de san Pablo*, en *Insegnamenti di Benedetto XVI*, VIII/1, Città del Vaticano 2012, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, pp. 594–603.

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Discernment through consecration

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Abstract

The Catholic Church faces a critical shortage of vocations, whereby it lacks available resources to evangelise and welcome others into a vibrant, resource-abundant ecclesial community. Meanwhile, young adults today tend to commit to vocations later, leaving a gap during which they remain uncommitted to a particular vocation, yet skilled, capable, and energetic. The current emphasis on increasing vocations seems to be through social media and advertisements, while Church teachings offer valuable insight into the process by which reflects on their inner life to make decisions. Yet, vocations remain scarce. Here, we propose a path towards authentic discernment based on John Paul II's 1996 Apostolic Exhortation, *Vita Consecrata*. We suggest that young adults engage in a daily offering of both interior and exterior acts of love, strengthening their relationship with the Lord, fulfilling the universal vocation to love, and preparing them to hear the Lord's call.

Keywords

Catholic Church, Vocation, Consecration, Discernment, John Paul II

1. A path towards authentic discernment

The Catholic Church is experiencing a critical shortage of vocations to the priesthood and religious life. In the United States and Europe, there has been a particularly troubling decline.[1] To promote vocations, religious communities and dioceses post promotional materials in parishes and Catholic schools as well as on websites and social media. Yet despite these efforts, the vocational crisis in the West persists and has even accelerated over the last decade. This situation is unsurprising as the amount of practising Catholics decreases, the pews remain empty, and countless youth have turned from the faith.[2] A calling to a life of chastity, poverty, and obedience as a consecrated person or celibacy, prayer, and obedience as a diocesan priest seems unrealistic and perhaps absurd.

At the same time, in today's world, young adults tend to marry later in life.[3] The same situation is seen with those who do take religious vows.[4] This leaves several years of discernment between the onset of adulthood and making a vocation commitment for life. As such, it is especially important for there to be a purpose to the period of discernment, which is in itself a call to holiness.

Indeed, with a dramatic decline in vocations to the priesthood and religious life and increasing time spent in "young adulthood," it is essential that the period of "discernment" be examined. What will truly lead one to discern an authentic call to a particular vocation—whether the priesthood, religious life, or married life? Or rather, what should one be doing, interiorly and exteriorly, *during* and *as* discernment? What is the true purpose of discernment?

As such, to foster vocations in the Church, we propose a path to predispose a young adult to authentic discernment. Rather than inviting young adults directly to an unforeseen vocation to the priesthood or consecrated life, we suggest

1 B. Hodge, "Is There a Global Vocations Crisis? A Look at the Numbers," *The Pillar*, March 22, 2022, https://www.pillarcatholic.com/p/is-there-a-global-vocations-crisis.

2 M. Lipka, "Millennials Increasingly Are Driving Growth of 'Nones,'" Pew Research Center, May 12, 2016, https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/05/12/millennials-increasingly-are-driving-growth-of-nones/; Pew Research Center, "America's Changing Religious Landscape," May 12, 2015, https://www.pewforum.org/2015/05/12/americas-changing-religious-landscape/.

3 A. J. Cherlin, "Demographic Trends in the United States: A Review of Research in the 2000s," *Journal of Marriage and Family* 72, no. 3 (2010), p. 406.

4 R. Wuthnow, *After the Baby Boomers: How Twenty- and Thirty-Somethings Are Shaping the Future of American Religion* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007), p. 121.

first inviting people of all ages, especially young adults, to participate in a daily consecration. This proposed daily consecration is a pathway through which one might learn to live in communion with the Lord while participating in the missionary life of the Church.

2. Discernment

What does it mean to discern? We learn about the process of discernment from the writings of various spiritual writers, especially the saints, like St. Ignatius of Loyola's *Spiritual Exercises*.[5] This topic is of particular interest to Pope Francis, who offered a catechesis on the topic in 2022.[6] St. Ignatius of Loyola suggests that we should pray, observe concrete situations that would confirm or negate a choice, and pay attention to our inner responses.[7] While this is highly valuable, we suggest that, given the critical shortage of vocations, there is a need for additional characterisation of the path leading to the point of decision making. This surely includes prayer, as Ignatius suggests, but may also involve acts of love. As such, what characterises the prior path that prepares one to hear a call from the Lord?

While much of Pope Francis' 2022 catechesis on discernment involves a discussion of how to make decisions that agree with God's will, he begins by emphasising relationship. He explains that discernment involves first and foremost, an "affective relationship with the Lord Jesus"[8] and he encourages his listeners to consider their relationship with the Lord as a "relationship with a friend that grows day by day."[9] He emphasises that friendship with the Lord generates love, which "nothing can hinder."[10] As such, we take from this that

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5 Ignatius of Loyola, *The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola*, trans. Elder Mullan (New York: P.J. Kenedy & Sons, 1914; orig. 1548), p. 8.

6 Francis, "Catechesis on Discernment: 2. An Example: Ignatius of Loyola," September 7, 2022, https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2022/documents/20220907-udienza-generale.html.

7 J. C. Futrell, *Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits* (St. Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1970).

8 Francis, "General Audience of 21 December 2022," accessed June 12, 2024, https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2022/documents/20221221-udienza-generale.html.

9 Francis, "General Audience of 21 December 2022."

10 Francis, "General Audience of 21 December 2022."

discernment begins with a relationship with the Lord—and that this therefore might be emphasised prior to, for example, an invitation to join a particular religious community.

Furthermore, in Pope St. John Paul II's book-length collection of personal writings, *Go in Peace*, he reminds us that it was "when the young man indicated that he was already following that path, [that] Jesus invited him to an even greater love: Leave all and come, follow Me; leave everything that concerns only yourself and join Me in the immense task of saving the world."[11] Here we see that it is first this love of God and love of neighbour that we must practice, and *then*, we may be called to "an even greater love" in a specific vocation of consecrated life, for example.

In his conversation with the Rich Young Man, Jesus gave the commandment to "love your neighbour as yourself" (Matthew 19:19). In Greek, the word used here for love is Ἀγαπήσεις. *Agápē* is the highest form of love, i.e., charity. It is a love that wills the good of the other, not one's pleasure, self-interest, or benefit. There is an implication here for the Church's missionary spirit. We are called not only to love, as in, be kind to; but to seek out others, with an active love, as Christ the Good Shepherd seeks each one of his sheep (Luke 15:4–7).

Therefore, we conclude that the initial steps of discernment involve primarily a call to love—to be in relationship with the Lord. In line with Matthew 19:21, we propose that the discerner can do so by living a daily consecration—an offering (giving, praising, crying out) of one's inner desires, needs, gifts, and sufferings—interiorly and in communion with a local Church. Concordantly and in line with Matthew 19:19–20, we suggest that those who are discerning can, in a particular way, participate in the "apostolic activity and missionary zeal"[12]—both interiorly and exteriorly.

3. Consecration: to be with the sacred

Our English word "consecration" comes from the Latin *consecratio* meaning associated with or dedicated to the sacred. We typically think of consecration as a temporally following discernment: One discerns a call to a consecrated life,

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[11] John Paul II, *Go in Peace: A Gift of Enduring Love* (New York: Crossroad, 2003), p. 27.

[12] *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2nd ed. (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1997), para. 828.

and then proceeds to take vows, possibly with an existing religious community. Here, however, as described above, we propose that a daily consecration—being *with* the sacred—be fostered prior to, or rather as a *path* to, discernment. When one participates in a daily consecration, he gives himself fully to the Lord, each day and in every moment. Through this union with Christ—by being *with* Him—he prepares himself to hear from the Lord: "Come, follow me" (Mark 10:21).

4. Challenges of our times

In *Vita Consecrata*, John Paul II invites us to be open to the creative ways of the Holy Spirit, recognising that "the Spirit…gives new charisms…[which respond] to the challenges of our times…[T]hey are all characterized by an intense aspiration to community life, poverty, and prayer…and the apostolate focuses on the demands of the new evangelization,"[13] He adds that "the originality of the new communities often consists in the fact that they are composed of mixed groups of men and women, of clerics and lay persons, of married couples and celibates, all of whom pursue a particular style of life."[14] He asks us to perceive "the needs of the times"[15] and allow the Spirit to invite us to participate in an "innovative cultural proposal;"[16] and, that "what is needed above all is a consecrated life which is continually open to the challenge by the revealed word and the signs of the times."[17] He states, "In this way the consecrated life will not be limited to reading the signs of the times but will also contribute to elaborating and putting into effect new initiatives of evangelisation for present-day situations."[18] John Paul continues to write that "it is necessary, therefore, to be open to the interior promptings of the Holy Spirit."[19] We are asked to perceive the current situation in our world and in the Church. What is the current situation? As mentioned previously, there is a critical shortage of vocations to the priesthood and religious life, leaving convents empty and Church doors closed.

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[13] John Paul II, *Vita Consecrata* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1996), sec. 12.
[14] John Paul II, *Vita Consecrata* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1996), sec. 62.
[15] John Paul II, *Vita Consecrata* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1996), sec. 37.
[16] John Paul II, *Vita Consecrata* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1996), sec. 80.
[17] John Paul II, *Vita Consecrata* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1996), sec. 81.
[18] John Paul II, *Vita Consecrata* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1996), sec. 73.
[19] John Paul II, *Vita Consecrata* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1996), sec. 73.

With regard to the shortage of vocations, John Paul II explained that religious organisations may ask themselves whether they have “perhaps lost the capacity to attract new vocations.”[20] Yet he encourages them to “have confidence in the Lord Jesus, who continues to call men and women to follow him.”[21] He says that “they must entrust themselves to the Holy Spirit, who inspires and bestows the charisms of the consecrated life.”[22]

John Paul II recognised the need for new forms of consecrated life that, as described above, extend beyond the call to celibacy.[23] He did not necessarily or directly encourage more emails, websites, or posters encouraging young adults to become priests or religious. Rather, he encouraged an openness to new forms of consecrated life. He seemed to know that something new and different was needed—something that involved people of all states in life; something that would not replace traditional communities, but rather, would lead to them.

5. Living the daily consecration

Here we propose a practice of daily consecration, as a response to John Pual II’s call in *Vita Consecrata*, which does not replace traditional forms of consecrated life, but rather provides a pathway that leads to holiness, to union with Christ, and thus to ecclesial vocations.[24] Young adults in today’s world are constantly “on the go.” Most have smartphones and jobs that require substantial time and energy. Others wake up early to get the children dressed and ready for a day at school or are up late, working, while the children sleep quietly. Life is busy, and it has become more difficult to hear the voice of the Lord amid it all.

Yet with all the “to do’s,” today’s young adults have even more to offer the Lord. In each moment, each dish a mother washes, each email a professional writes, and each Facebook post a young adult shares, can be offered to the Lord. Each financial need, fear of war, desire for social connection, joy with family, and moment of pain can be offered to the Lord. All of this can be offered in daily consecration. We propose this daily consecration as a path to discernment.

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[20] John Paul II, *Vita Consecrata* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1996), sec. 64.
[21] John Paul II, *Vita Consecrata* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1996), sec. 64.
[22] John Paul II, *Vita Consecrata* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1996), sec. 64.
[23] John Paul II, *Vita Consecrata* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1996), sec. 62.
[24] John Paul II, *Vita Consecrata* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1996), sec. 62.

We explain the components of the daily consecration below, which include momentary offerings, participation in the call to mission, acts of love, and union with the Church and broader community.

6. Defining the daily consecration

6.1. Momentary offerings

Consecration as a path to discernment might involve an offering of daily moments of waiting, walking, driving, talking, and watching. It might also involve offering small sacrifices throughout the day, such as choosing to pray instead of listening to music for 10 minutes. Young adults who are participating in a daily consecration as discernment might be encouraged to strive towards unceasing prayer: while walking to the subway, waiting for the bus, driving in city traffic, enduring struggles in the workplace, working through relationship challenges, and patiently bearing with suffering or persecution from the world because of one's faith (1 Peter 2:19). In bearing with these struggles, one learns obedience and becomes perfected (Hebrews 5:8–9), and with this, one grows in holiness and thus in authentic discernment.

John Paul II encouraged asceticism in consecrated communities. He writes that "asceticism, by helping to master and correct the inclinations of human nature wounded by sin, is truly indispensable if consecrated persons are to remain faithful to their own vocation and follow Jesus on the way of the Cross."[25] He also writes about the importance of "adapting a simple and austere way of life, both as individuals and as a community."[26] As such, young adults might recognise ways to live simply, such as cooking a communal dinner rather than eating out one night; and offer this, too, in a daily consecration.

In line with ascetism, young adults are called to practice the virtue of chastity, crucifying the flesh (Galatians 5:24). This, too, can be offered (Romans 12:1) on the path to discernment. In addition, chastity enables one to remain in a state of purity in which the Holy Spirit can descend upon us (Galatians 5:5), calling us to bring Jesus to others.

[25] John Paul II, *Vita Consecrata* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1996), sec. 38.
[26] John Paul II, *Vita Consecrata* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1996), sec. 82.

By living a daily consecration, one participates in the "fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death" (Philippians 3:10), and therefore allows one's "lowly body to conform with his glorified body" (Philippians 3:21). In doing so, young people strive towards holiness—towards union with God—and thus, towards discernment ("Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men." Matthew 4:19).

6.2. With the Church

The daily consecration is lived, importantly, with and through the Church. With priests acting in the person of Christ[27] as they offer the Eucharistic Sacrifice, the daily consecration is offered with the sacrifice of the priests and thus, through the Eucharistic offering. Through this priestly offering, young adults unite themselves with Jesus "by offering their own lives to the Father through the Holy Spirit."[28] Other Church practices to be encouraged include the Liturgy of the Hours, the Sacrament of Reconciliation, spiritual direction, and the Rosary—thus renewing one's "spiritual union with the Blessed Virgin Mary."[29]

Moreover, we are invited to be "imitators of the churches of God" (1 Thessalonians 2:14), and the Church is called to have a visible presence: "the Church must always seek to make her presence visible in everyday life, especially in contemporary culture."[30] Young adults can, on their path to discernment, be intentionally present to particular neighbourhoods, fostering the presence of Christ, the proof of our love (2 Corinthians 8:24). John Paul II further justified the necessity of such communities when he wrote that "the whole Church greatly depends on the witness of communities filled 'with joy and with the Holy Spirit.' She wishes to hold up before the world the example of communities in which solitude is overcome through concern for one another, in which communication inspires in everyone a sense of shared responsibility, and in which wounds are healed through forgiveness, and each person's commitment to communion is strengthened."[31]

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27 *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2nd ed. (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1997), para.1548.
28 John Paul II, *Vita Consecrata* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1996), sec. 95.
29 John Paul II, *Vita Consecrata* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1996), sec. 120.
30 John Paul II, *Vita Consecrata* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1996), sec. 25.
31 John Paul II, *Vita Consecrata* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1996), sec. 45.

Interestingly, in *Go in Peace*, John Paul II reminds us that the "fundamental vocation and mission" of the parish is to "be a place in the world for the community of believers to gather together as a sign and instrument of the vocation of all to communion…to be a house of welcome to all and a place of service to all…"[32] Young adults can, in a particular way, choose to live at or near local parishes on their path to discernment, with the goal of bringing Christ to neighbours; thereby seeking first the Kingdom of God and letting all else be given (Matthew 6:33). This intentional life near and with a local Church is wrapped into a daily consecration of one's interior and exterior self. Such consecration is a lifestyle that will lead to union with Christ such that one is able to hear a subsequent call to come, follow me (Matthew 4:19).

With young adults living a daily consecration near and with local churches, they bear witness, in line with John Paul II's assertion that, "on the whole, under the ever creative guidance of the Spirit, the consecrated life is destined to remain a shining witness to the inseparable unity of love of God and love of neighbour"[33]. This is a witness that is desperately needed in the world today.

6.3. Embracing the universal mission

A daily consecration involves not only an interior offering but also a daily and continuous embrace of the universal mission. Catholics embrace the call to seek, above all things, the kingdom of God (Matthew 6:33), to give oneself first to the Lord (2 Corinthians 8:5), and to lay down one's life for their friends (John 15:13). These actions stand in contrast to the common ways of the world, whereby one is instructed to seek their future; and even to some vocation campaigns, which seemingly emphasise the decision before emphasising the path to holiness—communion with the Lord—with discernment as a product of that authentic relationship.

Then even in and as a path to discernment, the call is to seek first the building up of His kingdom (Matthew 6:33); and all else will be given to us (Matthew 6:33). This does not mean that one should not explore potential religious communities, meet with vocational directors, and date potential future spouses; rather,

[32] John Paul II, *Go in Peace: A Gift of Enduring Love*, ed. Joseph Durepos (Chicago: Loyola Press, 2003), 115.

[33] John Paul II, *Vita Consecrata* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1996), sec. 63.

alongside these intentional actions, one also strives to love the poor, share their gifts, and build up His kingdom, as is instructed in the Catechism:

Jesus asks for childlike abandonment to the providence of our heavenly Father

> who takes care of his children's smallest needs: "Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?'…Your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well."[34]

These words point to a childlike abandonment in which one trusts that the discernment of a future vocation will be granted unto us (Matthew 6:33). Likewise, Jesus explains, "Whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it" (Matthew 16:25). It seems here that Jesus invites us to follow Him and thereby receive much.

If one truly desires to experience God's love, then without doubt, they desire the same for others. Thus, as it is written: "If someone who has worldly means sees a brother in need and refuses him compassion, how can the love of God remain in him?" (1 John 3:17). Likewise, John Paul II writes that "there is no authentic Christianity if there is no mission activity: Jesus is a gift from God that must be brought to everyone."[35] Such words highlight the call to love, bring Christ to all, and invite others into communion with Christ.

In following the Gospel in this radical way, one directly puts their trust completely in the Lord, trusting that He will provide. One embodies Philippians 4:6 where St. Paul writes, "Have no anxiety at all." This is true even in the absence of a clear call to the consecrated life, Holy Orders, or Holy Matrimony, even in the absence of a future spouse, religious community, or diocese to which one is drawn. In seeking first His kingdom and participating in the universal mission of the Church during and as discernment, one fulfils the call to holiness: "Love is therefore the fundamental and innate vocation of every human being. The vocation to love, understood as true openness to our fellow human beings and solidarity with them, is the most basic of all vocations. It is the origin of all

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34 *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2nd ed. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1997, para. 305.

35 John Paul II, *Go in Peace: A Gift of Enduring Love*, ed. Joseph Durepos (Chicago: Loyola Press, 2003), p. 116.

vocations in life."[36] This directs "discerners," to love first and foremost, as love is "the origin of all vocations."[37] It characterises the path towards discernment as emphasising love of God and neighbour, with trust that through this, one will hear, if Christ calls, as He manifests Himself along this path (John 14:21).

6.4. Acts of love

As discussed previously, in Matthew 19:20, the Lord invites His followers not only to be kind to others but also to seek them out. Similarly, John Paul II reminds us that "'faith is strengthened when it is given to others,' so the mission strengthens the consecrated life, gives it new enthusiasm and new motivation, and elicits faithfulness. For its part, missionary activity offers ample room for the different forms of the consecrated life."[38] With a daily offering, one engages in deeper prayer, which inherently leads to action. As John Paul II wrote, "that prayer is the soul of the apostolate but also that the apostolate animates and inspires prayer."[39] Prayer and acts of love strengthen one another. Both are essential to the consecrated life—even the form of daily consecration proposed here.

Many young adults hold jobs and have busy personal and professional lives. Therefore, they may not be able to commit to additional ministries or activities; but still can assume "a sense of mission," which is "more than external works."[40] It "consists in making Christ present to the world through personal witness."[41] As a path to discernment, young adults can participate in the "genuine inculturation" of divinity, in which we imitate the Lord, who "became man and walked among us in love and meekness."[42]

In other cases, the action may be more explicit. With engagement in prayer, unity in mission (Acts 2:4), consecrated daily offerings, love of neighbour, and

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[36] John Paul II, *Go in Peace: A Gift of Enduring Love*, ed. Joseph Durepos (Chicago: Loyola Press, 2003), p. 211.

[37] John Paul II, "Apostolic Journey to the Philippines: Prayer Vigil on the Occasion of the 10th World Youth Day in Manila," Speech, Rizal Park, Manila, January 14, 1995. Accessed August 8, 2024. At https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/1995/january/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19950114_vigilia-manila-gmg.html.

[38] John Paul II, *Vita Consecrata* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1996), sec. 78.

[39] John Paul II, *Vita Consecrata* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1996), sec. 67.

[40] John Paul II, *Vita Consecrata* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1996), sec. 72.

[41] John Paul II, *Vita Consecrata* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1996), sec. 72.

[42] John Paul II, *Vita Consecrata* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1996), sec. 79.

dialogue; the Holy Spirit descends, often calling one to action (John 16:13–15). With this "close union between contemplation and action,"[43] this action will be fruitful and young adults will surely be strengthened to act beyond their ability (2 Corinthians 8:3); and only with this union can the challenge of evangelisation in the modern world be undertaken.[44]

Thus, young adults—in the world but not of the world (John 17:11–14)—in preparation to receive a call from the Lord, may seek to "discover the methods most suited to the needs of the different social groups and various professional categories so that the light of Christ will penetrate all sectors of society and the leaven of salvation will transform society from within, fostering the growth of a culture imbued with Gospel values."[45] Importantly, during and as discernment, one is watchful and open to the promptings of the Spirit (Habakkuk 2:1). Our world can be truly transformed by Christ's light as He dwells among us (Amos 3:17). Furthermore, through these works, faith is made perfect (James 2:22), which again advances discernment while simultaneously participating in the universal mission of the Church.

7. Community

7.1. Sharing

Young adults may choose to live in community and share material goods as the Apostles did in the time preceding the descent of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:44). Such sharing could involve "material goods and spiritual experiences, talents and inspirations, apostolic ideals and charitable service."[46] During the period after university and before making a formal vocational commitment, one may decide to live in the community, sharing goods, gifts, and service.

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43 John Paul II, *Vita Consecrata* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1996), sec. 74.
44 John Paul II, *Vita Consecrata* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1996), sec. 74.
45 John Paul II, *Vita Consecrata* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1996), sec. 98.
46 John Paul II, *Vita Consecrata* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1996), sec. 42.

7.2. Dialogue

As recommended by John Paul II, in consecrated communities, "inspired by the Holy Spirit, each individual engages in a fruitful dialogue with the others in order to discover the Father's will."[47] There must be a prayerful dialogue among young adults, as well as among priests and bishops. In this way, the community can "cooperate generously with the particular Churches as much as they can and with respect for their own charism, working in full communion with the bishop in areas of evangelisation, catechesis and parish life,"[48] bearing fruit for the building up of the kingdom of God at the local parish level. Further, John Paul II writes that "challenges of evangelisation are such that they cannot be effectively faced without the cooperation, both in discernment and action, of all the Church's members. It is difficult for individuals to provide a definite answer; however, such an answer can arise from encounter and dialogue. In particular, effective communion among those graced with different charisms will ensure both mutual enrichment and more fruitful results in the mission in hand."[49] This cannot be argued against, since the Holy Spirit works through many, each who has unique gifts (Romans 12:6–8). Overall, we echo John Paul II's encouragement that "everything…be done in communion and dialogue with all sectors of the Church."[50] In this way and with this "privileged experience of dialogue" and "ecclesial communion," we are "ready to undertake the great universal mission"[51].

Dialogue that will be truly fruitful will come from prayerful conversations that allow for meditation of the Sacred Scriptures and the study of Sacred Doctrine (1 Timothy 4:13–15), as well as reflection upon the writings of the saints. In this way, we respond to "the need for a renewed and loving commitment to the intellectual life,"[52] "an incentive to dialogue and cooperation…a stimulus to contemplation and prayer in the constant quest for the presence and activity of God in the complex reality of today's world."[53] John Paul II reinforces that "meditation of the Bible in common is of great value." When practised according to the possibilities and circumstances of life in community, this meditation leads to a joyful sharing of the riches drawn from the word of God, thanks to which brothers

[47] John Paul II, *Vita Consecrata* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1996), sec. 92.
[48] John Paul II, *Vita Consecrata* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1996), sec. 49.
[49] John Paul II, *Vita Consecrata* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1996), sec. 74.
[50] John Paul II, *Vita Consecrata* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1996), sec. 74.
[51] John Paul II, *Vita Consecrata* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1996), sec. 74.
[52] John Paul II, *Vita Consecrata* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1996), sec. 98.
[53] John Paul II, *Vita Consecrata* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1996), sec. 98.

or sisters grow together and help one another to make progress in the spiritual life."[54] Through prayerful meditation and dialogue, the Holy Spirit guides and calls to action (2 Peter 1:21), which builds up the Kingdom of God (Acts 2:47).

7.3. Unity

John Paul II describes the "nature of the charism in communities of this kind" as one which "directs their energies…and the apostolic work of all towards the one mission"[55] Young adults, on a path to discernment, might aim to be "knit together in love" (Colossians 2:2); "like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind" (Philippians 2:2); "perfectly joined together in the same mind" (1 Corinthians 1:10); as the Apostles were prior to the descent of the Holy Spirit. John Paul II writes of the importance of such communities: "If the Church is to reveal her true face to today's world, she urgently needs such fraternal communities, which, by their very existence, contribute to the new evangelisation, inasmuch as they disclose in a concrete way the fruitfulness of the new commandment."[56]

John Paul II calls us to be "united by a common commitment to the following of Christ…inspired by the same Spirit"[57]. In this, he writes that we "cannot fail to manifest visibly, as branches of the one Vine, the fullness of the Gospel of love"[58]. We cannot disagree that this visibility of the Gospel of love is extremely and urgently needed in today's society; and, that young adults who have yet to take formal vows might contribute to this in a particular way—as a path to discernment.

7.4. United prayer

In 1 Peter, we read that we are called to love God through our united and fervent prayer (1 Peter 5:16). Along these lines, John Paul II recommends adoration: "The call to holiness is accepted and can be cultivated only in the silence of adoration."[59] Moreover, we are called to pray fervently and ceaselessly

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54 John Paul II, *Vita Consecrata* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1996), sec. 94.
55 John Paul II, *Vita Consecrata* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1996), sec. 45.
56 John Paul II, *Vita Consecrata* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1996), sec. 45.
57 John Paul II, *Vita Consecrata* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1996), sec. 52.
58 John Paul II, *Vita Consecrata* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1996), sec. 77.
59 John Paul II, *Vita Consecrata* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1996), p. 38.

(1 Thessalonians 5:16), seeking first His kingdom (Matthew 6:33). Thus, young adults who are discerning would, in addition to offering themselves to God, also come together in adoration, to pray the Holy Rosary and the Divine Mercy Chaplet, and to reflect on Scripture and other Church writings. Those who are on this path to discernment might pray in unity, for example, for the "light of God to enter into the world,"[60] for the Church to be a "dwelling place" (Psalm 84:1) of love, and for beauty and love to radiate from the Church. As such, while one is discerning, he or she is completely oriented towards the Lord, with the heart completely open, longing and desiring the building up of the Kingdom, just like Jesus' instruction to the young man (Matthew 19:21–24).

8. Conclusion

Young adults often spend several years before making a commitment to the priesthood, consecrated life, or marriage. Vocations to the priesthood and religious life are on a dramatic decline. There have been major shifts in parish life and shortages of parochial resources. Facing these modern-day challenges, we propose that young adults participate in a daily consecration and thus in the missionary call of the Church. We suggest that they do so by abiding in Him (John 15:4) through prayer, with a ceaseless offering of daily moments, and through the Eucharistic Sacrifice. Young adults can be intentionally available, uniquely, to evangelise and reach out to local neighbourhoods, bearing fruit in Him (John 15:5). Finally, in communities, young adults might live and share in community life with the extent possible. They might come together for prayer, adoration, celebration of the Eucharist, meditation on the Bible, and dialogue. All of this, again, is done under the guidance of the clergy and in unity with the local and universal Church. John Paul II explains,

> Those who love God, the Father of all, cannot fail to love their fellow human beings, whom they recognize as brothers and sisters. Precisely for this reason, they cannot remain indifferent to the fact that many men and women do not know the full manifestation of God's love in Christ. The result, in obedience to Christ's commandment, is the missionary drive *ad gentes*, which every committed Christian shares with the Church, which is missionary by nature.[61]

[60] Benedict XVI, *Deus Caritas Est*, (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2005), sec. 39.
[61] John Paul II, *Vita Consecrata* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1996), sec. 77.

In the proposed form of daily consecration—a response to John Paul II's call—young adults have an opportunity to fulfil their vocation to love—the vocation for "life in the Holy Spirit."[62] They participate in "divine charity and human solidarity"[63] and walk along a path in which they are prepared and available to receive a call to an even greater love (John 15:13), to come follow me (Matthew 4:19). Moreover, with young adults walking this path towards discernment and contributing to the universal mission of the Church, "spices… flow out," (Song of Solomon 4:16), "the wilderness becomes a fruitful field" (Isaiah 32:15), and the light of God's love brilliantly and radiantly enters the world through the Church.

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[62] *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2nd ed. (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1997), para. 1699.

[63] *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2nd ed. (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1997), para. 1699.

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The pursuit of the good life in the philosophical explorations of Immanuel Kant, Jean Nabert and Paul Ricoeur

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Abstract

This article will present the concept of "good life" in the ethics of I. Kant and its criticism by the representative of the philosophy of consciousness J. Nabert and P. Ricoeur. The identification of the pursuit of the "good life" with the pursuit of happiness comes from Greek eudaimonism. In Kant, the achievement of happiness was reduced to obedience to the law. The source of evil is immorality, identified by him as disobedience to the law. The limitations and erroneous assumptions of this formalistic concept were demonstrated by J. Nabert and P. Ricoeur. Nabert accused Kantian ethics of using an abstract notion of freedom and not considering the inner experience. On the basis of Kant's criticism, Nabert developed his own concept of evil as the unjustifiable and the possibility of overcoming evil through the desire for justification. Ricoeur, in turn, criticised, among other things, the Kantian reduction of all forms of emotionality to the sphere of desire, which closes the way to a meaningful discussion of happiness, suffering or evil.
Moreover, he pointed out the flaws in the very reduction of happiness to the "good life." Against the background of these remarks, we discuss the contemporary limitations of philosophical reflections on good and evil and happiness and unhappiness.

Keywords

happiness, good life, good, evil, suffering, freedom

Introduction

The identification of the pursuit of the 'good life' with the pursuit of happiness derives from ancient eudaimonism. In the concepts discussed below, however, the notion of happiness appears rarely. Immanuel Kant, convinced of the evil will existing in man, replaces the pursuit of happiness with the pursuit of subordination to the law. In his view, such subordination is a prerequisite for a good life. Critical analyses by the leading representative of the philosophy of consciousness, Jean Nabert, and his pupil, the founder of hermeneutics, Paul Ricoeur, provide us with new light on the limitations and fallacies of this view. Both recognise the weakness of human nature but try to seek the possibility of overcoming the human "tendency to fall" by other means. According to these philosophers, the prerequisite for a good life is a sense of one's own agency (Nabert) and the attainment of self-awareness to eliminate obstacles that hinder a person's understanding of himself and of his own limitations and possibilities. In their writings, both philosophers therefore criticise Kant's dogmatic and formalist conception and undertake analyses of the structures of consciousness and the inner experiences that constitute these structures. In doing so, they point out that a good life is not possible without understanding oneself and one's own spiritual aspirations.

1. Kant: The good life is subordination to the law

Immanuel Kant was the most important ethicist of the rationalist movement and one of the first to reject the eudaemonistic tradition that dominated ethical thought in both ancient and medieval philosophy. He was inspired by both British empiricism and continental rationalism, recognised the complexity of human motives. Unlike classical conceptions that often focused on the pursuit of happiness as the goal of life, Kant emphasised the moral foundations of action. He assumed that human cognition has two complementary and mutually controlling sources: the senses and reason. The senses allow us to perceive the world, while reason enables us to understand it.

Based on these premises, he attempted to reach the apriori conditions, not always realised in the consciousness of the moral sub-subject, which constitute morality. In formulating his imperative conception of morality, Kant was convinced of the existence in human nature of a propensity to evil, manifested through malice and the misappropriation of the norms of moral conduct. This leads, in his view, to the substitution of moral principles for motivation driven by personal interests or feelings. The denial of one's own reasonableness is also rooted in emotional weakness, which expresses itself in a reluctance to submit to rational maxims, because of the aforementioned emotional malice or a weak nature. Its deeper roots are to be sought in man's idea of what happiness is and the means by which it can be achieved. Kant recognised that man cannot achieve happiness in mortality.

Since happiness cannot be attained in mortality, this desire must be replaced by the pursuit of goodness, for "it is impossible to think of anything at all in the world, or indeed even beyond it, that could be considered good without limitation except a good will."[1] However, this good will is understood quite specifically. In Kant's view, reasonableness is the criterion of good and evil, and the subject's pursuit of good must coincide with the desire for reasonableness, which is revealed through the approval of law and duty. The moral value of an act performed in the name of duty, in this conception, is greater when one fulfils the duty by opposing the inclination. Thus, the less inclination we must fulfil a duty, the greater the moral worth of the act. In other words, if we do something good but it gives us pleasure, it is less valuable than if we find it unpleasant. To preserve life just for the sake of living is not wrong; it is only from the perspective of practical reason worthless. Only conduct that grows out of a natural predilection to spread happiness among others can "conform with duty and […] [be] amiable."[2]

Virtue is the supreme and unconditioned good of man "since it has no further condition above it, whereas happiness is something that, though always pleasant to the possessor of it, is not of itself absolutely and in all respects good but always presupposes morally lawful conduct as its condition."[3] Virtue and happiness relate to each other as a cause to affect. Happiness may be the consequence of an act resulting from good will, but it is, as it were, a by-product of the pursuit of duty.

Kant separated goodness from happiness; he believed that the most valuable motive for fulfilling a duty, the highest virtue, was the desire to fulfil it because

1 I. Kant, *Groundwork of the metaphysics of morals*, Cambridge 2003, Cambridge University Press, p. 7.
2 I. Kant, *Groundwork of the metaphysics of morals*, p. 11.
3 I. Kant, *Critique of practical reason*, Cambridge 1997, Cambridge University Press, p. 93.

it was a duty, and that the possibility of choosing a duty over the pursuit of happiness was evidence of the freedom of the rational individual.

2. Nabert: The good life is causal development

Nabert's primary task was to find the sources of spiritual life that could reveal the formation and development of subjectivity. He tried to find in the contents of human consciousness the moral pattern towards which our most intimate desires are directed. The results of his research were to show the way to the realisation of this pattern, to the attainment of spiritual maturity, or, as he said, to the rebirth of the Self, which was to be the culmination of the pursuit of the 'good life'.

Much of Nabert's research was inspired by Kant's thoughts. Both philosophers criticised metaphysics. Nabert, however, sought to go further in his analyses by emphasising reflection on inner experience, which was lacking in Kant's theory. In his research, he focused on the concrete Self and tried to discover the ways in which this Self is constituted in order to pursue development.

Kant's conception leads to a fundamental dualism—in the world of phenomena, causes cause effects, whereas in the world of noumenal, the reality of free and creative acts prevails. These parallel worlds have nothing in common, and yet, according to Kant's conception, we must infer from the same act that it is both the foreseeable result of discernible causes and that it is free. This view is difficult to agree with. Common sense suggests that an act is either free or determined, and that therein lies the problem of freedom.

Nabert attempted to renew Kant's solution by clearing it of what he considered being fundamental errors. The first objection concerns purely moral freedom. Kant defined freedom negatively as independence from impulsive inclinations and positively as obedience to the moral law. Such a definition severely limits the scope of freedom. By identifying freedom with morality, Kant required us to share with him the theses obvious to him, which he attributes to the categorical imperative, to the absolute of law. Nabert sees the weakness of such a reduction of freedom to obedience to the law. He does not reduce freedom to morality; he seeks freedom not in a moral act, but simply in an act – and a causal act of the Self. For, in his view, only a sense of causality can induce the Self to develop, to attempt to improve itself and the world.

Nabert's initiative, considering freedom as a complex process rather than as an abstract concept, allows us to see that freedom and determinism are not contradictory but complementary[4], and that what is at stake here are not two opposing realities but two complementary interpretations of reality. In Nabert's view, Kant was right when he described the causality of consciousness as irreducible to circumstances, as well as when he claimed that consciousness is subordinate to the power of reason. However, Kant, in his view, took too little account of the importance of the problematic of the inner experience of freedom and failed to consider its concrete, existential and personal character. Kant found it difficult to connect the 'I am' with the 'I think'. In his conception, it is difficult to find a justification for how the 'I am' could constitute real existence.

Nabert, while accepting, following Kant, the impossibility of the Self grasping itself through the intuitive path, nevertheless recognises the necessity of turning to the world in order to return through the experience of the world to the source of experience and to find the constitutive conditions for this experience. Furthermore, Nabert seeks to analyse inner experience by showing those types of human action in which the subject affirms its desire to be and its possibility to create value. He points out that to investigate consciousness and find a fixed point of reference for psychological facts, Kant's noumenal Self is not sufficient. Kant emphasised the transcendental activity of consciousness, for his main emphasis was on building a foundation for the creation of science. However, this activity, according to Nabert, cannot be the basis for understanding a concrete and real self-consciousness, whose aspiration is to constantly transcend its own limitations.

In doing so, Nabert emphasises that consciousness can only arrive at a good (moral) life if it directs itself towards possibilities of existence that are not inscribed in its nature, because they transcend it. He points to the desire for existence that is constitutive of consciousness. The function of the desire for existence in Nabert's ethics is both to bring morality into contact with nature and to justify the possibility of transforming nature. The desire to exist in the psychological sense is opposed to other desires because it does not, like those, relate to empirical reality, but only to values based on the exercise of freedom. The spontaneity of this desire escapes reflection. For here we are confronted with a desire for the completely unknown, which manifests itself as some indefinable need, a lack that consciousness longs to fill. Reflective consciousness arrives at a rift between goals and values. According to Nabert, the sensation

[4] J. Nabert, *L'expérience intérieure de la liberté et autres essais de philosophie morale*, Paris 1994, PUF, pp. 147–151.

of this rift is the result of the subjective nature of consciousness, not knowing itself or the true meaning of its goals, which are beyond the goals of nature. As Nabert emphasised, limiting oneself to the realisation of these goals would negate the existence of the spiritual realm within us.

In this context, Nabert reproached Kant for replacing the development of existence with oughtness. Duty, which is a form of asceticism, by opposing nature, conceals from us the desire for existence and suppresses the individuality that this desire expresses. The good of man is consequently subordinated to the good of the institution. Nabert points to the danger of surrendering to duty. Consciousness then perceives that it is subjected to an order that appears meaningless because it does not correspond to its desires. Social life appears to consciousness as a kind of alienation, opposing its development. The disillusionment that obedience to duty entails can therefore generate an aversion to a given rule of conduct.

Nabert's ethics goes in two directions in its search for the essence of morality, which is to show the ways to achieve a good life. On the one hand, it addresses the question of whether man, in his quest for self-realisation, can go beyond the moral life and transcend his own nature. On the other hand, it seeks the limits to the development of the Self through an analysis of the experience of evil that restricts our freedom. Whereas Kant seeks to constitutionalise morality by substituting the pursuit of happiness for duty, Nabert's analyses indicate the reasons why man cannot achieve happiness, i.e., causal development.

The basis for moral reflection on the phenomenon of evil is, for Nabert, the experiences of guilt, failure and loneliness. These experiences initiate reflection on the nature of evil. Evil as experienced by us is experienced as having no explanation and, regardless of whether we see its causes within ourselves or in the world outside us, we are unable to find a justification for it. The experience of the in-justifiable is the reaction of consciousness to events encountered in the world with which it cannot come to terms and which cause it to protest. There is no justification for some acts, some social structures, or some aspects of existence, just as there is no justification for pain, death, or wickedness.[5] The unjustifiable sentiment, then, here defines all forms of evil and refers both to the imperfections of nature and to the moral evil arising from freedom. The unjustifiable is not itself evil, but is the experience of evil. The importance that Nabert

5 J. Nabert, *Essai sur le mal*, Paris 1970, Aubier–Montaigne, p. 21.

attaches to the experience of evil is linked to the use of the reflexive method as one that brings with it a rejection, as his article in the French Encyclopaedia shows, of dogmatism replacing the problem of evil.[6]

The experience of evil through consciousness does not allow us to pose the problem of evil in the traditional way. Nabert refuses to treat evil as the absence or deprivation of something. He emphasises that evil is a real opposition, not reducible to any logical opposition. Nabert here poses the problem of evil extremely sharply; he does not seek to evade or conceal it by pointing to the sources of evil in external causes or by denying the reality of the existence of evil at all. For him, the existence of evil is an experiential fact, having its source in the inner causality of consciousness. Moreover, it is a constitutive element of being, for it relates to the positive causality of consciousness.

Nabert does not seek to reconcile or reconcile evil, understood as a kind of clear or real disorder, with some deeper order, eg legal. Evil defies all norms and leads to the failure of reflection that would like to define it, it is unjustified because it cannot be included either in the order of the world or in the becoming of subjectivity. In this sense, the doctrine of Kant is confirmed, which does not allow us to include evil in a rational dialectic, nor to explain it with some ontological finality.

Evil cannot be justified, for justification, to be powerful, must reconcile freedom with nature and consciousness with itself and simultaneously with the whole world. Unfortunately, for the single self, there is no such act or the possibility of complete rebirth that can justify it. For how could it rise above its individual acts and make judgments about its whole being?

The feeling of the unjustified questions morality. This does not mean that it denies morality in favour of some immoralism; moral categories can only be transcended if we rely on them at the same time. It is even necessary to transcend them, and for this purpose one must free oneself from moral rationalism, since it proclaims the self-sufficiency of morality and seeks to confine it within itself. This is the argument for rejecting Kant's autonomous morality and all kinds of speculative idealism. The difficulty lies in defining the ratio cognoscendi of evil as unjustifiable in understanding this reason, which is beyond any rational reason. In this context, Nabert shows that the experience of evil has an intrinsically religious significance. This idea is classical in itself, for if evil has been

[6] J. Nabert, *Les philosophies de la réflexion*, in: *Encyclopédie française*, vol. 19: *Philosophie–Religion*, Paris 1957, Société nouvelle de l'Encyclopédie Française, 19–06–1.

invoked as an argument against the existence of God, it remains a valid reason for the affirmation of God as well.

For Nabert, the desire for the divine is equivalent to the necessary to justify one's existence, "the desire to overcome evil."[7] Divinity for Nabert is "an essential form of consciousness"[8], not just an idea among many. Man would not be able to affirm himself without the affirmation of the divine, which, in his conception, appears as a constitutive factor in the formation of consciousness. It makes it possible to overcome the alienation necessary for the formation of subjectivity, that difference between aspirations and possibilities of fulfilment. The unjustified, or sense of lack of agency, limiting the possibilities for the development of consciousness are the elements of such alienation, constituting the Self. Only the idea of divinity implies the abolition of the fundamental alienation, which manifests itself in the experience of finitude.

Man, as a result of Nabert's reflective research, turns out to be a dependent, fragile being, condemned to the realisation of impossible desires and unsuccessful attempts to overcome the qualities that constitute him. Here, the disproportion between man's aspirations and his capacities is revealed. To pursue the good life alone is doomed to failure. Through reflective analysis, consciousness discovers that it has no hope of being able to satisfy its deepest desires by its own efforts: the desire to be and the desire to justify. Only the Divine leaves hope for the realisation of our desire to be and its justification as being good.

Analysing deep layers of consciousness, Nabert programmatically opposed 'top-down', speculative solutions. His work, despite being written over many years, constitutes a remarkably coherent whole, as a thematically and methodologically homogeneous field, and developed under the influence of problems and doubts arising in the course of research, even the most difficult and painful ones. The questions he posed, to which no clear answers could be found, provoked attempts to find solutions at higher levels or in other research perspectives. This path, inspired by Nabert, was followed by his pupil Ricoeur.

7 J. Nabert, *Le désir de Dieu*, Paris 1966, Aubier–Montaigne, p. 56.
8 J. Nabert, *Le désir de Dieu*, p. 57.

3. Ricoeur: A good life is a good story

Paul Ricoeur is the philosopher who most fully and interestingly combined the issues taken up by Nabert with those raised by phenomenology and existentialism. In Ricoeur's work, we find all the characteristic elements of the paradigm of the philosophy of consciousness, the priority of existential issues over cognitive ones, the distinction of human existence in the totality of being and the interest in concrete existence. Philosophy, according to the founder of hermeneutics, has ethical tasks to fulfil, it is supposed to lead from a state of alienation to freedom and happiness, restoring to man what has been lost by him in the course of his development.

In reflexive philosophy, the aim of research is to explain as fully as possible the reality of human consciousness and existence. However, Ricoeur draws conclusions from Nabert's research and comes to the conviction that pure reflection does not guarantee the realisation of this goal. The main reason is that "we are constituted by what happens to us"[9], so existence, not being something given to consciousness, cannot be controlled by the Self: the sources of consciousness must be sought outside itself.

Moreover, as he highlights, also following Nabert: "The subject […] is never the subject one supposes."[10] We must accept that what we can grasp from among the contents of consciousness is not all that influences our actions and the judgments we make. We are not able to fully understand ourselves, we are not able to answer the basic questions of "who am I" or "how to live well."

Hermeutical studies of the symbolism of evil, inspired by Nabert's analyses of evil, proved to be extremely important for the critique of reflexive philosophy. In these studies, Ricoeur attempts to understand the situation of man, who is not only capable of going astray, but is also a fallen being, as Kant suggested. How, then, can one point the way to a good life to a man who is unable to realise his motives, who often deceives himself and, on top of this, is unable to free himself from the evil ingrained in him?

Ricoeur here seems to have learnt from the impossibility of solving the problem of evil in Nabert's attempts and recognised that progress could only

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9 P. Ricoeur, *Towards a hermeneutics of the idea of Revelation*, in: P. Ricoeur, *Essays on Biblical interpretation*, Philadelphia 1980, Fortress Press, p. 107.

10 P. Ricoeur, *Freud and philosophy. An essay on interpretation*, New Haven and London 1970, Yale University Press, p. 459.

be achieved by a change of method, i.e. by examining the many levels of existence and the traces, the messages it leaves behind, deciphering these meanings and analysing them philosophically. His analyses go further than the research of anthropology to unveil the meaning of the message of the myths concerning the fall of man, showing this fall in a concrete and at the same time comprehensible dimension. This hermeneutic analysis of the weakness of the human structure is intended as an attempt to explain the possibility of the appearance and existence of evil in the world.

At the same time, Ricoeur notes that traditional ethics starting from the alternative of good and evil, as existing in reality, "arrives too late."[11] Here, too, we find a theme inspired by Nabert – according to Ricoeur, already between possibility and existing reality is what we call the fall. The intermediate area in which the fall reveals itself contains intrinsically an act of freedom, and the only way to make sense of freedom is through another act of freedom, which amounts to admitting one's own weakness – one's own fall. Only when we admit that the decisive transition from weakness, as the possibility of error, to the reality of concrete evil has something really to do with us, are we able to seriously consider our passions as freedom enslaving itself.

Ricoeur notes that it is only by recognising the holistic incompatibility of man with himself, as Nabert postulated earlier, that we can grasp the meaning of essential human reality. In any other case, we are in danger of losing what is important, concrete and unique in this reality, what gives meaning to individual existence. Ricoeur emphasises that self-consciousness is not a given but is the task of coming closer to what is lost.[12] Man's acquisition of consciousness can be realised in a historical process and cannot end. Self-consciousness leads us from meaning to existence, from reflection to being in the world, i.e., to grasp the fundamental human way of being. The only way for the subject to achieve self-consciousness turns out to be through interpretation, or rather a multiplicity of interpretations, relating to the various dimensions of existence, the aim of which is to understand oneself ever better in the face of a world of signs. The results of these interpretations are incorporated by an ever-forming narrative identity into a story that allows the subject to define himself and his goals.

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11 P. Ricoeur, *Fallible man. Philosophy of the will*, Chicago 1965, Henry Regnery Company, p. 219.

12 D. E. Klemm, *The hermeneutical theory of Paul Ricoeur. A constructive analysis*, London, Toronto 1983, Bucknell University Press, p. 60.

Here it is worth noting that the question of identity is a creative development of the problem of the split between nature and freedom that Nabert signaled. Ricoeur solves the problem by pointing to two types of identity that are relevant to understanding subject development. One is identity, the basis of which is "character [which] designates the set of lasting dispositions by which a person is recognised."[13] Such an identity corresponds to what we consider being our own nature, to 'who/what' we are. However, as Ricoeur notes, this type of identity is not immutable, since many of these 'lasting dispositions' are the result of habits, or acquired patterns of response, as well as 'acquired identifications' that we owe to others.[14] In the latter case, the response to the other opens up a perspective for us to explore another type of identity, one that also involves Nabert's signalled desire for causal, free development and his conclusions about the role of others in our development.

This second type of identity involves a time perspective. It is not only important who we are, but also who we would like to be, what goals we would like to pursue and, finally, how we would like to be perceived (both by ourselves and by others). This is where identity comes in, which we only build in life, based on our character and capabilities, based on the role models we identify with and, finally, based on the projects we create and would like to realise. It is mainly from these ingredients that we create our own story, with which we identify and according to the requirements of which we try to live well, in our conviction. Recognition of ourselves, of our own limitations, of the quality of the patterns we adopt influences the quality of our story and the life shaped according to the narrative we adopt.

Ricoeur, following a similar approach to Nabert, does not construct philosophical concepts. In his research, he defends himself from outlining more general syntheses and summaries, and those he does make always turn out to be provisional and are challenged by the next steps of reflection. This is also the case when he polemicises against Kant's account of the role of duty in the realisation of the good life. In doing so, he formulates a hypothetical proposal that perhaps the categorical imperative should be understood and formulated somewhat differently: "Act solely in accordance with the maxim by which you can wish at the same time that what *ought not to be*, namely evil, will indeed

13 P. Ricoeur, *Oneself as another*, Chicago 1992, University of Chicago Press, p. 121.
14 P. Ricoeur, *Oneself as another*, p. 121.

not exist."[15] This is a proposal that not only helps to better understand the idea behind the formulation of the categorical imperative but also indicates a new, much less dogmatic, norm of action. It is a kind of imperative for anyone trying to create his or her story of how a good life should be lived.

Conclusion

Kant pointed out, contrary to the optimistic ancient and Christian traditions, that the evil will constituting man should be curbed so that man could lead a decent, good life. The pursuit of happiness, in his view, led to the satisfaction of only low motives and therefore had to be replaced by submission to the law. The free act of a man's decision to submit to duty was supposed to free him from his bad will. He identified living a good life with responsibility for one's own actions, but recognised that man was not a sufficiently self-contained entity to be able to decide for himself what was good and what was evil.

Nabert and Ricoeur, while recognising the vulnerability and non-selfhood of man that Kant signalled, point out that these are the constitutive sources of humanity's subjectivity, through which man can develop and transcend his limitations. They too affirm that to live a good life is to live a responsible life, but they emphasise that we can gain responsibility for our decisions and actions by understanding ourselves. They stress that Kant's conception is not sufficient to understand man because it does not reach the most intimate sources of spirituality – the sphere where we find man's deepest aspirations, such as the desire to understand his place in the world, the desire to be, and the desire to overcome evil. Only by becoming aware of the sources of alienation and understanding the meaning of the deepest desires can all the dimensions of being itself be revealed to the Self. This is the basis for realising a causal, responsible, full life, which, as Ricoeur points out, is the story we try to create with our lives. It seems that for both philosophers, the very act of embarking on this path of seeking self-understanding, motivated by the desire to be better, is the same as living a good life.

Living a good life is not the same as living a happy life. Especially with today's understandings of happiness. It is not a carefree or prosperous life. It is a difficult

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15 P. Ricoeur, *Oneself as another*, p. 218.

life because it is a life of responsibility. In it, we respond to the problems that come before us and for the gift of our existence, the meaning of which we are still seeking. However, it is a life that gives a sense of self-acceptance, something that modern man often lacks.

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Legislative reforms of John Paul II in the field of the protection of minors in the light of the principle of "lex sequitur vitam"

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Abstract

The pontificate of John Paul II deserves an objective evaluation, considering the activity of the pope in various areas of ecclesiastical life. From the point of view of the universal Church as an institution managed by the successor of St. Peter, it is crucial to promulgate laws while maintaining the supernatural dimension of the Church, while also taking into account the most fundamental principles of lawgiving. One of these principles is expressed in the words: *lex sequitur vitam*, which means that the changing life of the community is always combined with changes in the law. The article poses the question of whether the principle of *lex sequitur vitam* has been considered and applied in the legislation of John Paul II aimed at combating the phenomenon of abuse of minors. What determinants of legislation did John Paul II consider when making subsequent changes in the canon law? The article shows that the preparation of laws in accordance with the art of law-making must be subject to certain rules, so that the law corresponds to the social situation.

Keywords

John Paul II, *lex sequitur vitam*, legislative reforms, protection of minors

1. Introduction

The disclosure of pedophile scandals coincided with the end of the pontificate of John Paul II, which, for some critics, became an opportunity to accuse the pope of not securing the good of minors in the Church and the good of the whole community with laws. Facing this problem, in today's state of knowledge, must consider the errors and omissions made by Church superiors throughout the world. The statement of inappropriate response to cases of abuse in the past appeared in the 2001 *Historical introduction* to the norms of the *motu proprio Sacramentorum sanctitatis tutela*: "A 'pastoral attitude' to misconduct was preferred and canonical processes were thought by some to be anachronistic. A 'therapeutic model' often prevailed in dealing with clerical misconduct. The bishop was expected to 'heal' rather than 'punish.'"[1]

This article is not intended to analyse individual administrative and disciplinary decisions taken by John Paul II during his pontificate. The analyses focus on whether John Paul II's statutory reforms were undertaken in accordance with the principle of *lex sequitur vitam*, derived from the law itself and being immanent to the law. The legislator should be guided by certain principles in law-making proceedings. Without their application, the law is not the law.

Due to the social dimension of the phenomenon of pedophilia in the Church, the principle of *lex sequitur vitam* should be analysed and its inclusion and application in the legislation of John Paul II. After the promulgation of the 1983 Code of Canon Law,[2] the problem of the protection of minors in the canonical order was addressed in the apostolic constitution *Pastor bonus*, promulgated on 28 June 1988.[3] According to Article 52 of this document, serious crimes against morals, transferred to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, were to be examined and, if necessary, canonical sanctions were to be determined or imposed according to the norms of common or proper law. In 2001, John Paul II issued the apostolic letter *Sacramentorum sanctitatis tutela*[4] and added

1 Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *The norms of the Motu proprio "Sacramentorum sanctitatis tutela" (2001): Historical introduction*, "Communicationes" 42 (2010), p. 351.

2 *Codex Iuris Canonici auctoritate Ioannis Pauli PP. II promulgatus* (25.01.1983), "Acta Apostolicae Sedis" 75 (1983), pars II: 1–317.

3 John Paul II, *Apostolic constitution "Pastor bonus"* (28.06.1988), "Acta Apostolicae Sedis" 80 (1988), pp. 841–912.

4 John Paul II, *Apostolic letter issued Motu proprio "Sacramentorum sanctitatis tutela"* (30.04.2001), "Acta Apostolicae Sedis" 93 (2001), pp. 737–739.

to it the appropriate norms, in which the abuse of clergy against minors up to the age of 18 was placed among the most serious crimes against the faith and the sacraments as *delicta graviora*. Any credible information about the commission of such a crime was to be reported to the Congregation from that moment on.

2. Recognition of the principles of lawgiving in the exercise of the power of primacy

The supreme power of government, exercised within the framework of the primacy, is given to the Church to direct the faithful in the name and power of Christ according to the purposes of the Church (can. 331). It is a public authority because its aim is to good the community.[5] The legislative power exercised in the exercise of primacy can be referred to in the Preparatory Document for the 16th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops: “The ability to imagine a different future for the Church and her institutions, in keeping with the mission she has received, depends largely on the decision to initiate processes of listening, dialogue, and community discernment.”[6] Every legislator, and above all the universal legislator, must recognise that the common good is not realised in abstract conditions, but in a concrete social reality that changes and evolves. Every pope in any epoch thus faces the same challenge: how to determine the current demands of the common good; what should be done at a given stage to achieve the common good in the field of law-making. Although the Church has been elevated to the supernatural order, it nevertheless retains its natural structure and undergoes a historical process of development. The historical situation may change, and then the prescription loses its relevance or a niche appears due to the lack of necessary regulations.[7] This change is influenced not only by the transformation of historical external conditions but also by the development of the Church’s consciousness.

[5] Cf. P. Erdő, *Władza Biskupa Rzymu. Ujęcie historyczno-prawne*, “Annales Canonici” 8 (2012), p. 15.

[6] Synod of Bishops, *Preparatory socument for the 16th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops* (07.09.2021), https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/en/bollettino/pubblico/2021/09/07/210907a.html (18.03.2023), No. 9.

[7] The changing reality must be regulated, but excluding reforms that could concern God’s law in both forms of its existence: natural God’s law and God’s positive law. To divine law, the canonical tradition attributes the quality of immutability.

The recognition of the Principles of Lawgiving by the pope promulgating laws forces us to break away from the simplistic understanding of law as a tool in the hands of an absolute monarch. Although the law that governs our lives has its source in the will of the legislator, the Pope is for the whole Church an office called by Christ to diagnose the actual state of the community and to determine the requirements of the common good. If these requirements are mandatory, they should become laws.

Church law does not compel obedience, as state law does. In its deepest sense, it defines how to act in the community and calls for such actions to be followed. It wants to lead the faithful to make a personal decision, aware of its importance for the community and for the person himself. This characteristic of canon law is expressed precisely by the adjective "canon." The canon in ancient sources meant the measure and guide of equity and justice, as well as the rule of conduct. The Council of Nicaea referred to this concept, and not to the concept *lex*, when it passed twenty disciplinary laws. This feature is also the reason that most Church regulations do not have a penal sanction or a sanction of nullity. However, some rightly contain a criminal sanction.[8] Violations of Church law in an important matter such as crimes against human dignity destroy the common good. This good is unquestionably destroyed when the dignity of the weakest members of the community is destroyed and when these crimes increase. Canon law gives as much freedom as possible and binds no more than the common good requires.

What determinants influence the creation of laws in both the sense of "giving freedom" and "binding" for the common good? As Piotr Kroczek states, the incentives-influencing changes in the law are numerous and very diverse. It cannot be otherwise, since the reality, which is subject to regulation, is constantly changing and evolving under the influence of many heterogeneous factors. The legislator's knowledge of reality must be up-to-date, and determinants of legislation are necessary to achieve it. Nowadays, they significantly influence the shape of legislation in various legal systems. The following determinants of legislation existing in various legal systems can be mentioned: sociological, cultural, economic, geographical, demographic, philosophical, theological,

[8] Cf. R. Sobański, *Zbawcza funkcja prawa kościelnego*, "Śląskie Studia Historyczno-Teologiczne" 6 (1973), pp. 161–162.

religious, political-legal, and technical.[9] What determinants influenced John Paul II's statutory reforms regarding the protection of minors?

3. Sociological determinants of legislation

The law is strongly dependent on the community to which it is addressed. Sociology as a science is a helpful tool for the legislator because it provides data describing society. On the basis of the conclusions from sociological research, the legislator may make decisions with scientific and substantive justification.[10] The first serious study on the scale of abuse in the Church, in this case in the USA, appeared in the final period of the pontificate of John Paul II. In 2004, the New York John Jay College of Criminal Justice published a report on the nature and extent of sexual abuse of minors by Catholic priests and deacons in the United States between 1950 and 2002.[11] Therefore, John Paul II did not have access to complete and reliable sociological analyses in the matter of the sexual abuse of minors in the Church.

Why didn't the Church authorities commission such studies earlier? The New York University's research was commissioned and funded by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, and the source of the data was voluntary surveys completed by U.S. dioceses. Sociological research helps us understand society and its structure and explain social processes and people's behaviour despite change. Therefore, it is difficult to study a phenomenon that will only become a social process in the future, i.e., it will be described as a series of interrelated phenomena occurring in society and causing specific effects, mainly transformations. For this reason, not only universities connected with the Catholic Church

9 Cf. P. Kroczek, *"Ius sequitur vitam", czyli o niektórych czynnikach zmian w prawie*, "Studia Socialia Cracoviensia" 6 (2014) 2 (11), p. 169.

10 Cf. P. Kroczek, *The art of legislation: the principles of lawgiving in the Church*, Kraków 2011, Wydawnictwo UNUM, pp. 126–127.

11 John Jay College of Criminal Justice, *The nature and scope of sexual abuse of minors by Catholic priests and deacons in the United States, 1950–2002: a research study conducted by the John Jay College of Criminal Justice, the City University of New York: for the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops*, Washington, D.C. 2004, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. It shows that in the indicated period, 954 priests were accused of pedophilia, of which 54 were convicted. The number of victims was estimated to be over 10,000.

but also academic centres clearly distancing themselves from the Church have not taken up this topic before.

It should be emphasised that John Paul II undertook legislative actions regardless of the lack of reliable sociological research on the phenomenon of pedophilia in the Church. In the 1983 Code of Canon Law, the crime against minors concerns primarily can. 1395 § 2. There is talk here of a "just penalty" with the possible imposition of the most severe penalty – dismissal from the clerical state. Pedophilia is still treated here as a *crimen pessimum* – as one of the most serious crimes according to the centuries-old doctrinal tradition of the Church. One may have reservations as to why the Code leaves too much discretion to the judges on the degree of severity of the penalty. In answering this question, reference must be made to the principle of *lex sequitur vitam*. The final shape of the prescriptions contained in this normative act did not result from an arbitrary decision of the pope, but from many years of collegial reflection, considering the observation of sociological determinants. Detailed work on this document lasted 20 years and was attended by representatives of all episcopates of the world: theologians, historians, specialists in canon law, and finally sociologists. At the request of John Paul II and with his participation, 14 meetings were held in interdisciplinary teams, during which the draft Code was studied. Moreover, the final shape of the regulations fulfilled at the level of legal regulations the main postulates of the Second Vatican Council, in particular the decentralisation of power in the Church through the transfer of competences from the Holy See to the diocese.[12] The actions taken during the drafting of the code, despite their global reach, did not lead to diagnosing the phenomenon of pedophilia in the Church as a social process that has been consolidated for years.

4. Cultural determinants of legislation

How is this possible if, according to current knowledge, there is no doubt that, at the time of the creation of the code, there were numerous cases of pedophilia among clergy all over the world?[13] The life of the ecclesial community, and thus

12 See more J. L. Larrabe, *El nuevo Código de la Iglesia*, "Estudios eclesiásticos" 58 (1983) 224, pp. 3–20.

13 In the period following the Second Vatican Council, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith was presented with a few cases of sexual misconduct by the clergy towards minors,

the law-making process, is influenced by the culture within which the Church performs its mission. The law as a human product is part of culture. Legally relevant elements such as values or how problems are solved are culturally determined.[14]

Culture socialises man, that is, teaches the ability to adapt to it, tries to establish criteria of values that people should follow. It creates ideals and anti-ideals to which man aspires, and therefore there is no easy escape from the "cultural matrix."[15] Culture is transmitted as an adaptive mechanism through which the community tries to cope with the problems encountered. In this sense, it has a positive value, which does not mean that the "cultural matrices" produced in society have such value.

The universal canon law although created for the faithful all over the world, is itself created mainly within European culture. In the second half of the twentieth century, cultural tendencies towards the protection of the child as a weaker being were clearly observed.[16] Why, then, was there no decisive fight against the phenomenon of pedophilia at the same time? Within culture, an independent subculture can be created, existing within the culture of the whole society. For many years, in various social groups and in various institutions of global and local range, as well as in the environment of clergy and Church hierarchs, there was a subculture of silence in the matter of pedophilia. Concealing cases of pedophilia has promoted the false belief that these phenomena do happen, but they are singular and incidental. It was believed that publicising this problem, even if this reflection were to begin within the ecclesial community, would cause further problems. This was connected with a false concern for the image and credibility of the Church and, paradoxically, also for the ability and potential of the Church in performing educational activities.

The fight against pedophilia in the Church became possible as a result of breaking the subculture of silence and changing the optics in the sphere

some of which were related to the abuse of the sacrament of Penance. Cf. Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Historical introduction*, p. 351.

14 Cf. P. Kroczek, *The art of legislation*, p. 129.

15 Cf. P. Kroczek, *The art of legislation*, p. 129.

16 The UN General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child on 20 November 1989. The Holy See joined it in 1989, although the Vatican is not formally a full member of the UN. Cf. H. Suchocka, *Działania papieży oraz Stolicy Apostolskiej na rzecz ochrony osób małoletnich*, in: *Prawa dziecka: perspektywa Kościoła*, ed. P. Kroczek, Kraków 2015, Uniwersytet Papieski Jana Pawła II Wydawnictwo Naukowe, pp. 175–176.

of the educational influence of the Church, consistent with the Gospel, to which John Paul II contributed significantly as an unquestionable authority of those times on a global scale. An important event was the meeting with American bishops and the letter of John Paul II beginning with the following words: "During these last months I have become aware of how much you, the Pastors of the Church in the United States, together with all the faithful, are suffering because of certain cases of scandal given by members of the clergy."[17] It was a reaction to information from 1992 to 1993 about cases of pedophilia among American priests. After this meeting, many experts and commentators began to use the term "zero tolerance for pedophilia", which was introduced by the Pope to influence public opinion. This meeting drew the attention of the whole world to the cultural heritage of humanity in the field of protecting the child as the weakest being.

A normative act, considering the emerging social changes and preparing the ground for breaking the subculture of silence, was the apostolic constitution *Pastor bonus* of 28 June 1988. Article 52 of the Constitution stated that not only crimes against the faith or in the celebration of the sacraments but also more serious crimes committed against morals fell within the penal jurisdiction of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, which declares or imposes canonical sanctions in accordance with the law. The announcement of the document occurred five years after the promulgation of the code and five years after the first media material on pedophilia in the Church. The newspaper article concerned Father Gilbert Gauthe, who was removed from ministry in the Diocese of Lafayette, Louisiana, for multiple crimes of sexual abuse. The diocese received reports of Gauthe's abuse for seven years before he was indicted.[18] Article 53 of the *Pastor bonus* shifted part of the responsibility for judging more serious crimes from the diocese to the Holy See. This means that John Paul II, who faithfully and consistently introduced the teaching and reforms of the Second Vatican Council, first in the Archdiocese of Krakow and then in the whole Church, under

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17 John Paul II, *Letter to the bishops of the United States of America* (11.06.1993), https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/letters/1993/documents/hf_jp-ii_let_19930611_vescovi-usa.html (23.03.2023).

18 See J. Berry, *Tragedy of Gilbert Gauthe*, "Times of Acadiana" Part 1 (23.05.1985): https://www.bishop-accountability.org/news/1985_05_23_Berry_TheTragedy.htm (23.03.2023); Part 2 (30.05.1985): https://www.bishop-accountability.org/news/1985_05_30_Berry_TheTragedy.htm (23.03.2023).

the influence of sociological determinants, was able to read the signs of the times anew, which the Council also obliged the hierarchs of the Church to do.

Gauthe's trial was widely commented on in the American mass media because the facts of the case shocked public opinion. However, this was only a harbinger of a real media shock on a global scale, lasting for decades to come. The sociological factors shaping the law do not come only from scientific sociological research. They are also associated with the concept of "public opinion" understood as the totality of views of members of society or its larger factions on matters of general interest at a given time.[19] An undoubted danger for the ecclesiastical legislator, against which he must defend himself, is the temptation to achieve short-term results, although in line with social expectations, but contrary to the true responsibility for the smooth functioning and preservation of the community. The activity of the mass media in the matter of abuse in the Church has undeniably contributed to the process of renewal and purification. In the 80s, however, this was not so obvious. The pressure of the mass media may result in the creation of laws under the influence of unverified, superficial, and stereotyped information, as a result of improper recognition of reality caused by acting under the influence of public opinion. The right attitude seems to be to observe the trends functioning in public opinion and to take them into account, but obviously not in an absolute and binding way, in the legislative process. In the old English language, the word "trend" meant "to turn". The very source of the term suggests an irreversible change, a manifestation of something yet to happen, a signal of changes that will redefine different spaces of life.

Under the influence of the first symptoms of serious changes, not yet widely noticed either by Church superiors or by the world public opinion, John Paul II decided to change the prescription contained in the *Pastor bonus*. Art. 52 did not specify which crimes were reserved for consideration by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and did not impose on clerics the obligation to inform the Congregation of suspicions of committing a grave crime, including against the sixth commandment, to the detriment of minors. This was clarified in the SST of 2001, which imposed on every ordinary and other local hierarchs the obligation to report such crimes directly to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. According to Jenkins' 1996 study, successive media publications on sexual abuse by priests have led to the perpetuation of trends in the U.S. that

19 Cf. P. Kroczek, *The art of legislation*, pp. 127–128.

herald change. It is worth mentioning that, according to the author, even in the 90s, the stereotype of a "pedophile priest" had been consolidated in the public opinion, and the problem of sexual abuse was presented as a problem of the Catholic Church.[20] The apostolic letter *Sacramentorum sanctitatis tutela* of 2001 became a landmark document, translating into the language of law the principle of "zero tolerance", which equated the defence of the sanctity of the sacraments with the protection of people who have experienced sexual abuse in the Church.[21]

5. The philosophical determinants of legislation

Laws are primarily to serve man, and Karol Wojtyla's philosophical interest in man, concern for the shape of his life and the desire to help him in the fundamental sphere—in the field of the truth about man – is widely known. A child is a separate category of person due to age, physical and mental development occurring in him. As Hanna Suchocka stated, John Paul II paid special attention to the person of the child and the concern for guaranteeing his rights. This resulted "from embedding his thinking on the personalistic concept of human rights with particular emphasis on human dignity, including the dignity of the child as the source of these rights."[22]

Can. 1395 § 2 before the amendment attached a penal sanction to four types of crimes violating the sixth commandment of the Decalogue and attacking human dignity. Three of them distinguish the manner in which the crime was committed: a) violently, b) under the influence of threats, and c) made in public. The fourth type of crime concerned the subject of a passive criminal act, i.e., a situation in which the victim of the criminal act was under 16 years of age. Problems in the area of the axiology of the child, his dignity and the value of childhood were reflected in the teaching of John Paul II. On the basis of the analysis of encyclicals, exhortations, selected letters and speeches, it can be concluded that in the Pope's view, dignity is linked to humanity and that it can never

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20 See P. Jenkins, *Pedophiles and priests: Anatomy of a contemporary crisis*, New York 1996, Oxford University Press.

21 In 2002, during the *Sacramentorum sanctitatis tutela*, the "Boston Globe" published the results of a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalistic investigation into the abuse and cover-up of pedophilia in the Archdiocese of Boston. From that moment, we can speak about the widespread presence of the subject of pedophilia in the Church in global media.

22 H. Suchocka, *Działania papieży*, p. 175. The English translation is ours.

be diminished, mutilated or destroyed by sexual abuse. It should be respected and protected. Man is a person by nature and by nature he is entitled to the subjectivity proper to the person.[23] The Pope sought to increase the legal protection of minors, thus protecting their personal dignity, as evidenced by decisions in the legislative sphere: raising the age of a minor victim of a criminal act until he or she reaches the age of eighteen and extending the prescription period (ten years starting from the age of eighteen by the victim) and introducing the possibility of suspending the prescription. Previously, the same legal solutions were adopted in the USA in 1994 and Ireland in 1996 because of indults granted by the Pope to these countries.[24] It was John Paul II who initiated legal thinking about crime *contra sextum minore* in the categories of an attack on human dignity. As a result of the amendment of Book VI of the Code of Canon Law made by Pope Francis, these acts were classified as "offences against human life, dignity and liberty" (title VI).

John Paul II understood the human person not in abstract categories but in the context of history and culture.[25] In Christian culture, the sexual abuse of minors was considered a serious crime, and early medieval penitential books treated sexual relations with minors as one of the serious sins requiring long penance. The first known ecclesiastical document to address this issue is Canon 71 of the Disciplinary Synod of Elvira, Spain, at the beginning of the fourth century, which denied child rapists (*stupratoribus puerorum*) Holy Communion even at the hour of death. The expression *nec in finem* suggests the idea of the permanence of excommunication as a sign of total disapproval of such acts.[26] Both the Code of Canon Law of 1917 and the code promulgated by John Paul II and all his legislation considered the centuries-old doctrine in this matter.

According to Wojtyła, evil does not result from some material shortage of man, but from the disordered use of human freedom. John Paul II perceived man as a responsible being. Those who are aware of their rights should also be aware of their duties. The Pope sought to overcome the Western understanding of justice in an individualistic sense, emphasising that rights do not exist

[23] Cf. K. Wojtyła, *Osoba i czyn*, Kraków 1985, Towarzystwo Naukowe KUL, p. 99.

[24] Cf. Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Historical introduction*, p. 351.

[25] Cf. P. Kroczek, *The art of legislation*, pp. 115–117.

[26] Cf. "Stupratoribus puerorum nec in finem dandam esse communionem censuimus" (Synod of Elvira [Concilium Eliberitanum], Canon 71, in: *Sancti Isidori* […] *opera omnia*, tomus octavus, ed. J.-P. Migne, Parisiis 1850 [Patrologiae Cursus Completus. Series Latina, 84], col. 309. Cf. PL 161, col. 686C.

without a sense of personal responsibility towards others.[27] He stated that "canonical penalties which are provided for certain offenses and which give a social expression of disapproval for the evil are fully justified. These help to maintain a clear distinction between good and evil, and contribute to moral behaviour as well as to creating a proper awareness of the gravity of the evil involved."[28]

6. Theological determinants of legislation

Canon law is dependent on theology and, as such, must operate on the basis of a theological consensus. Otherwise, its meaning is distorted by positivism, according to which the rule is what the rule-maker says at a given moment. There must be a credible theological position on which to base the rule. The first rule of the Church's faith but also the rule of life, is Sacred Scripture.[29] In his address to the American bishops, John Paul II quotes a passage from the Gospel of St. Matthew: "Woe to the world because of scandals!" (Mt. 18:7). The law punishing the crime of pedophilia is therefore to prevent serious scandals.

The Church, to whom Christ the Lord has entrusted the deposit of faith, aided by the Holy Spirit to guard revealed truth with reverence, has the inherent duty and right to proclaim the Gospel to all peoples (can. 747 § 1). This means that the matter of the *Credo* is to be particularly protected by law. During the pontificate of John Paul II, a new Catechism of the Catholic Church was published, which is an official compendium of the truths of the Christian faith.[30] Pedophilia concerns four numbers: 2285, 2353, 2356 and 2389, and the evil of pedophilia is called a particularly grave scandal. The doctrine on scandal contained in the Catechism of the Catholic Church situates it within the framework of the fifth commandment as something that causes spiritual death. In addition, the catechism, apart from seeing the sin of pedophilia in terms of scandal, focuses special attention on unjust and immoral law as a possible cause of further scandals.

[27] Cf. P. Kroczek, *The art of legislation*, pp. 115–117.
[28] John Paul II, *Letter to the bishops of the United States*.
[29] Cf. P. Kroczek, *The art of legislation*, pp. 118–119.
[30] *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Washington DC 2019, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

For the proper understanding and proper application of ecclesiastical legislation, it is necessary to know ecclesiology and sacramentology. The law must fully correspond to the nature of the Church. In this sense, canon law can be understood as a great effort to translate conciliar doctrine and ecclesiology into canonical language. If the Second Vatican Council commits the Church to undertake a thorough process of renewal of Christian life in line with the challenges of the contemporary world, this task cannot be accomplished without genuine concern for the good of minors. The Pope issued norms concerning the most serious crimes reserved to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, extending legal protection to the sanctity of the sacraments of the Church, especially the Holy Eucharist and the sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation. It should be emphasised that in one document, in addition to the protection of the sacraments, which are "a source of life for the Church and in the Church's hands they are means of conversion to God and of reconciliation among people."[31] The Pope also extended legal protection to minors, whose innocence and grace became "a source of spiritual enrichment for them and for the entire Church."[32] The aim was to send a clear message to the bishops and to the whole Church that sexual crimes against children and young people are crimes of similar gravity as crimes against the sanctity of the sacraments. Therefore, the norms about the most serious crimes in the Church issued by John Paul II put the harm done to children in the sexual sphere in line with sins and crimes such as the profanation of the Eucharist or the use of the sacrament of penance by confessors for scandalous purposes, which has always met with special stigmatisation from the Church.[33]

Canon law, like everything else in the Church, is entirely oriented to the salvation of souls. It must create a juridical framework for pastoral activity and give advice to superiors and the faithful to help them in their pastoral work (cf., for example, canons 242 § 1, 252 § 3, 258, 1676, 1695). John Paul II used pastoral and legal arguments to explain the reason for the introduction of the

[31] John Paul II, *Post-synodal apostolic exhortation "Reconciliation and Penance" in the mission of the Church today* (2.12.1984), "Acta Apostolicae Sedis" 77 (1985), pp. 257–266, No. 11.

[32] John Paul II, *Post-synodal apostolic exhortation "Christifideles laici" on the vocation and the mission of the lay faithful in the church and in the world* (30.12.1988), "Acta Apostolicae Sedis" 81 (1989), pp. 393–521, No. 47.

[33] Note that before the *Sacramentorum sanctitatis tutela* was published, as a rule, there were no scientific studies in the field of theology on pedophilia in the Church. Most likely, theology, like the sociological sciences, had succumbed to a subculture of silence in this matter.

The Person and the Challenges
Volume 15 (2025) Number 1, p. 99–114

Sacramentorum sanctitatis tutela norms: "The Safeguarding of the Sanctity of the Sacraments, especially the Most Holy Eucharist and Penance, and the keeping of the faithful, called to communion with the Lord, in their observance of the sixth commandment of the Decalogue, demand that the Church itself, in her pastoral solicitude, intervene to avert dangers of violation, so as to provide for the salvation of souls 'which must always be the supreme law in the Church' (CIC, can. 1752)."[34]

7. Conclusion

The conducted analyses allow us to state that John Paul II was guided in his legislative activity by the principle of *lex sequitur vitam*, without which the law is not law. From the viewpoint of the responsibility for the Church, which is borne by the successor of St. Peter acting in a specific place and time, creating laws too fast, ignoring principles of lawgiving, is objectively a mistake. Legislative activity requires careful observation of the reality to be regulated, which, in turn, changes and evolves often in surprising and unpredictable directions.

It is unfair to judge John Paul II's legislative actions from the position of presentism, and it is also intellectually dishonest to expect that the supreme legislator will legislate like an absolute monarch – quickly and authoritatively, without diagnosing social processes – or that he will have knowledge that society will acquire several decades later. The fact that John Paul II had knowledge about individual pedophilic events in various particular Churches or knew this phenomenon from the historical point of view does not mean, as his critics often claim, that from the beginning he had knowledge about pedophilia in the Church as a current social process in the global sense. The Pope quickly noticed a new, shocking trend, diagnosed it and made decisive legislative decisions.

The actions of John Paul II should be considered prophetic, breaking the social taboo, which at the end of the twentieth century was the phenomenon of pedophilia in the Church. This topic appeared not only in the speeches of the hierarchs of the Church but also in academic studies in the fields of sociology and theology. The principle of 'zero tolerance', introduced into the public space

34 *Sacramentorum sanctitatis tutela*.

thanks to John Paul II, made it possible to break the subculture of silence, interest the world of science in the subject of abuse and reform Church law. The activity of the media all over the world should also be appreciated, but making changes in the social mentality, followed by specific reforms requiring the consensus of many ecclesiastical centres, would not have been possible on such a scale and with such speed without the personal involvement of the highest moral authority in the world at that time. Furthermore, from the contemporary perspective, with the current state of knowledge, it should be noted that John Paul II acted quickly and decisively, but with the right observation of reality, applying with prudence to the Determinants of Legislation in his Legislative reforms.

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Effectiveness of the therapeutic process and categories of change in relational family therapy

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Abstract

The effectiveness of a psychotherapeutic approach is often measured by the changes in various areas of the client's life that result from the therapeutic process. Research in this area shows that the common factors that promote change are elements that are present in all forms of therapy, such as therapeutic alliance, empathy, positive expectations, and corrective emotional experiences. In this study, we examined changes in psychotherapy, focusing on changes in the relational family therapy model. The study was conducted with 130 participants who were divided into an experimental group and a control group, one of which participated in relational family therapy and the other was not involved in psychotherapeutic treatment. The participants completed the Systemic Therapy Inventory of Change (STIC)[1] after the first therapy session and again after three months of therapy, with the same time period between the first and last test for the control group. The results of the study show that clients who participated in relational family therapy showed greater changes in various systems than those who did not receive psychotherapy. The results suggest that relational family therapy promotes positive changes in various areas of client functioning after three months of therapy.

Keywords

psychotherapy, change in psychotherapy, therapeutic alliance, common factors in psychotherapy, relational family therapy

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[1] W. M. Pinsof, J. L. Lebow, R. E. Zinbarg, L. M. Knobloch-Fedders, G. B. A. Friedman, B. Mann, S. Cytrynbaum, E. Durbin, E. Karam, J. Goldsmith, *Systemic Therapy Inventory of Change – STIC*, Evanston, IL 2005, The Family Institute at Northwestern University.

1. Introduction

The founder of person-centred psychotherapy, Carl Rogers,[2] understands change in psychotherapy as a change in the personality structure of an individual on a superficial, but also on a deeper level; as integration, less inner conflict and greater availability of energy for an efficient life. On the behavioural level, he observed the change from behaviours that we normally consider immature to more mature ones. One of the studies that examined therapeutic change[3] defined it as a process, in which insight and personal content of an individual emerge and new behaviours and empowerment of a person occur. The authors also cite definitions by other researchers who see the core of therapeutic change as a change in the client's subjective perspective. By this they mean subjective constructs and theories that represent a complex bundle of personal thoughts about oneself and the world, on the basis of which individuals behave and evaluate themselves. Based on these definitions, the clients change as they develop new interpretive models about themselves and the world around them. Changes in self-concept are linked to improved mental health and self-regulation, emphasising the importance of self-knowledge.[4] Score[5] points out that psychotherapy involves not only changes in the cognitions of a person's mental or brain structure, but more importantly, the changes in the affective embodied experience of one's own brain, mind and body. An important concept for psychotherapy is the non-verbal bodily affective dynamic that is expressed in the therapeutic alliance between the therapist and the client. Some authors use the term therapy outcome instead of the change in therapy,[6] with an explanation that we cannot

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[2] C. R. Rogers, *The necessary and sufficient conditions of therapeutic personality change*, "Journal of Consulting & Clinical Psychology" 60 (1992) 6, pp. 827–832.

[3] C. Altimir, M. Krause, G. De la Parra, P. Dagnino, A. Tomicic, N. Valdes, C. J. Perez, O. Echavarri, O. Vilches, *Clients', therapists', and observers' agreement on the amount, temporal location, and content of psychotherapeutic change and its relation to outcome*, "Psychotherapy Research" 20 (2010) 4, pp. 472–487.

[4] M. Huflejt-Łukasik, W. Bąk, R. Styła, K. Klajs, *Changes in the self in the course of psychotherapy,* "Roczniki Psychologiczne" 18 (2015) 3, pp. 449–464.

[5] A. N. Schore, *The science of the art of psychotherapy*, New York 2012, W. W. Norton & Company.

[6] C. Altimir, M. Krause, G. De la Parra, P. Dagnino, A. Tomicic, N. Valdes, C. J. Perez, O. Echavarri, O. Vilches, *Clients', therapists', and observers' agreement on the amount, temporal location, and content of psychotherapeutic change and its relation to outcome*, pp. 472–487; C. J. Bryan, T. Blount, K. A. Kanzler, C. E. Morrow, K. A. Corso, M. A. Corso,

equate the results of the therapy with the client's satisfaction with the therapy. Indeed, the latter indicates how satisfied clients are with their experience of the therapeutic process and does not necessarily mean that they believe that therapy can help them solve their problems. The therapy outcome can therefore be seen as a change in the target complaints expressed by the client and is not necessarily a consequence of the therapy, but overlaps with the time of the therapeutic process.

Johansson and Høglend[7] argue that although we know that psychotherapy works, the processes and mechanisms underlying therapeutic change are still largely unknown, and they emphasise the importance of exploring the mediators and moderators of change in psychotherapy as a way to improve our understanding of the mechanisms at work in psychotherapy. Kazdin[8] defined mechanisms of change as events that are responsible for the changes that occur in psychotherapy, or the reasons for the changes and the ways in which the changes manifest in particular clients. These mechanisms are about the processes that explain how change actually occurs. The changes may have multiple outcomes with one mechanism or one outcome despite multiple mechanisms. The outcomes could be linear or non-linear to the mechanism. In his opinion, the mechanisms proposed for psychotherapeutic change must be plausible, temporally explicit, and empirically supported. Young[9] proposes six processes that could be involved in causal psychotherapy. These processes include the mechanism of activation-inhibition-coordination on the one hand and the executive function on the other. In between are the processes of co-regulation, analysis-synthesis, objectivity-subjectivity and psychological reserve. Each of these variables can vary from high to low, with the lower end being more problematic. He claims that psychotherapy can aim to bring the patient to an adaptive level.

Reliability and normative data for the Behavioral Health Measure (BHM) in primary care behavioral health settings, "Families, Systems & Health" 32 (2014) 1, pp. 89–100.

7 P. Johansson, P. Høglend, *Identifying mechanisms of change in psychotherapy: Mediators of treatment outcome*, "Clinical Psychology and Psychotherapy" 14 (2007) 1, pp. 1–9.

8 A. E. Kazdin, *Mediators and mechanisms of change in psychotherapy research*, "Annual Review of Clinical Psychology" 3 (2007), pp. 1–27.

9 G. Young, *Psychotherapeutic change mechanisms and causal psychotherapy: Applications to child abuse and trauma*, "Journal of Child and Adolescent Trauma" 15 (2022) 3, pp. 911–923.

The main limitations in psychotherapy research are the small samples and infrequent assessment.[10] In reviewing the literature on the mechanism or factors of change in psychotherapy, two paradigms are broadly distinguished: the older paradigm, which views psychotherapy as a process of applying psychological techniques to emotional or behavioural disorders, and the newer or alternative paradigm, which holds that therapeutic efficacy is primarily contained in the client's experience, and which places significant importance on the encouragement, empowerment and motivation of the client-therapist relationship. The newer paradigm views therapeutic procedures as important, but they become effective primarily when they contribute to the development and enhancement of the relationship with the therapist as experienced by the client.[11] Recent research emphasises that change is not merely a shift in internal states but an experiential learning process, where new sensory and emotional experiences play a crucial role.[12] Research into pathways of change in psychotherapy has attracted considerable attention in recent decades and is particularly relevant for therapists, as the results may indicate certain patterns of change that should trigger a clinical response. However, given the clinical relevance of these findings, researchers must consider the problem of limited generalizability.[13]

Relational family therapy[14] has been comprehensively described in numerous scientific articles.[15] As a therapeutic approach, it places the relationship

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10 A. M. Hayes, L. A. Andrews, *A complex systems approach to the study of change in psychotherapy*, "BMC Medicine" 18 (2020) 1, pp. 1–13.

11 S. Jerebic, D. Jerebic, *Consequences of childhood sexual abuse for intimate couple relationship according to relational family therapy*, "The Person and the Challenges" 8 (2018) 2, pp. 133–146; D. E. Orlinsky, *Foreword*, in: *The heart and soul of change: Delivering what works in therapy*, eds. B. L. Duncan, S. D. Miller, B. E. Wampold, M. A. Hubble, Washington, DC 2010, American psychological association, pp. xix–xxv.

12 A. Banymandhub, *Le changement, un nouvel apprentissage*, "Le Journal Des Psychologues" N° Hors-série (2023) HS2, pp. 43–47.

13 M. Bugatti, J. Owen, R. J. Reese, Z. Richardson, W. Rasmunsen, D. A. Newton, *The effectiveness of psychotherapy for depression in private practice: Benchmarking and trajectories of change*, "Professional Psychology: Research and Practice" 54 (2023) 5, pp. 327–335.

14 C. Gostečnik, *Relacijska družinska terapija*, Ljubljana 2004, Brat Frančišek in Frančiškanski družinski inštitut

15 C. Gostečnik, T. Repič Slavič, M. Cvetek, R. Cvetek, *The salvational process in relationships: A view from projective-introjective identification and repetition compulsion*, "Journal of Religion and Health" 48 (2009) 4, pp. 496–506; C. Gostečnik, T. Repič, T. Pate, R. Cvetek, *Body language in relational family therapy*, "Journal of Religion & Health" 57 (2018) 4, pp. 1538–1553; C. Gostečnik, T. Repič Slavič, T. Pate, R. Cvetek, *Repetition*

at the centre of therapeutic work, and it is within the relationship that the fundamental relationship structures are changed. Sensitisation to repressed content and the provision of missing early experiences is another important factor of this therapeutic approach.[16] The relational family model also places a high value on the hope for change and transformation. When a person actively participates in the therapeutic process, when the client takes full responsibility for their own psychological state, then with the help of a therapist, change is possible even in the worst traumas, because every pain and trauma also brings with it longing and hope for change, which can occur in a potential psychological space between therapist and individual, couple or family in the therapeutic process.[17]

2. Method

2.1. Participants

In this study, the reports of 130 participants, 74 women and 56 men, were analysed. The participants were divided into two groups, the experimental group and the control group, each consisting of 65 participants. The groups were equal in terms of gender, age and baseline range of individual, partnership and family problems. Both groups consisted of 28 men and 37 women. The experimental group consisted of participants who were actively involved in the relational

compulsion revisited in relational family therapy: The discovery of old in order to develop something new, "Journal of Religion and Health" 58 (2019) 2, pp. 612–627; B. Simonič, N. Rijavec Klobučar, *Attachment perspective on marital dissolution and relational family therapy*, "Journal of Divorce & Remarriage" 58 (2017) 3, pp. 161–174; K. Kompan Erzar, B. Simonič, *Marital infidelity: Relational family therapy perspective on adult detachment*, "Journal of Family Psychotherapy" 21 (2010) 2, pp. 105–116; T. Repič Slavič, C. Gostečnik, *Relational family therapy as an aid toward resolving the trauma of sexual abuse in childhood in the process of separation in the couple relationship*, "Journal of Marital & Family Therapy" 43 (2017) 3, pp. 422–434; S. Jerebic, D. Jerebic, *Consequences of childhood sexual abuse for intimate couple relationship according to relational family therapy*, pp. 133–146.

16 T. Repič, *Nemi kriki spolne zlorabe in novo upanje*, Celje 2008, Društvo Mohorjeva družba, Celjska Mohorjeva družba.

17 C. Gostečnik, T. Repič, R. Cvetek, *Potential curative space in relational family therapy*, "Journal of Family Psychotherapy" 20 (2009) 1, pp. 46–59.

family therapy process, while the control group consisted of participants who were not involved in any kind of psychotherapy. The average age of the participants in the experimental group was 35.4 years (SD = 4.7), and the average age of the control group was 34.41 years (SD = 6.56). The marital status of the participants in the experimental group was 61% married, 21.6% unmarried in a committed relationship, 10.8% divorced and the rest single (never married); in the control group 33.8% were married, 58.5% unmarried in a committed relationship and 7.7% single (never married).

2.2. Measuring tools

In the study, we used the Systemic Inventory of Change (STIC),[18] a measure to assess the state of individual problems and strengths, the relationship with the partner, the current family, the child's problems and the characteristics of the family of origin.[19] It is an inventory to assess change in the process of family, marital and individual therapy, considering the multisystemic and multidimensional perspective of psychotherapeutic change. The inventory is suitable for testing several hypotheses and consists of two forms:

1. Initial STIC: Participants complete the inventory at the beginning of the therapeutic process. The initial version of the questionnaire is longer because it also contains questions that capture demographic data and characteristics of the participant's family of origin.
2. Intersession STIC: is a shorter version of the questionnaire that is completed by participants during the therapeutic process (between sessions, optional) and at the end of the therapeutic process.

The Initial STIC includes five scales to assess the client's 5 systems: *Individual Problems and Strengths* (IPS), *Family of Origin Scale* (FOS), *Relationship with Partner* (RWP), *Family/Household* (FH) and *Child Problems and Strengths* (CPS).

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18 W. M. Pinsof, J. L. Lebow, R. E. Zinbarg, L. M. Knobloch-Fedders, G. B. A. Friedman, B. Mann, S. Cytrynbaum, E. Durbin, E. Karam, J.Goldsmith, *Systemic Therapy Inventory of Change – STIC*.

19 W. M. Pinsof, R. E. Zinbarg, J. L. Lebow, L. M. Knobloch-Fedders, E. Durbin, A. L. Chambers, T. Latta, E. Karam, J. Goldsmith, G. B. A. Friedman, B. Mann, *Laying the foundation for progress research in family, couple, and individual therapy: The development and psychometric features of the initial Systemic Therapy Inventory of Change*, "Psychotherapy Research" 19 (2009) 2, pp. 143–156.

The authors[20] selected these system areas because they believe they are the five most clinically relevant systems that can be consistently explored in family, marital, and individual therapy.

Each scale contains the most clinically relevant dimensions, based on the literature and the author's clinical experience. The Individual Problems and Strengths scale consists of 25 items divided into the following areas: *flexibility/resilience* (3 items), *life functioning* (2 items), *open expression* (3 items), *self acceptance* (2 items), *disinhibition* (3 items), *negative affect* (8 items grouped into 3 subscales: *depression, anxiety, well-being*), *self-misunderstanding* (2 items), and *substance abuse* (2 items). The Family of origin scale consists of 22 items, which are divided into the following subscales: *mutuality of expectations (clear expectations)* (2 items), *positivity* (6 items), *abuse* (3 items), *intrusiveness* (2 items), *negativity* (5 items), and *substance use* (4 items). The Relationship with Partner scale consists of 24 items, divided into 7 subscales: *commitment* (2 items), *partner positivity* (9 items), *sexual satisfaction* (2 items), *trust* (3 items), *anger/inequity* (4 items), *physical abuse* (2 items) and *substance abuse* (2 items). The Family/Household scale consists of 28 items, which are divided into the following subscales: *boundary clarity* (2 items), *decision making* (2 items), *family pride* (2 items), *positivity* (9 items), *abuse* (3 items), *feeling misunderstood* (2 items) and *negativity* (8 items). The Child Problems and Strengths scale consists of 26 items, which are divided into 7 subscales: *parent/child alliance* (2 items), *prosocial* (3 items), *social/academic* (3 items), *antisocial* (6 items), *food/weight concerns* (2 items), *impulsivity* (4 items) and *negative affect* (6 items). The last scale, The Relationship with Child scale, consists of 6 items divided into 3 subscales: *efficacy* (2 items), *positivity* (2 items), and *negativity* (2 items).

The intersession STIC consists of only 4 measurement scales: *Individual Problems and Strengths scale*, *Relationship with Partner scale*, *Family/Household scale* and *Child Problems and Strengths scale*. All the scales of the Intersession STIC are similar to those of the Initial STIC in terms of content and methodology, but consist of fewer questions and are therefore shorter.

[20] W. M. Pinsof, R. E. Zinbarg, J. L. Lebow, L. M. Knobloch-Fedders, E. Durbin, A. L. Chambers, T. Latta, E. Karam, J. Goldsmith, G. B. A. Friedman, B. Mann, *Laying the foundation for progress research in family, couple, and individual therapy*, pp. 143–156.

2.3. Procedure

The participants in the survey were divided into two groups: the experimental group and the control group. The participants in the experimental group were clients in individual, marital or family therapy in various therapeutic centres in Slovenia, all of which practice relational family therapy. Their therapists asked them if they wanted to participate in the survey and instructed them to answer the Initial STIC after the first session and the Intersession STIC after at least 12 therapy sessions. The control group consisted of participants who were informed about the survey and randomly selected and who did not participate in any therapy. They were asked to complete the Initial STIC and after 3 months also the Intersession STIC. All participants (in both groups) were instructed to use the same personal code in the Initial STIC and the Intersession STIC so that their responses could be summarised and compared after the first and second measurement.

3. Results

3.1. STIC

3.1.1. Individual Problems and Strengths

The difference in scores on the Individual Problems and Strengths scale between the initial and final test in the experimental group compared to the control group showed a statistically significant difference in favour of the experimental group. The change (measured as the difference in the arithmetic mean score between the initial and final measurement) was higher in the experimental group than in the control group in each subcategory. The difference was positive for the categories of well-being, life functioning, open expression, flexibility/resilience and self-acceptance. For the subscales measuring depression, anxiety, negative affect, disinhibition, self-misunderstanding, substance abuse, and individual problems combined, the difference was negative, meaning that these problematic behaviours improved.

The arithmetic means of the scores on the subscales of the Individual problems and strengths scale in the experimental and control groups after the initial and final measurements were then compared, using the T-test if the distribution of the results did not deviate from the normal distribution and the Wilcoxon's test if the distribution of the results deviated from the normal distribution. The T-tests and Wilcoxon's tests showed that all differences between the experimental and control groups were statistically relevant at the 0.01 level, with the exception of life functioning, flexibility/resilience, substance abuse and self-misunderstanding.

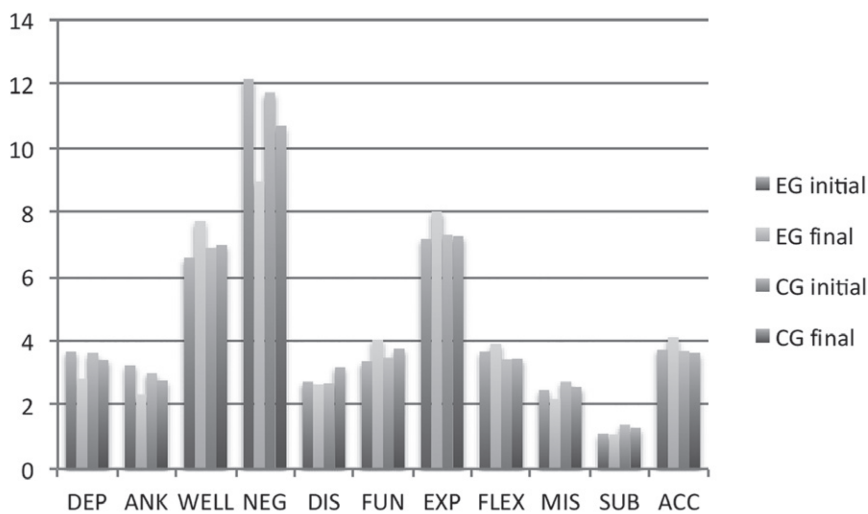

Figure 1: Individual problems and strengths in the experimental and control groups after initial and final measurements.

Subcategories: DEP – depression, ANX – anxiety, WELL – wellbeing, NEG – negative affect, DIS – disinhibition, FUN – life functioning, EXP – open expression, FLEX – flexibility/resilience, MIS – self misunderstanding, SUB – substance abuse, ACC – self-acceptance. EG – experimental group, CG – control group. All measures are given as the arithmetic mean for each subscale.

Table 1: Arithmetic means of the scores on the subscales of the Individual problems and strengths scale in the experimental and control groups after the initial and final measurements; means of the differences between the initial and final measurements in the experimental and control groups and statistical significance of the differences between the initial and final scores. The T-test was used if the distribution of the results did not deviate from the normal distribution, and the Wilcoxon's test was used if the distribution of the results deviated from the normal distribution.

Subscales of Individual problems and strengths scale		Experimental group			Control group		
		N	*arithm.*	*st.dev.*	*N*	*arithm.*	*st.dev.*
Depression	initial	65	3,65	1,28	65	3,62	1,486
	final	65	2,8	1,078	65	3,4	1,183
	diff.	65	**-0,85**	1,265	65	**-0,22**	1,682
	T-test	T=3,11					
	p	**p=0,003****					
Anxiety	initial	65	3,22	0,838	65	2,98	0,96
	final	65	2,31	0,917	65	2,75	1,173
	diff.	65	**-0,91**	1,057	65	**-0,23**	1,17
	T-test	T=3,46					
	p	**p=0,001****					
Well-being	initial	65	6,58	1,802	65	6,88	1,505
	final	65	7,72	1,663	65	6,98	1,691
	diff.	65	**1,14**	1,952	65	**0,11**	2,07
	T-test	T=-2,709					
		p=0,009**					
Negative affect	initial	65	12,15	3,227	65	11,74	3,27
	final	65	8,97	3,419	65	10,69	3,548
	diff.	65	**-3,18**	3,344	65	**-1,05**	4,064
	T-test	T=3,583					
		p=0,001**					
Disinhibition	initial	65	2,71	0,805	65	2,68	0,97
	final	65	2,63	0,821	65	3,17	0,993
	diff.	65	**-0,08**	1,005	65	**0,49**	1,106
	Wilcoxon's test	Z=-3,131b					
	p	**p=0,002****					
Life functioning	initial	65	3,35	0,779	65	3,46	0,812
	final	65	4,02	0,82	65	3,74	0,668
	diff.	65	0,66	0,973	65	0,28	0,944
	Wilcoxon's test	Z=-1,946c					
	p	p=0,052					
Open expression	initial	65	7,17	1,587	65	7,29	1,588
	final	65	8,03	1,38	65	7,25	1,358
	diff.	65	**0,86**	1,56	65	**-0,05**	1,462
	T-test	T=-3,406					
	p	**p=0,001****					
Flexibility/resilience	initial	65	3,65	0,856	65	3,42	0,748
	final	65	3,89	0,753	65	3,43	0,749
	diff.	65	0,25	0,884	65	0,02	0,992
	Wilcoxon's test	Z=-1,359C					
		p=0,174					
Self-misunderstanding	initial	65	2,45	1	65	2,71	0,914
	final	65	2,18	0,917	65	2,55	0,83
	diff.	65	-0,26	0,94	65	-0,15	1,049
	T-test	T=0,668					
	p	p=0,507					

Subscales of Individual problems and strengths scale		Experimental group			Control group		
		N	arithm.	st.dev.	N	arithm.	st.dev.
Substance abuse	initial	65	1,09	0,292	65	1,38	0,604
	final	65	1,08	0,322	65	1,28	0,573
	diff.	65	-0,02	0,414	65	-0,11	0,793
	Wilcoxon's test	Z=-1,002c					
	p	p=0,317					
Self-acceptance	initial	65	3,72	0,875	65	3,68	0,886
	final	65	4,11	0,812	65	3,62	0,86
	diff.	65	**0,38**	0,842	65	**-0,06**	0,982
	Wilcoxon's test	Z=-2,656c					
	p	**p=0,008****					
Individual problems together	initial	65	30,06	6,635	65	30,31	6,757
	final	65	24,25	7,802	65	28,97	7,163
	diff.	65	**-5,82**	6,605	65	**-1,34**	6,911
	T-test	T=4,328					
	p	**p=0,00****					

Notes: N – numerous, arithm. – arithmetic mean, st. dev. – standard deviation, diff. – difference, p – statistical significance, * p≤0.05; ** p≤0.01.

3.1.2. Relationship with the partner

Fifty eight participants in the experimental group and 63 participants in the control group participated in the analysis of the problems and strengths of the relationship with the partner.

The arithmetic mean values of the scores on the subscales of the Relationship with Partner scale in the experimental and control groups were compared after the first and last measurement using the T-test if the distribution of the results did not deviate from the normal distribution, and using the Wilcoxon's test if the distribution of the results deviated from the normal distribution. After the final measurement, the total scores on the Relationship with Partner scale showed a greater improvement in the experimental group than in the control group, with a significance level of less than 1%. For the various subscales of the Relationship with Partner scale, there were also statistically significant differences in the change from the initial to the final score, with the experimental group showing greater improvement in conversation between partners, mutual communication, mutual intimacy, positivity of the relationship and the value of the relationship in general. The study also showed a statistically significant decrease in mistrust/betrayal, inequity and anger/contempt between partners ($p < 0.01$). Another statistically significant result was the decrease in sexual dissatisfaction ($p < 0.05$).

The study found no statistically significant changes on the other subscales of partnership problems and strengths.

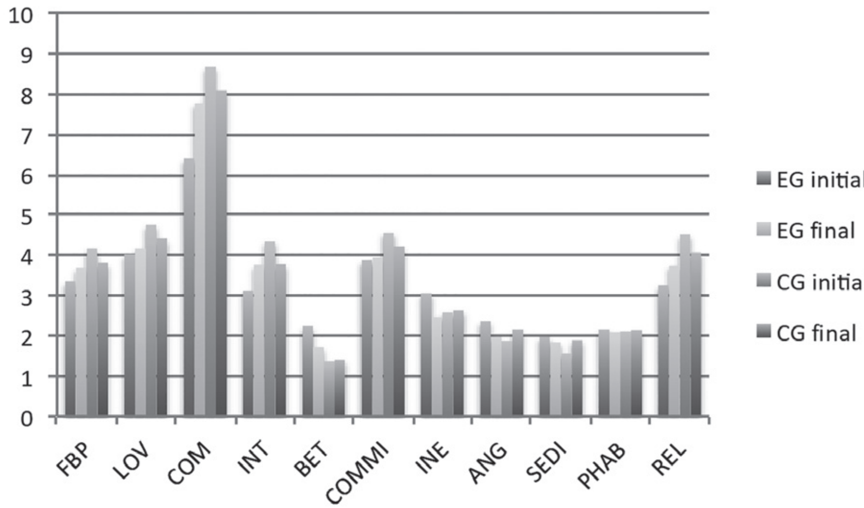

Figure 2: Relationship with partner scale scores in the experimental and control groups after the initial and final measurements.

Note: The subscales of the relationship with partner scale are: FBP – fun between partners, LOV – mutual love, COM – communication, INT – intimacy, BET – mistrust/ betrayal, COMMI – commitment, INE – inequity, ANG – anger/contempt, SEDI – sexual dissatisfaction, PHAB – physical abuse, REL – relationship in general. All the measures are shown as arithmetic mean for each subscale. EG – experimental group, CG – control group. All measures are given as the arithmetic mean for each subscale.

Table 2: Mean values of the subscales of the Relationship with Partner scale in the experimental and control groups according to the initial and final measurements; mean differences between the initial and final measurements in the experimental and control groups and statistical significance of the differences between the initial and final values. The T-test was used if the distribution of the results did not deviate from the normal distribution, and the Wilcoxon's test was used if the distribution of the results deviated from the normal distribution.

Subscales of Relationship with partner scale		Experimental group			Control group		
		N	*arithm.*	*st.dev.*	*N*	*arithm.*	*st.dev.*
Fun between partners	initial	56	3,36	1,21	62	4,17	0,685
	final	56	3,69	1,245	62	3,81	1,09
	diff.	56	**0,23**	1,079	62	**-0,29**	0,876
	Wilcoxon's test	Z=-2,804					
	p	**p=0,005****					
Mutual love	initial	56	4,03	1,284	62	4,75	0,474
	final	56	4,16	1,197	62	4,41	1,057
	diff.	56	0,13	0,944	62	-0,34	0,803
	Wilcoxon's test	Z=-1,450c					
	p	p=0,147					
Mutual communication	initial	56	6,4	2,094	62	8,67	1,437
	final	56	7,76	2,011	62	8,08	2,058
	diff.	56	**1,36**	1,806	62	**-0,59**	1,852
	T-test	T=-4,609					
	p	**P=0,00****					
Mutual intimacy	initial	56	3,12	1,365	62	4,35	0,864
	final	56	3,76	1,218	62	3,78	1,142
	diff.	56	**0,64**	1,334	62	**-0,57**	0,919
	Wilcoxon's test	Z=-4,048C					
	p	**p=0,00****					
Positivity	initial	56	17,02	4,919	62	21,94	2,533
	final	56	19,41	4,896	62	20,13	4,654
	diff.	56	**2,21**	4,33	62	**-1,81**	3,547
	T-test	T=-4,378					
	p	**P=0,00****					
Mistrust/Betrayal	initial	56	2,24	1,218	62	1,37	0,703
	final	56	1,72	1,056	62	1,41	0,835
	diff.	56	**-0,52**	0,968	62	**0,04**	1,029
	Wilcoxon's test	Z=-3,002B					
	p	**p=0,003****					
Commitment	initial	56	3,88	1,415	62	4,56	0,616
	final	56	3,95	1,303	62	4,21	1,065
	diff.	56	0,07	1,062	62	-0,35	0,813
	T-test	T=-1,334c					
	p	p=0,182					
Inequity	initial	56	3,05	1,395	62	2,59	1,102
	final	56	2,47	1,203	62	2,63	1,067
	diff.	56	**-0,58**	1,299	62	**0,04**	1,073
	T-test	T=3,173					
	p	**p=0,002****					
Anger/Contempt	initial	56	2,36	1,21	62	1,87	0,813
	final	56	1,98	0.946	62	2,16	0,987
	diff.	56	**-0,38**	1,173	62	**0,29**	0,991
	T-test	T=3,459					
	p	**p=0,001****					

Subscales of Relationship with partner scale		**Experimental group**			**Control group**		
		N	***arithm.***	***st.dev.***	***N***	***arithm.***	***st.dev.***
Sexual dissatisfaction	initial	56	1,98	1,263	61	1,57	0,856
	final	56	1,84	1,04	61	1,9	1,155
	diff.	56	**-0,14**	1,266	61	**0,33**	1,126
	Wilcoxon's test	Z=-2,158b					
	p	**p=0,031****					
Physical abuse	initial	56	2,17	0,775	62	2,11	0,364
	final	56	2,09	0,629	62	2,14	0,82
	diff.	56	-0,08	0,554	62	0,03	0,795
	Wilcoxon's test	Z=-1,636b					
	p	p=0,102					
Relationship with partner (sum)	initial	56	43,71	10,922	61	52,98	4,379
	final	56	48,57	10,117	61	49,35	9,778
	diff.	56	**-4,86**	7,797	61	**-3,36**	6,567
	T-test	T=-4,297					
	p	**p=0,00****					
Relationship with partner (general)	initial	49	3,26	1,211	56	4,51	0,598
	final	49	3,75	1,159	56	4,07	1,032
	diff.	49	**0,49**	1,155	56	**-0,44**	0,781
	Wilcoxon's test	Z=-3,362c					
	p	**p=0,001****					

Notes: Notes: N – numerus, arithm. – arithmetic mean, st. dev. – standard deviation, diff. – difference, p – statistical significance, * p≤0,05; ** p≤0,01.

3.1.3. Family (household); relationship with the child

Forty people in the experimental group and 35 in the control group participated in the analysis of the problems and strengths of the family/household.

The total score of the strengths and problems in the family/household after the final measurement showed a higher improvement in the experimental group than in the control group in the category "Feeling misunderstood", with a significance level of less than 5%. For the other subscales of the family/household scale, no statistically significant differences were found between the initial and final values in the study.

Thirty two people in the experimental group and 25 in the control group took part in the analysis of the relationship with the child scale. The study found no statistically significant difference in the mean values between the experimental and control groups.

4. Discussion

The results of the study show that there is a statistically significant difference in change between the experimental and control groups on the subscales of individual and relationship problems and strengths in favour of the experimental group. The comparison between the initial and final measurements confirmed that active participation in the therapeutic process of relational family therapy helps increase clients' strengths and decrease their problems. In 12 sessions, or after about 3 months, if there is continuous participation in the therapeutic process, the clients' condition improves significantly. Depression, anxiety and negative emotions decreased significantly, which was also found in other studies, e.g. in a study from 2022,[21] which found that the first four emotions most strongly experienced during the therapy process were happiness, relief, sadness and surprise in both therapists and clients

Both groups of participants were matched for the initial severity of problems, i.e., they consisted of participants with a similar intensity of initial problems. The study showed that participation in psychotherapy is useful and can be of great help in trying to improve conditions and eliminate problems. The greatest positive change was observed in partnership problems and strengths, followed by changes in individual problems and strengths and less improvement in family problems and strengths. This probably confirms an important fact inherent in the premise of relational family therapy,[22] that couples therapy usually offers clients the opportunity to have a corrective emotional experience with their partner as part of the therapy. Another important fact is that both partners have new experiences in partnership dynamics and communication, not just one. Shame and fear of the partner's reaction often prevent the disclosure of important issues (e.g., about sexual or physical abuse in the family of origin),[23] so new experiences with supportive responses can make a big difference in communication between partners. In the study, regardless of the type of therapy (individual, couple or family therapy), an improvement was observed on various subscales of the

[21] A. Çavdar, *Emotions and symptom change in psychodynamic psychotherapy: A longitudinal study*, "Turkish Journal of Psychology / Turk Psikoloji Dergisi" 37 (2022) 90, pp. 40–43.

[22] C. Gostečnik, *Relacijska zakonska terapija*, Ljubljana 2007, Brat Frančišek in Frančiškanski družinski inštitut.

[23] D. Jerebic, S. Jerebic, *Are childhood sexual abuse and intimate safety in adult intimate relationships correlated?*, "The Person and the Challenges" 9 (2019) 2, pp. 193–206.

couple relationship. From this, we can conclude that new insights in therapy can be the source for a different behaviour in the relationship with the partner and thus for new reactions to the partner. This could lead to a new, improved relationship dynamic.

The various psychotherapy models differ in terms of what they focus on emotions, cognitions or behaviour[24] etc. For relational family therapy, we can say that it focuses on the interconnectedness and interaction of all three, so that the results of therapy also appear on all sub-dimensions of a person's functioning.[25] The main effect of therapy is often the mitigation of current crises and the uplifting of the client's morale, but many therapists see personal growth as the most important outcome of psychotherapy. Personal growth involves developing a more accurate and realistic perception of self and others and better access to one's inner world and behaviour that is better aligned with achieving personal goals. Personal growth can also include better self-acceptance and emotional security, which can increase flexibility and spontaneity in relationships with others while improving the person's sense of well-being. For some people, psychotherapy also promotes the achievement of a more coherent and satisfying philosophy of life.[26] Another important outcome of therapy is a move towards a more realistic view of the family of origin, as many adults see their early relationships with parents as good,[27] but may not be aware of the less functional and potentially damaging side of family dynamics. An example of this is the adult children of alcoholics, for whom recognising the consequences of alcoholism in their family of origin is crucial to the quality of their adult lives.[28]

The reduction in negative affect, more specifically the scores on the depression and anxiety subscales, indicates an important positive effect of relational family therapy. According to Frank and Frank,[29] depression and anxiety are

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[24] J. D. Frank, J. B. Frank, *Persuasion and healing: A comparative study of psychotherapy*, Baltimore 1993, The Johns Hopkins University Press.

[25] C. Gostečnik, *Relacijska paradigma in klinična praksa*, Ljubljana 2013, Brat Frančišek in Frančiškanski družinski inštitut.

[26] J. D. Frank, J. B. Frank, *Persuasion and healing: A comparative study of psychotherapy*.

[27] E. Osewska, *Memories of adults regarding relations with parents in childhood*, "The Person and the Challenges" 7 (2017) 1, pp. 149–158.

[28] B. Simonič, E. Osewska, *Emotional experience and consequences of growing up in a family with alcoholism in adult children of alcoholics*, "The Person and the Challenges" 13 (2023) 1, pp. 63–81.

[29] J. D. Frank, J. B. Frank, *Persuasion and healing: A comparative study of psychotherapy*.

directly related to demoralisation, which is the main characteristic of clients who come to therapy. People feel that they have not met their own expectations or the expectations of others, or that they have not been successful in overcoming a problem. They feel powerless to change a situation or themselves, and they feel that they are in a unique situation that no one has ever experienced before, so no one really understands them. In addition to anxiety and depression, they may feel other emotions such as anger and resentment. In our study, we examined the latter two emotions as subscales of the Relationship with Partner scale. The results of the study suggest that clients feel less anger and resentment after three months of therapy than at the beginning of therapy.

We asked participants to take part in the study at their first session with the therapist, so that they completed the initial STIC questionnaire after the first session and not before. We suspect that the differences would be even greater if they completed the questionnaire before the first session, because a lot can change even after the first session, even though they completed the questionnaire with answers that relate to the last month of their lives. People can be more optimistic after they have started the therapy process because they believe that they have started to solve their problems, they have confidence in the therapeutic process, etc. Patients and therapists also have psychotherapy-related expectations, such as their prediction of what processes will promote therapeutic change. The results of a study by Brugnera et al.[30] have shown that patients' expectations of the change process at the beginning of psychotherapy are related to therapy outcomes and lead to different effects in the early stages of therapy. These results suggest that patients' views of the therapeutic process could be a potential target for improving the effectiveness of therapy.

The participants completed the questionnaire via a web link, which could also mean that older or less educated people were not included, as they are generally less adept at using computers. They may also not have a computer or internet connection. Pinsof et al.[31] reported that they solved this problem in their study

[30] A. Brugnera, M. J. Constantino, A. Grossman-Giron, B. D., Tzviel, D. Tzur Bitan, *Patient and therapist change process expectations: Independent and dyadic associations with psychotherapy outcomes*, "Psychotherapy Research" march 2024 (ahead of print), pp. 1–10.

[31] W. M. Pinsof, R. E. Zinbarg, J. L. Lebow, L. M. Knobloch-Fedders, E. Durbin, A. L. Chambers, T. Latta, E. Karam, J. Goldsmith, G. B. A. Friedman, B. Mann, *Laying the foundation for progress research in family, couple, and individual therapy*, pp. 143–156.

by using computers or tablets that were available at the clinic so that participants could complete the questionnaires before each therapy session.

The study showed no statistically significant differences in some subscales (especially in relation to family and children), so the initial hypothesis of the study had to be rejected. Although the sample was large enough, there was only some participants with children, i.e., participants who were considered as the ones who have a family. It would be advisable to conduct the study with a sample consisting of more participants with children. The length of the STIC questionnaire could also be the reason for the lower number of responses on the subscales related to family, as the questions about children were at the end of the questionnaire, where there was a lower percentage of completed responses.

Due to the complexity of the family system and the changes within this system, it would be advisable to observe the changes over a longer period than three months, although some studies suggest that this may no longer give us statistically significant differences in the changes. The study examining the "good enough" model and the "dose-effect" model[32] found that the "good enough" model was a better fit to the data compared to "the dose-effect" model for all outcomes. Clients who attended fewer sessions showed faster improvement, suggesting that clients tend to discontinue psychotherapy when they feel that their symptoms, well-being, and life functioning have improved sufficiently.

The results of the present study are consistent with previous research results and theoretical foundations and provide new insights into the relationship between therapeutic treatment based on the relational family therapy model and changes in the area of individual and couple problems and strengths.

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Role of demographic factors in the formation of grandareting styles

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Abstract

As population ageing is a global trend of our time, the relationships we form with older people are becoming increasingly important. The relationship between grandparents, adult children and grandchildren plays an important role. The definition of grandparenthood can also include activities with grandchildren, emotional attachment, and the quality of the relationship between grandchildren and grandparents. In this paper, we have focused on the relationship between grandparents and grandchildren, with special attention to the influence of demographic factors on the formation of grandparenting styles. At the same time, we researched the following grandparenting styles that are most frequently mentioned in the literature: formal, fun-seeker, surrogate parent, reservoir of family wisdom and distant figure. We found in our study that there are significant differences in individual grandparenting styles in relation to gender, age and marital status, while no major differences were detected in terms of education and place of residence.

Keywords

Grandparents, grandchildren, parenting style, demographic factors

Introduction

A family is a place of deep relationships, warm and genuine, but sometimes also wounded. No matter what the relationships in the family are, whether the family is more or less ideal, it is still a school of humanity where one learns about relationships, solidarity, coexistence and care for the good of others and the common good.[1] Parents have a great influence on children's human and religious growth.[2] In addition to parents, grandparents play an important role in raising future generations. The role of grandparents presents itself mainly as taking care of grandchildren, supporting them and participating in various activities.[3] The bond with grandchildren can, on the one hand, be extremely beneficial for grandparents, as it rejuvenates them and fills them with energy,[4] but on the other hand, it can sometimes be too much of a burden, which brings them additional stress.[5] Grandparents are increasingly involved in the lives of their grandchildren, which is especially evident during family crises when they assume a more significant role in caring for the children.[6] Even though many grandchildren have regular contact with their grandparents, grandmothers are usually more actively involved than grandfathers. Grandchildren often spend time with grandparents on weekends or at celebrations and help them with housework, while grandparents read stories to younger grandchildren, play with them, take them on trips, etc.[7] The relationship they establish with their grandchildren can also help elderly people cope with age and possible problems.

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1 B. Simonič, E. Osewska, *Emotional expirience and consequences of growing up in a family with alcoholism in adult children of alcoholics*, "The Person and the Challenges" 13 (2023) 1, pp. 63–81.

2 J. Stala, *Parents catechesis: for children, family or for adults?* "The Person and the Challenges" 13 (2023) 1, pp. 37–51.

3 V. Timonen, S. Arber, *A new look at grandparenting*, in: S. Arber, V. Timonen. (eds.), *Contemporary grandparenting. – – Changing family relationships in global contexts*, Chicago 2012, The University of Chicago Press, pp. 1–24.

4 H. Gürtler, *Otroci imajo radi stare starše: priročnik za življenje z vnuki*, Celje 2013, Celjska Mohorjeva družba.

5 G. Brunello, L. Rocco. *Is childcare bad for the mental health of grandparents? Evidence from SHARE*, "Review of the Economics of the Household" 190 (2016), pp. 67–74.

6 P. Uhlenberg, M. Cheuk, *The significance of grandparents to grandchildren. An international perspective*, in: D. Dannefer, C. Phillipson, (eds.), *The SAGE handbook of social gerontology*, London 2013, SAGE Publications Ltd, pp. 447–458.

7 T. Mlakar, *Stari starši v življenju vnukov*, "Kakovostna starost" 18 (2015) 2, pp. 3–21.

When grandparents are also more actively involved in the process of raising children, there may be disagreements with parents regarding the parenting styles and different methods they use. It is then crucial for grandparents to realise that parents have the primary authority in the upbringing of their children.[8] The way grandparents raise their grandchildren can be influenced by a number of factors, such as the age of grandparents and grandchildren, education, employment, marital status, number of grandchildren, and relationship with the middle generation.[9] The grandparent-grandchild relationship also changes over the course of life, which means that grandparents may not raise their grandchild in the same way during the preschool period and later in the teenage years.[10] Nevertheless, there are many definitions of different grandparenting styles that have been identified in recent decades. Among them, we often mention the classification, which includes five grandparenting styles: formal, fun-seeker, surrogate parent, reservoir of family wisdom and distant figure.[11] In this paper, we first define the concept of grandparenthood and then provide a more detailed description of the role that grandparents play in raising their grandchildren. This is followed by a description of the factors that impact the development of grandparenting styles. The empirical part consists of the definition of the research problem in terms of content and methodology, followed by the presentation and interpretation of the results. Concluding remarks are provided at the end of the paper.

Grandparents

Grandparenthood primarily consists of the support and care that grandparents provide for their grandchildren. In a broader sense, the definition of grandparenthood can also include activities with grandchildren, emotional attachment,

[8] H. Gürtler, *Otroci imajo radi stare starše: priročnik za življenje z vnuki*, Celje 2013, Celjska Mohorjeva družba.

[9] M. Wetzel, K. Hank, *Grandparents' relationship to grandchildren in the transition to adulthood*, "Journal of Family Issues" 41 (2020) 10, pp. 1885–1904.

[10] J. Sprey, S. H. Matthews, *Contemporary grandparenthood. A systemic transition*, "The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science" 464 (1982) 1, pp. 91–103.

[11] B. L. Neugarten, K. K. Weinstein, *The changing american grandparent*, "Journal of Marriage and Family" 26 (1964) 2, pp. 199–204.

and the quality of the relationship between grandchildren and grandparents.[12] Grandparenting can be one of the most rewarding life experiences. Many grandparents said that the role fulfilled them and gave additional meaning to their lives. The role of the grandparent is different for every individual and depends on many factors, but there is no denying the positive effects that a healthy relationship between grandparents and grandchildren can have. For example, children learn to live with older people; they have someone who provides safe shelter, support and unconditional love, while grandparents are filled with optimism and energy. However, "children and grandchildren should not become the only link you have with life."[13] In the past, when most of the population in Slovenia still made their living from agriculture, grandparents played a crucial role in child rearing. Parents invested most of their energy in work, whereas grandparents had a little more time and experience raising children. However, with the development of industry, many changes have come to families. Young people began migrating to cities and became more financially independent, housing was mostly only suitable for a small family and people were working later in life, which meant that grandparents were still employed. Two-generational families have become more present, while grandparents gradually became less needed in child rearing.[14]

The transition from parenthood to grandparenthood begins even before the birth of the first grandchild. The age of the person who is about to become a grandparent plays an important role in their perception of the new chapter in life. The age at which their children become parents also affects whether grandparents will respond positively or negatively to the new role. If grandparents are unsure of whether their children are mature, independent and responsible enough to take care of their own children, they will approach this role with more hesitation and concern. In contrast, if their children are at a stage in their life when they can independently take care of their child, grandparents are likely to have fewer reservations. If their children are still very young and unprepared, this could mean that the grandparents will have to assume the role of parents.

12 V. Timonen, S. Arber, *A new look at grandparenting*, in: S. Arber, V. Timonen. (eds.), *Contemporary grandparenting. Changing family relationships in global contexts*, Chicago 2012, The University of Chicago Press, pp. 1–24.

13 H. Gürtler, *Otroci imajo radi stare starše: priročnik za življenje z vnuki*, Celje 2013, Celjska Mohorjeva družba.

14 B. Žorž, *Stari starši in njihovo vzgojno poslanstvo.* Celje 2015, Celjska Mohorjeva družba.

On the other hand, if their children decide to have their own children later in life, there will be a large generational gap between the grandchildren and the grandparents, which can have a negative effect on the relationship. Furthermore, the middle generation is much more independent in comparison to the earlier stages of life, which means that the help of grandparents is not as essential anymore, which can also have a negative, constraining impact on the relationship with grandchildren.[15]

Even though the relationship between grandchildren and grandparents plays a key role in connecting generations, it is not as researched and as precisely defined as a child's relationship with their parents. The role of the grandparent largely depends on whether it was expected, whether it appeared at an appropriate time in a person's life and whether it has an impact on other areas in the individual's life.[16] Many grandparents may experience some initial hesitation and doubt about their readiness for the role. Some grandparents may have found a new freedom and meaning in life after their own children had left home, so the thought of grandchildren and taking care of small children again fills them with worries and uncertainty. Relationships with the grandchild's family can also play an important role, especially the relationship between the grandmother (mother-in-law) and the mother (daughter-in-law). In case their relationship is not the best, grandmothers can have legitimate concerns about their relationship with their grandchildren.[17]

The role of grandparents in a grandchild's life

Grandparents play an increasingly important role in the lives of the younger generations. Factors such as longer life expectancy and better health, a high number of divorces, and an increasing number of single-parent families and working mothers contribute to this. Not only grandmothers but also grandfathers play a vital role in caring for their grandchildren and are increasingly involved in the

[15] J. Sprey, S. H. Matthews, *Contemporary grandparenthood. A systemic transition*, "The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science" 464 (1982) 1, pp. 91–103.

[16] V. R. Kivett, *The grandparent. Grandchild connection*, "Marriage & Family Review" 16 (1991) 3/4, pp. 267–290.

[17] S. Moore, D. Rosenthal, *Grandparenting. Contemporary perspectives.* New York 2017, Routledge.

lives of the younger generation. Although grandparenting is a socially recognised category in all human societies and its meaning varies around the world, it is undeniable that grandparents play an important role in a grandchild's life. Increasing life expectancy and declining fertility mean that most children have grandparents and only some siblings and cousins with whom they must share their grandparents. This means that grandparents have more time and energy to devote to each individual grandchild.

Most grandparents with young grandchildren are healthy and financially stable, and many are already retired. Grandparents are also often involved in taking care of the child when the young family is going through a crisis and are usually the first choice when the parents alone cannot adequately fulfil their role. A critical aspect of the relationship with grandparents is that it is through this relationship that most children experience an important and fulfilling relationship with an older person. Without grandparents, most children would not be in contact with older people.[18]

Grandchildren typically have regular contact with their grandparents, with the most significant amount of time spent together during the grandchild's elementary school years. The age of the grandparents is an important factor here because the older they are, the less time they spend with their grandchildren. Grandchildren see grandparents as confidantes and can share their concerns with them, without fear of judgement. Mutual support between grandchildren and grandparents is also important. They learn new knowledge and skills from each other and help each other with tasks. Moreover, grandparents also play an important role in their grandchildren's mental health.[19] Children in rural China who were rejected by grandparents were more likely to become depressed, while emotional warmth from grandparents was negatively associated with depression in children.[20] Emotional closeness is one of the more stable characteristics in the grandparent-grandchild relationship, as it is not affected by changes in the life circumstances of grandparents

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18 P. Uhlenberg, M. Cheuk, *The significance of grandparents to grandchildren. An international perspective*, in: D. Dannefer, C. Phillipson, (eds.), *The SAGE handbook of social gerontology*, London 2013, SAGE Publications Ltd, pp. 447–458.

19 T. Mlakar, *Stari starši v življenju vnukov*, "Kakovostna starost" 18 (2015) 2, pp. 3–21.

20 F. Yang, X. Liu, *Grandparenting styles, childhood food insecurity, and depression among Chinese rural left-behind children: A structural equation model.* "Children and Youth Services Review" 13 (2020) 3, pp. 119–123.

or grandchildren, nor is it affected by the reduced influence of parents as a middle generation.[21]

Influences on the Formation of Grandparenting Styles

The formation of grandparenting styles is influenced by several different factors, such as age, employment, education, marital status, and number of grandchildren.[22]

Krasnova in her article emphasises, that the age of grandchildren is one of the important factors. She talks about the connection between different grandparenting styles used by grandmothers and the age of the grandchildren, noting that in the period when the grandchildren are younger and need more attention, care and concern, grandmothers act mainly in a formal sense. They read with them, go for a walk, watch TV, etc. grandmothers are often still working during this period of their grandchild's life and can only devote themselves to their grandchild in their free time. When grandchildren get older, grandmothers have fewer direct responsibilities in connection to them since the grandchildren do not need that much help anymore, so their relationship starts focusing more on educational activities like helping with homework, going to the theatre or a museum, etc. When grandchildren grow up, the relationship often turns into a more distant one, grandchildren spend less time with their grandmothers, and their shared activities become more limited. It is often the grandmothers who distance themselves from their grandchildren and not the other way around. At this point in life, there appears to be a switch in the family roles where children and grandchildren start becoming the ones to take care of the grandparents, who need more and more help. Many older grandmothers do not want to accept that and refuse help, so they distance themselves from the family and wish to prove that they are still independent enough and capable of taking care of themselves. The author also emphasises the level of education and notes that grandmothers with lower levels of education spend more time with their grandchildren, while the most educated

[21] M. Wetzel, K. Hank, *Grandparents' relationship to grandchildren in the transition to adulthood*, "Journal of Family Issues" 41 (2020) 10, pp. 1885–1904.

[22] V. R. Kivett, *The grandparent. Grandchild connection*, "Marriage & Family Review" 16 (1991) 3/4, pp. 267–290.

grandmothers spend the least time with their grandchildren. Grandmothers on the mother's side of the family have more contact with their grandchildren than grandmothers on the father's side of the family, especially because grandmothers on the mother's side tend to live with the young family more often.[23]

Research has shown that contact between grandparents and grandchildren is not as frequent once grandchildren reach adulthood, especially because the middle generation has fewer chances to create opportunities for forming intergenerational connections, as well as because of new obligations and responsibilities grandchildren gain once they enter adulthood.[24] The middle generation is largely responsible for the formation of bonds between grandchildren and grandparents, especially when the grandchildren are still young.[25] Similarly, the generation of parents can on the one hand hinder the development of a relationship between grandchildren and grandparents if they, for example, do not allow the grandparents to have contact with their grandchildren in cases when their own relationship with their parents is not the best. Sometimes grandchildren can notice that their parents are not on the best terms with their own parents, so they adapt their behaviour accordingly. Grandparents often have more grandchildren than children and the grandchildren also have different parents, who can have different views on upbringing and on the relationship that grandchildren should form with their grandparents. For this reason, it is impossible to expect that grandparents would have the same level of connection with every individual grandchild, also because there are several practical obstacles, such as a place of residence that is far away, age (they are healthier and more active at the time they get their first grandchild), and the relationship with the grandchild's parents.[26]

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[23] O. V. Krasnova, *Grandmothers in the family*, "Russian Social Science Review" 43 (2002) 5, pp. 76–91.

[24] M. Wetzel, K. Hank, *Grandparents' relationship to grandchildren in the transition to adulthood*, "Journal of Family Issues" 41 (2020) 10, pp. 1885–1904.

[25] J. Sprey, S. H. Matthews, *Contemporary grandparenthood. A systemic transition*, "The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science" 464 (1982) 1, pp. 91–103.

[26] R. Dunifon, A. Bajracharya, *The role of grandparents in the lives of youth*, "Journal of Family Issues" 33 (2012) 9, pp. 1168–1194.

Grandparenting styles

The grandparenting style is actually an interpersonal relationship between a grandparent and a grandchild, which is constantly changing and evolving under the influence of various factors. The characteristics of the relationship are therefore not permanent and can change over time. It is also important to realise that a grandparent has a unique relationship with each grandchild. Grandchildren are also different from each other, and they have different parents who have unique relationships with their own parents. We must also be careful when defining the grandparenting style because grandparents can claim that they see their grandchildren often, have a friendly relationship with them, etc., but maybe this person is only talking about two grandchildren out of six. Perhaps these are only their daughter's children, but not their son's, etc. Therefore, the authors warn that caution is needed when evaluating the relationship between grandchildren and grandparents.[27]

We know five different styles of grandparenting. They found that the formal style was more common among older grandparents, while younger grandparents were more often the fun seekers or the distant grandparents.

- The Formal
  These grandparents follow the prescribed role of a grandparent, acknowledging the distinction between the responsibilities of parents and grandparents. They leave the task of raising children entirely to the parents and do not offer them unwanted advice on the matter. However, they sometimes take care of the child for a few hours and provide occasional indulgence.
- The Fun Seeker
  They are very playful in their relationship with the grandchild and aim to have fun with them as much as possible. They have a distinctly informal, almost friendly relationship with their grandchildren, with almost non-existent boundaries between the roles of a grandparent and a child, especially in terms of authority. The main goal of such a relationship is the satisfaction and entertainment of both the grandparent and the grandchild.

[27] J. Sprey, S. H. Matthews, *Contemporary grandparenthood. A systemic transition*, "The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science" 464 (1982) 1, pp. 91–103.

- The Surrogate Parent
  This style of grandparenting is especially characteristic of grandmothers. It is typical of those families where both parents are at work and are very busy, so the grandparents take on a large part of the caretaking responsibilities.
- The Reservoir of Family Wisdom
  This is a distinctly authoritarian style, which is characteristic especially of grandfathers. Grandparents represent a source of wisdom, knowledge, and skills that they pass on to their grandchildren. Parents and grandchildren are subordinate to grandparents in this relationship.
- The Distant Figure
  Grandparents do not have much contact with their grandchildren; they only see each other on special occasions, such as holidays or birthdays.[28]

Empirical section

Research method

The study relied on descriptive and causal-non-experimental methods of empirical pedagogical research.

Research sample

There were 191 grandparents participating in the study. Due to some missing data in the individual surveys, the number varies. We used purposive and convenience sampling. Shown below is a representation of the respondents according to demographic factors.

[28] B. L. Neugarten, K. K. Weinstein, *The changing american grandparent*, "Journal of Marriage and Family" 26 (1964) 2, pp. 199–204.

Table 1. Number (f) and percentage (f%) of respondents according to gender.

Gender	f	f %
Male	44	23.0 %
Female	147	77.0 %
Total	191	100.0

Table 1 shows that the sample consists of 191 grandparents, out of which 77.0% are female and 23.0% are male.

Table 2. Number (f) and percentage (f%) of respondents according to age.

Age	f	f %
65 or younger	36	19.1
66 to 75	108	57.4
76 or older	44	23.4
Total	188	100.0

Most of the respondents belonged to the age group between 66 and 75 years (57.4%), followed by respondents who were 76 or older (23.4%), while only 19.1% belonged to the age group younger than 65.

Table 3. Number (f) and percentage (f%) of respondents according to marital status.

Marital status	f	f %
Single	12	6.3
Married	99	51.8
Widowed	42	22.0
Divorced	26	13.6
Cohabiting	12	6.3
Total	191	100.0

The table shows that most of the respondents were married (51.8%), followed by widowed (22.0%), divorced (13.6%) and finally single (6.3%) and cohabiting (6.3%) grandparents.

Table 4. Number (f) and percentage (f%) of respondents according to their place of residence.

Place of residence	f	f%
Countryside	42	22.0
City	116	60.7
Suburb	33	17.3
Total	191	100.0

Most of the respondents lived in the city (60.7%), significantly less in the countryside (22.0%) and the least in the suburb (17.3%).

Table 5. Number (f) and percentage (f%) of respondents according to education level.

Education level	f	f%
Incomplete primary school	2	1.0
Primary school	21	11.0
Vocational, technical school	82	42.9
College, vocational college	52	27.2
Undergraduate programme	28	14.7
Master's programme	5	2.6
PhD	1	0.5
Total	191	100.0

Most of the grandparents completed a vocational or technical school (42.9%), followed by those who completed college or vocational college (27.2%). There are fewer grandparents who completed an undergraduate programme (14.7%), primary school (11 %) or a master's programme (2,6%). Only two respondents did not complete primary school, while one respondent had a PhD.

Research instrument

In the research, we used an anonymous questionnaire, which we designed after a review of the relevant literature. It included 13 questions, of which 9 were close-ended and 4 were open-ended. At the beginning of the questionnaire, we obtained general data about the respondents (gender, age, marital status, place of residence, and education), followed by questions related to their parental and grandparental roles. The validity of the questionnaire was ensured through mentor review and a pilot study conducted with a sample of five grandparents. We ensured the reliability of the questionnaire by providing precise instructions, unambiguous questions, and clear answer options.

Data collection

We first tested our questionnaire on five grandparents. Based on their responses and feedback, we adapted the questionnaire accordingly and added clearer instructions to avoid potential ambiguity.

Data processing

We used the IBM SPSS Statistics 26 computer programme to analyse the data. We used the following statistical methods: frequency distributions, basic descriptive statistics, Mann-Whitney U test and Kruskal-Wallis test.

Results and Interpretation

Table 6. Mann-Whitney test of grandparenting styles according to gender.

	Gender		Mann-Whitney U	
			U	p
Formal.	Male	94.5	3073.500	0.939
	Female	93.8		
Fun seeker.	Male	81.3	2587.000	0.083
	Female	96.7		
Surrogate parent.	Male	106.4	2476.000	0.047
	Female	88.9		
Reservoir of family wisdom.	Male	110.4	2304.000	0.013
	Female	87.7		
Distant figure.	Male	105.7	2387.500	0.036
	Female	87.9		

The results of the Mann-Whitney test indicate that there is a significant difference ($p < 0.05$) in some grandparenting styles between males and females. The surrogate parent grandparenting style ($p = 0.047$) was more characteristic of men ($R = 106.4$) than of women ($R = 88.9$). The result was surprising, since we expected women to be in the role of surrogate parents more often than men, especially because women tend to have a more active parental role as well. There is a significant difference according to gender in grandparents who are a reservoir of family wisdom ($p = 0.013$), which is a style that more often appears among males ($R = 110.4$) than females ($R = 87.7$). There was also a significant difference in grandparents who were distant figures ($p = 0.036$). This grandparenting style was also more common in males ($R = 105.7$) than in females ($R = 87.9$).

Table 7. Kruskal-Wallis test of grandparenting styles according to age.

	Age		Kruskal-Wallis	
			Kruskal-Wallis H	p
Formal.	65 or younger	95.94	4.043	0.132
	66 to 75	96.86		
	76 or older	78.95		
Fun seeker.	65 or younger	99.13	6.874	0.032
	66 to 75	95.95		
	76 or older	73.41		
Surrogate parent.	65 or younger	80.33	3.827	0.148
	66 to 75	90.83		
	76 or older	102.49		
Reservoir of family wisdom.	65 or younger	86.21	0.643	0.725
	66 to 75	91.61		
	76 or older	95.63		
Distant figure.	65 or younger	72.36	6.729	0.035
	66 to 75	93.62		
	76 or older	98.09		

The Kruskal-Wallis test showed that there was a significant difference ($p < 0.05$) between some grandparenting styles according to the age of the grandparents. There was a significant difference in the fun seeking ($H = 6.874$, $p = 0.032$) and the distant grandparenting styles ($H = 6.729$, $p = 0.035$). Younger grandparents (65 or younger) tend to be fun seekers, while older grandparents (76 or older) rarely identify themselves as such. The distant grandparenting style was the most common among older grandparents (76 or older) and the least common among younger grandparents (65 or younger). We expected such results, especially because younger grandparents tend to have more energy that is required to maintain an active relationship with their grandchild, while older grandparents can spend the time with their grandchildren in a more inactive and relaxed way, which is not necessarily perceived as fun by grandchildren. Older grandparents can also have more health issues that prevent them from spending time with their grandchildren in ways that they would like. We did find it surprising, however, that there was no significant difference in surrogate parents according to age, as we presumed that this style would be more common among younger grandparents.

Table 8. Kruskal-Wallis test of grandparenting styles according to marital status.

	Marital status		Kruskal-Wallis	
			Kruskal-Wallis H	p
Formal.	Single	111.09	6.262	0.180
	Married	95.05		
	Widowed	78.47		
	Divorced	99.79		
	Cohabiting	108.96		
Fun seeker.	Single	110.21	3.185	0.527
	Married	95.52		
	Widowed	83.21		
	Divorced	93.19		
	Cohabiting	86.00		

According to the Kruskal-Wallis test, there is a significant difference in the distant grandparenting style according to the marital status of the grandparent ($H = 17.625$, $p = 0.001$). The table shows that the distant grandparenting style is most common among divorced grandparents and the least common among cohabiting couples.

Table 9. Kruskal-Wallis test of grandparenting styles according to the place of residence.

	Place of residence		Kruskal-Wallis	
			Kruskal-Wallis H	p
Formal.	Countryside	96.63	0.160	0.923
	City	93.54		
	Suburb	92.16		
Fun seeker.	Countryside	100.02	2.174	0.337
	City	93.47		
	Suburb	82.50		
Surrogate parent.	Countryside	91.83	1.489	0.475
	City	96.09		
	Suburb	83.83		
Reservoir of family wisdom.	Countryside	102.11	2.311	0.315
	City	92.23		
	Suburb	83.70		
Distant figure.	Countryside	78.94	4.447	0.108
	City	97.32		
	Suburb	91.03		

The Kruskal-Wallis test did not show any significant difference in grandparenting styles according to place of residence, which indicates that different grandparenting styles appear among grandparents regardless of where they live (countryside, city or suburb).

Table 10. Kruskal-Wallis test of grandparenting styles according to education level.

	Education level		Kruskal-Wallis	
			Kruskal-Wallis H	p
Formal.	Incomplete primary school	146.00	8.731	0.189
	Primary school	110.62		
	Vocational, technical school	97.79		
	College, vocational college	83.34		
	Undergraduate programme	85.75		
	Master's programme	85.20		
	PhD	146.00		
Fun seeker.	Incomplete primary school	147.50	8.555	0.200
	Primary school	104.20		
	Vocational, technical school	98.51		
	College, vocational college	82.23		
	Undergraduate programme	85.37		
	Master's programme	77.00		
	PhD	147.50		
Surrogate parent.	Incomplete primary school	137.50	10.197	0.117
	Primary school	120.30		
	Vocational, technical school	94.34		
	College, vocational college	84.89		
	Undergraduate programme	81.63		
	Master's programme	88.50		
	PhD	99.00		
Reservoir of family wisdom.	Incomplete primary school	124.00	8.971	0.175
	Primary school	113.08		
	Vocational, technical school	93.60		
	College, vocational college	95.64		
	Undergraduate programme	70.91		
	Master's programme	92.50		
	PhD	71.00		

	Education level		Kruskal-Wallis	
			Kruskal-Wallis H	p
Distant figure.	Incomplete primary school	157.00	10.625	0.101
	Primary school	93.75		
	Vocational, technical school	98.51		
	College, vocational college	83.27		
	Undergraduate programme	77.71		
	Master's programme	116.80		
	PhD	107.50		

According to the test, there is no significant difference in grandparenting styles according to the education level of grandparents, which means that different grandparenting styles appear among grandparents regardless of their level of education. This finding was unexpected since we presumed that some grandparenting styles would be more frequent in grandparents with higher levels of education.

Conclusions

The study revealed a statistically significant difference in grandparenting styles according to gender. The surrogate parent, reservoir of family wisdom and distant figure are the styles that are more characteristic of grandfathers than grandmothers. The most common grandparenting style among men is the reservoir of family wisdom, while women are most often the fun seekers. We presumed that surrogate parents would be more characteristic of women, as demonstrated by Neugarten and Weinstein's research, that this grandparenting style more often appears when the younger generation spends a lot of time at work, so the grandmother is usually the one that takes on primary care of the child.[29] The result could be explained by the fact that nowadays, grandmothers are also more often employed, while men can assume some roles that have long been perceived as exclusively female. According to the literature, grandparenting as the reservoir of family wisdom is more frequent among men than women. Grandfathers are usually the ones who pass on special skills and life wisdom

[29] B. L. Neugarten, K. K. Weinstein, *The changing american grandparent*, "Journal of Marriage and Family" 26 (1964) 2, pp. 199–204.

to their grandchildren, and in this role, they may also be somewhat superior to the grandchild's parents.[30] Grandmothers are often more present and actively involved in their grandchildren's lives than grandfathers, which is in line with our findings, as it turned out that the distant grandparenting style is more characteristic of men than women.[31]

Fun seekers are most frequently younger grandparents, while older grandparents rarely identify themselves with this style. The fun seeker grandparenting style is more common among younger grandparents, which agrees with our findings.[32] The opposite is true for the distant figure grandparenting style, which most frequently appears in older grandparents.[33] In contrast,[34] we observed that grandparents younger than 65 are usually more distant than older grandparents. Perhaps such a change has occurred because older grandparents are increasingly spending the rest of their lives at an older age in a nursing home, or they want to prove their independence despite their age. In accordance with our findings, the research of,[35] points out that many grandmothers in old age prefer to distance themselves from their children and grandchildren and refuse their help, as they find it difficult to accept the fact that they should become more dependent on someone or that they would no longer be able to take care of themselves. Krasnova researched the styles of grandparenting that are characteristic of grandmothers and found that among younger grandmothers, who are under 55 years old and still working, the formal style prevails, since it does not require a lot of effort and energy from them, as it mainly consists of taking walks and watching TV with the grandchildren. For older grandmothers, after retirement, this style shifts into one of two directions: active or distant grandparenting. On the one hand, after retirement, they have more time to actively devote themselves to their grandchildren, but on the other hand, a new lifestyle can almost completely distance them from the grandchildren.

30 B. L. Neugarten, K. K. Weinstein, *The changing american grandparent*, "Journal of Marriage and Family" 26 (1964) 2, pp. 199–204.
31 T. Mlakar, *Stari starši v življenju vnukov*, "Kakovostna starost" 18 (2015) 2, pp. 3–21.
32 B. L. Neugarten, K. K. Weinstein, *The changing american grandparent*, "Journal of Marriage and Family" 26 (1964) 2, pp. 199–204.
33 T. Mlakar, *Stari starši v življenju vnukov*, "Kakovostna starost" 18 (2015) 2, pp. 3–21.
34 B. L. Neugarten, K. K. Weinstein, *The changing american grandparent*, "Journal of Marriage and Family" 26 (1964) 2, pp. 199–204.
35 O. V. Krasnova, *Grandmothers in the Family*, "Russian Social Science Review" 43 (2002) 5, pp. 76–91.

We found that the distant figure grandparenting style is associated with the grandparent's marital status. This style is most characteristic of divorced grandparents, with the biggest difference compared to married, widowed and cohabiting grandparents. We anticipated this result because in the case when the grandparents are divorced, one of them usually does not live as close to the grandchildren as the other, and in the distant type of grandparenting, the physical distance is the key factor. Therefore, it is understandable that some divorced grandparents have a more distant relationship with their grandchildren, do not see them as often and do not know them very well. This style is characteristic of grandparents who live the furthest away from their grandchildren.[36]

The place of residence and the education level of the grandparents did not turn out to be factors associated with the formation of grandparenting styles. The distant style of grandparenting, specifically in grandmothers, was most characteristic of those with the lowest levels of education, while among the most educated grandmothers, a symbolic style prevailed, which is characterised by wanting to serve as an example to children, to teach them good work habits and familiarise them with moral principles.[37] The most educated grandmothers spend the least time with their grandchildren.[38] Perhaps there are discrepancies here due to the more than twenty-year difference in the years of research. In the context of the more recent research, we can assume that more educated grandmothers are still active, still devote themselves to their careers and do not have as much time to devote to their grandchildren. In the 1970s, however, perhaps due to their lower levels of education, they had to take on more jobs in order to support the family and could therefore not devote as much time to their grandchildren. Our second hypothesis can be partially confirmed, as there are statistically significant differences in the grandparenting styles according to gender, age, and marital status, but there are no differences according to the place of residence and education level of the grandparents.

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[36] A. J. Cherlin, F. F. Furstenberg, *The new american grandparent. A place in the family, a life apart*, London 1992, Harvard University Press.

[37] J. F. Robertson, *Grandmotherhood. A study of role conceptions*, "Journal of Marriage and Family" 39 (1977) 4, pp. 165–174.

[38] O. V. Krasnova, *Grandmothers in the family.* "Russian Social Science Review" 43 (2002) 5, pp. 76–91.

Limitations

In the research, all limitations are attributed to the sample. The research is based on the oldest grandchild and not on the remaining grandchildren. One of the limitations is the purposive random sample, which prevents us from generalising the results to the entire population. Regardless of the highlighted limitations, the acquired empirical knowledge allows the derivation of further guidelines for research.

Guidelines for further research

As we have already mentioned, the field of grandparental parenting styles is quite unexplored. In the future, it would also be interesting to investigate the role of great-grandparents, who are also increasingly present in families, given that life expectancy is increasing. Also, it might make sense to include both grandchildren and grandparents in the research on grandparenting styles, thus gaining insight into the same problem from both sides. Future research could also examine in more depth what differences in grandparents' parenting styles can occur in the relationship of grandparents with different grandchildren, perhaps even in different stages of the grandchildren's lives. Even in this case, it would make sense to focus on both sides, i.e., grandchildren and grandparents.

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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.[1] 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.[2] 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.[3] 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.[4] 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.[5] This author listed three criteria for personality maturity: autonomy, treating the other as a person, and

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1 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 reflecions*, "Religions" 1 (2022), pp. 1–13.

2 W. Okoń, *Słownik pedagogiczny*, Warszawa 2007, Wydawnictwo Akademickie Żak, p. 67.

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

4 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.

5 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.[6] 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 Wojtyla at the deepest level of him being a person.[7]

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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6 Z. Chlewiński, *Dojrzałość. Osobowość, sumienie, religijność*, Poznań 1991, Wydawnictwo W drodze.

7 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.[8] 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.[9] 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.[10] 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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8 P. Francuz, *Ksiądz Profesor Zdzisław Chlewiński*, "Roczniki Psychologiczne" 4 (2001), pp. 5–25.

9 Z. Chlewiński, *Dojrzałość. Osobowość, sumienie, religijność*, p. 9.

10 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.[11] 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.[12]

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.[13] 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.[14] In the following,

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[11] Z. Chlewiński, *Dojrzałość. Osobowość, sumienie, religijność*, p. 33.

[12] Chlewiński's concept has been used in the following publications (concerning well-known personalities): W. Juroszek, *Generał Fieldorf 'Nil' as a personal model in upbringing towards maturity*, "Kwartalnik Naukowy Fides et Ratio" 4 (2022), pp. 43–53; W. Juroszek, *Generał 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.

[13] Z. Chlewiński, *Dojrzałość. Osobowość, sumienie, religijność*, p. 21.

[14] 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.[15] 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[16] […]. 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.[17]

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15 G. Weigel, *Świadek nadziei*, p. 61.
16 G. Weigel, *Świadek nadziei*, p. 60.
17 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.[18]

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.[19] 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

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

[19] 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.[20]

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.[21]

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:

[20] Jan Paweł II, *Wstańcie! Chodźmy!*, Kraków 2004, Wydawnictwo Św. Stanisława, pp. 64–65.
[21] 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.[22]

Karol Wojtyla 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.[23] 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.[24]

In commenting on the above quote from the Pope's autobiography, it is worth emphasising that Karol Wojtyla, 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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[22] 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.

[23] Z. Chlewiński, *Dojrzałość. Osobowość, sumienie, religijność*, p. 20.

[24] Jan Paweł II, *Autobiografia*, p. 39.

Zdzisław Chlewiński points out that the mere formation of a strong will cannot be a goal itself.[25] 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).[26] 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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[25] Z. Chlewiński, *Dojrzałość. Osobowość, sumienie, religijność*, p. 9

[26] G. Weigel, *Świadek nadziei*, p. 125.

helping to penetrate the drama of one's life.[27] 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.[28]

John Paul II specifically said what an educator should do:

> Let's go to the youth: here is the first and basic educational requirement.[29]

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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27 G. Weigel, *Świadek nadziei*, p. 124.

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

29 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.[30]

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.[31]

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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30 Z. Chlewiński, *Dojrzałość. Osobowość, sumienie, religijność*, p. 33.

31 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.[32]

Wojtyła is an example of a mature, showing gratitude educator who enjoys the[33] 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.[34]

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.[35]

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

32 Jan Paweł II, *Autobiografia*, p. 48.
33 W. Juroszek, M. Kozubek, *Self-education into maturity in light of the theoretical approach of Zdzisław Chlewiński*, p. 251.
34 Jan Paweł II, *Autobiografia*, p. 51.
35 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.[36]

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.[37] 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.

36 Jan Paweł II, *Autobiografia*, p. 51.

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

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Education and formation of catechists and teachers of religion in the Czech Republic. Challenges and perspectives

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Abstract

This article presents a view of the contemporary situation in the field of training and lifelong education of catechists and teachers of religion within the Roman Catholic Church in the Czech Republic. The catechetical ministry always has a concrete form and a concrete addressee; therefore, it is useful to first address the context of this ministry in contemporary Czech society, and a short historical excursion should serve this purpose. This is the period since the fall of communism. The next part of the article deals with the issue of the legislative organisation of teaching in public schools and the resulting requirements for the professional qualification of a teacher of religion. The third chapter pays attention to catechetical formation, which from the point of view of the Church is crucial in the whole process of evangelisation (part of which is also catechesis). The fourth chapter analyses the system of education and formation of catechists and teachers of religion in the Czech Republic (basic and lifelong). The last part pays attention to some important challenges related to teaching religion and catechesis in the Czech secular environment. It also attempts to develop perspectives related to catechetical ministry in the Czech society.

Keywords

Czech Republic, catechesis, catechist, religious education, religious teacher, education, formation, secularism, socio-cultural change

The historical and social context of catechetical ministry

The relationship between the Church and Czech society up to this time is burdened to some extent by the past. First, it concerns the teachings of Jan Hus, his burning, the subsequent events that culminated in the Battle of White Mountain[1], the recatholization, the establishment of Czechoslovakia and Masaryk's associated political programme for the restoration of Czechoslovak statehood, which was based on a Reformation interpretation of Czech history that tended to point to the negative role of the Roman Catholic Church and led indirectly to the presence of anticlericalism in Czech society[2].

The beginning of communism in 1948 continued the anti-Catholic attitudes of Czech society. The communist regime launched a brutal, targeted repressive policy against the churches, which was accompanied by aggressive atheist propaganda. The majority of society just stood silently by and did not react to this repression.[3]

After the fall of the communist regime in 1989, major and fundamental changes occurred in the social, political and economic life of the Czech Republic. These changes were also reflected in the religious sphere. The space for religious freedom was opened up, and the credit of religion in general increased in society. After four decades of programmatic atheisation and restrictions on religious freedom, a new stage is now dawning for the churches, which have the ambition to be an important part of the new democratic society.

The renewal of religious institutions (church schools, theological faculties, charities), orders and congregations is gradually occurring. Religious associations, which in the past were an important part of Czech society, are being re-established. On the other hand, the churches were weakened structurally, materially, mentally and in terms of personal resources, and it became obvious that their renewal would take several decades. The problems went much deeper than they appeared at first sight. The communist regime had damaged not only the church structures but especially the cultural and spiritual background

1 See: T. Jarmara, *Náboženství a církve v politickém životě České republiky po roce 1989*, "Studia Theologica" 24 (2022) no. 3, pp. 105–124; P. Čornej, *Jan Hus v proměnách šesti století*, "Studia Theologica" 17 (2015) no. 3, pp. 19–35.

2 See: M. Trapl, *František X. Halas o vztahu T. G. Masaryka k římskokatolické církvi*, "Studia Theologica" 19 (2017) no. 4, pp. 31–39.

3 Cf. M. Trapl, *Český politický katolicismus v letech 1918–1938*, in: P. Fiala et al., *Český politický katolicismus 1848–2005*, Brno 2008, CDK, pp. 183–195.

that the churches had co-created in Czech society in the past. Many activities were irreversibly lost and could not be restored. The churches also had to deal with many internal problems, such as the continued operation of the so-called hidden church, the occupation of individual bishoprics and parishes, the issue of StB collaborators from the church ranks, and polarising currents within the church.[4] These and many other complicated issues are slowly coming to a standardised form.

It can be concluded that the churches, despite all the difficulties and in spite of the entrenched secularism, strive to be part of today's Czech society and through their activities want to co-create a value-based society that can be aware of its Christian roots.

Legal basis for teaching religion in schools

After the fall of communism, churches were again given the opportunity to work in schools. This action was anchored in modern legislation. Today, the teaching of religion in public schools is governed by the following legislation:

- Act No. 3/2002 Coll. on Freedom of Religion and the Status of Churches and Religious Societies and on Amendments to Certain Acts (Act on Churches and Religious Societies).[5]

  This law provides that registration confers legal personality on a particular church or religious.[6] Currently, 21 churches or religious societies are registered under this law in the Czech Republic.[7] If the legal conditions are met, religious societies may also be authorised to exercise "special rights, " which include the ability to teach religion in state

[4] See: T. Petráček, *Sekularizace a katolicismus v českých zemích: specifické rysy české cesty od lidové církve k nejateističtější zemi světa*, Ostrava 2013, Moravapress, pp. 107.

[5] Cf. P. Jäger, *Církve a náboženské společnosti v České republice a jejich právní postavení*, Brno 2006, CDK.

[6] See: Zákon č. 3/2002 Sb. § 6 odst. 1; srov. také Z. Horák, *Církev a české školství*, Praha 2011, Grada, p. 222.

[7] H. Pavlincová, *Religionistická encyklopedie, heslo církve a náboženské společnosti v ČR*, [online]. Sociologický ústav AV ČR, v.v.i., [cit. 18.12.2024]. Dostupné na https://rg-encyklopedie.soc.cas.cz/index.php/c%C3%ADrkve_a_n%C3%A1bo%C5%BEensk%C3%A9_spole%C4%8Dnosti_v_%C4%8CR_(JKI-K)

schools or[8] to establish religious schools.[9] The conditions for obtaining a "special right" include: a minimum period of 10 years since registration, a proven 10-year period of publication of an annual report on activities for each calendar year, proper performance of obligations to the state and third parties, and proof of a minimum of 0.1% of adult citizens or foreigners with permanent residence in the Czech Republic.[10]

- Education Act No. 561/2004 Coll. on pre-school, primary, secondary, higher vocational and other education, as amended (the latest amendment is effective from 27 February 2021)).[11]

The current law replaced various legal amendments concerning education that occurred after the fall of communism. These include, first of all, the School Act No. 29/1984 Coll., which has been amended several times, Act No. 564/1990 Coll., on State Administration and Self-Government in Education, and Act No. 76/1978 Coll., on Educational Institutions.

According to Section 3, schools must follow the Framework Educational Programme (FEP), prepared by the Ministry of Education, which is implemented in individual schools and supplemented by their own School Education Programmes (SEPs), which reflect the characteristics of one or another party and also contain curricula with elaborated contents of individual subjects. The optional subject of religion also has a curriculum in force, approved by the Ministry of Education on 2 June 2004 with effect from 1 September 2004 under No. 20 924/2003-22, ecclesiastically approved at the 49th plenary session of the Czech Bishops' Conference on 9 April 2003.[12]

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8 See: Zákon č. 3/2002 Sb. § 7 odst. 1 písm. a.

9 See: Zákon č. 3/2002 Sb. § 7 odst. 1 písm. e; srov. Také S. Přibyl, *Pojetí tzv. "zvláštních práv" církví a náboženských společností podle zákona č. 3/2002 Sb.*, "Revue církevního práva" (2004) no. 1 (27), pp. 7–21;

10 See: Z. Horák, *Církev a české školství*. Praha 2011, Grada, p. 227; J. Kříž, *Zákon o církvích a náboženských společnostech. Komentář*, Praha 2011, C.H. Beck, pp. 314–317.

11 See https://www.zakonyprolidi.cz/cs/2004-561

12 Cf. Česká biskupská konference, Osnovy k výuce náboženské výchovy římskokatolické církve v 1.-9. ročníku základní školy, Praha 2004, Sekretariát České biskupské konference; L. Muchová, *Curricula of religion in Czech state schools at present*, "Studia Theologica" 6 (2004) no. 1, pp. 74–89. Dostupné z: https://www.studiatheologica.eu/artkey/sth-200401-0007_Osnovy_nabozenstvi_na_ceskych_statnich_skolach_v_soucasnosti.php. [cit. 21.12.2024].

The Education Act also sets out the conditions for teaching religion in public schools in Section 15.

According to this section, religion may be taught in schools in accordance with the applicable principles and objectives of education in the Czech Republic.

The teaching of religion may be provided by registered churches or religious societies that have been granted the “special right” to teach religion in state schools, also cooperatively, as appropriate, on the basis of a written agreement.[13]

In public primary and high schools, religion is taught as an optional subject.[14] The minimum number of pupils is 7. Registration for the course is provided by the particular church or religious society each year. Religious education may be taught in combined groups of pupils from different classes of a school. It may also be taught in combined groups of pupils from different schools by agreement. This agreement also regulates financial matters. The maximum number of pupils in a class is 30.

A religion teacher (catechist) may teach religion by agreement with a particular school. The authorisation to teach religion (canonical mission) is issued by the statutory body of the church or religious society.

- Act No. 563/2004 Coll. on Teaching Personnel and Amendments to Certain Acts, as amended, Sections 3, 4, 14 (22) and 32.[15]

This law deals with the conditions that are a prerequisite for the status of a teaching worker in schools, among which is also a teacher of religion.

§ Section 3 of this Act specifies the conditions necessary for the practice of the activities of a teaching worker. A person who qualifies the following prerequisites may be a teaching worker:

- has the full competence to perform legal acts,
- is professionally qualified to undertake activities directly related to the teaching he/she does,
- has an unblemished reputation,

[13] See: https://www.zakonyprolidi.cz/cs/2004-561#cast1

[14] If religion is taught as an elective subject at the school, the religion teacher must submit a syllabus for the subject to the school principal, which becomes part of the school’s educational programme (School Curriculum).:

[15] See https://www.zakonyprolidi.cz/cs/2004-563

- is in good health,
- has proven her knowledge of the Czech language.

§ Section 14 characterises the basic requirements for teachers of religion.[16]

A teacher of religion obtains his or her professional qualification through university studies in accredited master's degree programmes:
- in the field of theological sciences,
- in the field of pedagogical sciences, with pedagogical preparation for teaching religion,
- in the field of pedagogical or social sciences and with a university degree achieved in the frame of studies in accredited bachelor's degree programmes in the field of pedagogical sciences, with pedagogical preparation for teaching religion, or in the frame of accredited lifelong learning implemented by a university (theological, pedagogical) with a pedagogical preparation programme for teachers of religion.

Training of catechists and teachers of religion

The requirements for the training of teachers of religion and catechists are clearly expressed in the above-mentioned Education Act[17]. Further guidelines and recommendations can be found in the catechetical documents of the universal Church[18] and the documents of the particular church in the Czech Republic.[19]

Today is a time of great social and cultural changes, some of which have a global impact (the digitalisation of culture and the globalisation of culture) and some of which are specific to a given environment (the highly secularised Czech society). The described phenomena strongly influence each other and thus determine the processes through which rapid and radical changes in human

16 See https://www.zakonyprolidi.cz/cs/2004-563#cast1
17 Cf. Act No. 563/2004 Coll., § 3, § 14.
18 For the purpose of this article, we will be inspired by the latest 2020 Directory for Catechesis (hereafter DpK).
19 For the purpose of this article, we will be inspired by the Document for the Direction of Catechesis and Religious Education in the Czech Republic from 2015.

life occur in its various dimensions (social life, value orientation, attitudes, worldview, interpersonal relations, education).[20]

In the context of these great changes, in a time of cultural pluralism and the challenges that arise from it, Christian formation plays an important role. Formation should be focused on the individual so that they are able to face global tendencies that could overshadow the originality and individual journey of faith of each person.[21] Christian formation concerns primarily those who are ordained for catechetical ministry, although it is specific. It requires special attention, and local churches should devote sufficient energy and resources to it, because the quality and effectiveness of pastoral and catechetical activities depend on the quality of the persons involved.[22] The Directory devotes an entire, extensive Chapter IV to this issue. This emphasises to some extent the need for good and adequate catechetical formation. Catechetical formation is a lifelong process that takes place in the communion of the Church, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Thus, formation cannot be limited to the acquisition of professional skills in basic studies or lifelong learning. It also has a transcendental dimension in which the baptised person experiences in the living community of the Church the life of faith, its personal and social dimension. Everything occurs in his inner self. The Holy Spirit accompanies him in the process of internalising the message of the Gospel, during which he discovers in himself the deepest identity of a child of God. In this way, the Gospel becomes for him the fundamental orientation for his life and missionary mission. This mission, based on God's call and free decision, can also be realised through the catechetical ministry in the community of the Church.[23]

In the latest Directory, we find other important suggestions and recommendations for catechetical formation, which, although for the purpose of this paper it is not important to analyse in detail, are worth at least mentioning that some of them build on previous documents and confirm their relevance and validity, while others respond to the challenges of our time and therefore bring new content, methodological and organisational elements.

[20] See: DpK, Introduction.
[21] See: DpK, Introduction.
[22] See: Dpk, 130.
[23] See: DpK, 131; 318; T. Reimer, *Katechéza v súčasnej dobe. Podnety a výzvy nového Direktória pre katechézu*, Bratislava 2021, Don Bosco, p. 50.

The principles according to which today's catechetical formation should function must not only reflect the principle of fidelity to God and man but also take into account new findings in the humanities and social sciences, especially in the area of digital culture and social communication. These changes are justified precisely because of the changes in the socio-cultural context into which the catechetical ministry of the church is entering.[24]

The current and valid catechetical document issued by the Czech Bishops' Conference in 2015 is the document about the direction of catechesis and religious education in the Czech Republic.

The text is inspired by the official catechetical documents of the universal Church.[25] It reminds us that the responsibility for the evangelising mission of the local Church, including education in the faith, lies with the Christian community as a whole under the leadership of the diocesan bishop. The other persons who are officially ordained by the Church for this task (priests, deacons, religious and lay persons) exercise their mission in a particular way, according to their position in the Church, in communion with the bishop.[26]

Catechesis should accompany a person at every period of his life and is also essential for the growth of the Church community. Therefore, it should not be offered only privately. This is also why some members receive an official mandate from the Church to serve within the community in the process of faith formation. The lay catechist should inwardly feel a call to this ministry from God.[27]

The document underlines that ongoing formation is an essential part of the ministry of the catechist and teacher of religion. The aim of this formation is to prepare the catechist for evangelising and catechetical ministry in the Church. The text speaks of so-called competences (theological, spiritual, communicative and cultural).[28] We can speak of theological competence when the catechist

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[24] Cf. Z. Marek, *Formacja katechetów w ujęciu dyrektorium o katechizacji*, "Studia Katechetyczne" 19 (2023), pp. 335–346; A. Zellma, *Formation of Catechists – Inspirations from Directory for Catechesis*, "Studia Warmińskie" 58 (2021), pp. 285–300; L. Dřímal, *Nové direktorium pro katechezi. Další výzva pro vychovatele víry na všech úrovních*, "Caritas et Veritas" 12 (2022) no. 2, pp. 108–116; R. Czekalski, *Tożsamość katechety i jego formacja w dyrektoriach z lat 1971–2020*, "Studia Katechetyczne" 17 (2022), pp. 81–98.

[25] It includes an overview of all Church documents related to the topic under discussion (in alphabetical order CIC, CiV, CT, DCE, DV, EG, EN, GS, GE, LF, LG, RH, SC, VDK).

[26] Comp. Česká biskupská konference, *Dokument o směřování katecheze a náboženského vzdělávání v České republice*, Praha 2015, Sekretariát České biskupské konference, 30.

[27] Cf. Česká biskupská konference, *Dokument o směřovani katecheze*, 30.

[28] Cf. Česká biskupská konference, *Dokument o směřovani katecheze*, 32.

and religious teacher has acquired theological education and can apply it adequately in practice. Spiritual competence is based on human maturity and personal experience of living the faith. The catechist and teacher of religion is to be given maximum support by the Church. Only on the basis of his own experience of faith can he accompany those entrusted to him. Communicative competence includes a set of knowledge and skills that enable the content of religious education and catechesis to be conveyed clearly, distinctly and appropriately for the age of the addressee. It includes knowledge of the principles of faith pedagogy and of today's educational approaches and practices in the field of pedagogy and didactics of religious education. The catechist and teacher of religion should be able to work as a team in the team in which he/she works. Cultural competence is acquired by the catechist and teacher of religion by gradually deepening a profound awareness of belonging to people. Together with them, she shares the conditions of life and together with them, she seeks ways to make her faith beneficial to the whole culture of individual and social life.[29] All these competencies are achieved by the catechist in the context of higher education at theological and pedagogical faculties, and in addition by the ability to live actively in a concrete Christian community (e.g., parish) and by deepening the communal and personal dimension of spiritual life. Having acquired the required training for catechetical ministry, the formation of catechists and teachers of religion occurs throughout life in a system of continuing education and related formation.[30]

Organisation of education and formation of catechists and teachers of religion in the Czech Republic

On the basis of the requirements of the Education Act[31], the requirements and recommendations of the ecclesiastical documents of the Vatican dicasteries and the Czech Bishops' Conference, the formation of catechists and teachers of religion is organised in the Czech Republic in cooperation with churches, theological faculties and educational institutions. This system includes several stages of training and ongoing formation. The preparation should respond

[29] Cf. Česká biskupská konference, *Dokument o směřovani katecheze*, 32.
[30] See: Česká biskupská konference, *Dokument o směřovani katecheze*, 33.
[31] Cf. Česká biskupská konference, *Dokument o směřovani katecheze*, 33.

to the type of environment and the specific addressees to whom the religious teacher or catechist will be appointed.[32] In a similar spirit, the Document on the Direction of Catechesis and Religious Education issued by the Czech Bishops' Conference in 2015 expresses itself about catechetical formation.[33]

Fundamental formation and education for teachers of religion and catechists

The new Directory for Catechesis speaks of the three dimensions of catechetical formation, which are inherently linked and cannot be separated from each other, since man as such is an indivisible unity. The most profound of these relates to his vocation to "be" a catechist, a formative process that helps the catechist mature on a human level. Above all, it is about emotional balance, the capacity for inner self-reflection, personal integrity, the ability to establish relationships and dialogue, constructive thinking and cooperation in a group, which contributes to the development of respect and love for the persons being catechised. The natural dimension of the catechist should also be complemented by a spiritual dimension, so that he maintains a strong awareness of the presence of God, who guides him, transforms him inwardly and empowers him to be a catechist – a missionary who is not passive in his catechetical ministry, but is able to meet people, their expectations and needs in an active way. His task is to develop an attitude of accompaniment of the catechised, i.e., to be their close guide on the journey of faith.[34]

An important characteristic for a catechist is docibilitas, or receptivity to God's grace, and openness to life and to people. This openness is conducive to lifelong self-development and inner growth. He can thus apply the methods acquired in formation to himself and to his ministry in the Church.[35]

The Directory for Catechesis places new emphasis on ensuring the safety of children and young people. The catechists are to protect the recipients of catechesis from any form of abuse. To have great respect for the personality and

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32 Cf. E. Alberich, L. Dřímal, *Katechetika*, Praha 2008, Portál, p. 216; L. Dřímal, *Fundamentální katechetika*, Olomouc 2023, Univerzita Palackého.

33 Cf. Česká biskupská konference, *Dokument o směřování katecheze a náboženského vzdělávání v České republice*, Praha 2015, Sekretariát České biskupské konference, 33; 44–45.

34 Cf. DpK, 132.

35 Cf. DpK, 135.

conscience of each catechised person. Therefore, it is of the utmost importance to avoid any kind of coercion, especially in the areas of freedom, economy or sexuality.[36]

Another important element mentioned in the document is ensuring the safety of children and young people, particularly protection from any form of abuse. Catechists should show the utmost respect for the other person and their conscience in their behaviour and avoid any kind of coercion, especially in the area of freedom, economics or sexuality. They should be able to "be with" or be able to establish deep interpersonal relationships within their ministry. Furthermore, catechetical formation should be devoted to the theoretical and practical training of catechists, or the dimension of "knowing" and "knowing how to", according to the principle of fidelity to God (fidelity to God's message) and fidelity to the person (to the context of his or her life, the environment of circumstances in which he or she lives).[37]

This document emphasises the importance of acquiring professional religious-pedagogical knowledge in the process of catechist formation. It is obvious that the biblical-theological sciences have a key place in this process. These should also be complemented by the study of the humanities and pedagogical sciences, which can broaden and deepen the basic formation stage.[38]

Biblical-theological formation is to be based on knowledge of the Christian message of faith, centred around the central mystery of salvation—the person of Jesus Christ. At the centre of this formation are the Holy Scriptures and the Catechism of the Catholic Church. The Directory for Catechesis reminds us that during theological study, it is not only theoretical knowledge that is at issue, but the study is a holistic process of preparation for the important catechetical mission and is intended to lead to the development of a synthesis and inner coherence in the understanding of the Church's teaching. This coherence allows for a deep and contextual understanding of the theological

36 Cf. DpK, 141–142.

37 Cf. DpK, čl. 136–150; R. Czekalski, *Tożsamość katechety i jego formacja w dyrektoriach z lat 1971–2020*, "Studia Katechetyczne" 17 (2022), pp. 81–98; L. Muchová, *The teacher of religion – missionary and evangelist, but also a professional and expert. Above all, however, a Christian experiencing a deep internal relationship with God through Christ*, "Caritas et veritas" 7 (2017) no. 2, pp. 104–120.

38 Cf. R. Czekalski, *Tożsamość katechety i jego formacja w dyrektoriach z lat 1971–2020*, "Studia Katechetyczne" 17 (2022), pp. 92–93.

structure, which facilitates the catechist's orientation on various fundamental doctrinal issues.[39]

The consequence of a well-ordered formation should be the deepening of the catechist's faith, so that he can live it in a conscious way and be able to relate the theological knowledge acquired to everyday life. In this way, the catechist can better assess the situations of individuals, better catechise them and, above all, present faith to them as a living and inseparable part of human reality.[40]

The Education Act clearly specifies the requirements for the preparation of teachers of religion.[41] The law implies that persons who intend to become teachers of religion in schools have three options for obtaining the necessary training. The first option is to obtain a master's degree in theological studies from a university. Next, they can obtain a master's degree in pedagogical sciences, focusing on the preparation of teachers of religion. As a third option, the law offers the option of earning a master's degree in any educational field, and in addition to that, earning at least a bachelor's degree in pedagogical sciences with a focus on religious teacher preparation or education through accredited continuing education programmes offered by colleges with a focus on religious teacher preparation.

If someone does not meet these educational requirements, he or she may not practice teaching in a school. In extraordinary situations, the law allows principals to dispense with these basic requirements, such as when a particular educator teaches a subject at a school for which he or she has a college degree and it is his or her primary activity and teaches religious education to supplement his or her full-time teaching load. In such a case, the principal may employ a teacher without the necessary qualifications to teach religion. In addition, the principal may employ an unqualified teacher of religion if he or she demonstrates that he or she does not have another qualified teacher in that area. A third possibility where, by law, a principal may dispense is when a religious education teacher has reached the age of 50 and has been in direct teaching for a minimum of 15 years.[42]

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[39] Cf. R. Czekalski, *Tożsamość katechety i jego formacja w dyrektoriach z lat 1971–2020*, "Studia Katechetyczne" 17 (2022), pp. 92–93.

[40] DpK, 144–147.

[41] Cf. Act No. 563/2004 Coll., § 14

[42] Act No. 563/2004 Coll., § 22 a § 32

Currently, theology can be studied at three theological faculties in the Czech Republic: the Catholic Theological Faculty of Charles University (hereinafter KTF UK)[43], the Sts. Cyril and Methodius Faculty of Theology of Palacky University in Olomouc (hereinafter CMTF UP)[44], and the Faculty of Theology of the University of South Bohemia in České Budějovice (hereinafter referred to as TF JU)[45], where one can obtain a bachelor's and master's degree in theology and thus qualify for the requirements of the Education Act.[46] For an overview, we present the number of graduates of Master's programmes at individual faculties.[47] In 2022, 17 students graduated from the theological faculty of Charles University, 79 students graduated from CMTF UP in 2023, and 1 student graduated from TF JU in 2023.

In addition to Catholic theology, students of other churches can obtain qualifications for teaching religion in schools by studying theology at the Hussite Theological Faculty of Charles University (HTF UK)[48] and the Evangelical Theological Faculty of Charles University (ETF UK).[49]

In addition to theological faculties, it is possible to obtain qualifications for teaching religion in schools at other faculties in the Czech Republic, e.g. The Faculty of Education at the University of Hradec Králové (hereafter referred to as the Faculty of Education at the University of Hradec Králové) offers students a three-year Bachelor's degree programme in Religious Education, but a graduate of this programme can only be employed as a teacher of religion if he or she has completed a follow-up Master's degree in theology or has already

[43] Cf. KTF UK, Annual Report on the Activities of the Catholic Theological Faculty in 2022, [online] [cited 4 January 2025], available from: [https://www.ktf.cuni.cz/KTF-193-version1-vyrocni_zprava_o_cinnosti_2022.pdf]

[44] Cf. CMTF UP, Annual report on the activities of CMTF UP for the year 2023, [online] [Cit. 4. 1. 2025], available from: [https://files.upol.cz/sites%2Fpub%2FPubNormy%2F2023%20-%20VZ%20CMTF%20o%20%C4%8Dinnosti.pdf].

[45] Cf. TF JU, Annual Report on Activities for 2022, [online] [Cit. 4. 1. 2025], available from: [https://www.tf.jcu.cz/images/TF/fakulta/dokumenty/strategicke-dokumenty-tf-ju/vz-tf-ju-2022_final.pdf]

[46] Cf. Act No. 563/2004 Coll.

[47] Data from the annual reports of individual schools.

[48] Cf. HTF UK, Annual Report on Activities in 2023, [online] [cited 2025 Jan. 4], available from: [https://htf.cuni.cz/HTF-46-version1-vz2023_final.pdf]

[49] Cf. ETF UK, Annual Report 2023, [online] [Cit. 4. 1. 2025], available from: [https://web.etf.cuni.cz/ETFN-429-version1-2023_vyrocni_zprava_final.pdf]

obtained a Master's degree in another field, e.g. at the Catholic Theological Faculty of Charles University.[50]

Another Faculty of Education of Masaryk University (hereafter PED MUNI) offered until 2024 an accredited course in Teaching Christian Education for Primary Schools, which offered training for primary school teachers in the general education field of Christian Education. A graduate of the Master's degree in Christian Education with an additional combination of majors can later become an elementary or secondary school religious education teacher.

Continuing education and formation for teachers of religion and catechists

The Directory for Catechesis considers the lifelong (permanent) formation of catechists an essential part of their ministry. It follows seamlessly from the basic formation. After obtaining a university degree and the ecclesiastical credential for catechetical ministry, the catechist is automatically included in the permanent formation phase. It is a lifelong process of education and spiritual growth that helps catechists acquire the art of responding to the changing needs of society, the ecclesial community, and the persons being catechised.[51] It is not a form of self-study, so it is not an individual matter, but is to be provided by the local church. It is a sharing of experience, mutual learning and support between the catechists.[52] Moreover, according to the document, the Church is to provide catechists with adequate tools and opportunities for permanent formation. These are most often professional courses, seminars, workshops, retreats, or study programmes.[53]

According to the 2015 Catechetical Guidelines of the Czech Bishops' Conference (CBC)[54], a necessary part of the ministry of the catechist and teacher of religion is permanent formation[55]. It is a lifelong study. After obtaining a uni-

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50 Cf. PdF UHK, Annual Report 2023, p.15, [online] [Cit. 4. 1. 2025], available from: [https://www.uhk.cz/file/edee/pedagogicka-fakulta/pdf/uredni-deska/vyrocni-zpravy/2023/vyrocni-zprava-o-cinnosti-pdf-uhk-za-rok-2023.pdf]

51 Cf. DpK, 135.

52 Cf. DpK, 139.

53 Cf. DpK, 154–156.

54 Česká biskupská konference, Dokument o směřování katecheze a náboženského vzdělávání v České republice, Praha 2015, wyd. Sekretariát České biskupské konference.

55 Cf. Česká biskupská konference, *Dokument o směřování katecheze*, 33.

versity degree, formation continues in the system of continuing education and formation. Permanent formation is provided by individual dioceses through catechetical centres in collaboration with theological and pedagogical faculties. The standards for continuing education and formation of catechists and teachers of religion are provided according to the document of the CBC[56].

Current diocesan formation programmes for catechists

According to data obtained by the Department of Church Data Analysis (CBA) in 2022, there are 1,600 catechists and religious teachers appointed in parishes and schools throughout the Czech Republic[57].

Therefore, there are a relatively large number of people appointed by the Church to work in the field of evangelisation within the catechetical ministry. Individual dioceses provide for them permanent catechetical formation or lifelong education. As an example, we will mention only one diocese, namely the Ostrava-Opava Diocese, which has been established in this field for a long time and offers the largest variety of programmes, of which we will present only the main ones.

The Diocese of Ostrava-Opava offers several forms of support to catechists and teachers of religion through the Catechetical and Pedagogical Centre (KCP).

A three-year lifelong learning programme. The programme offers a basic overview of the theological, pedagogical and psychological sciences, deepens them about current topics in the contemporary Church and society and focuses on didactic applications for all ages[58].

- Religious Teaching. This is an accredited programme for graduates of a Master's degree in Education or Social Sciences. The study to acquire competence and qualification to teach the subject of Roman Catholic religion at the 1st and 2nd level of primary school and at secondary school according to § 14 of the Act No. 563 Coll., on pedagogical staff.

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56 Cf. Česká biskupská konference, *Dokument o směřování katecheze*, 33.

57 Data were based on questionnaires from all dioceses in the Czech Republic, cyclically processed by the Department of Data Analysis and Processing of the Czech Bishops' Conference (we present data from 2021). See also CBC, Catholic Church in the Czech Republic (2024), Frýdek-Místek, KLEINWÄCHTER holding s.r.o, sec. 27.

58 See: Catechetical and Pedagogical Centre of the Ostrava-Opava Diocese, Course of Religious Teaching and Christian Education, [online] [Cit. 8. 1. 2025], available from: [https://kpc.doo.cz/podpora-katechetu/trilety-vzdelavaci-program-3/].

- Education to Christianity It is a study programme for graduates with a secondary education with a high school diploma. Study to acquire the competence to teach the Roman Catholic religion outside the school premises and to do pastoral and catechetical work for all age groups in the parish.

Supervision. This is an offer of supervision for all teachers of religion, priests and lay people.

- Open supervision group for the catechists. Open supervision groups meet in the following areas: The capacity of the supervision group is about 5–10 persons. A continuation will be arranged at the given locations according to the interest of the participants. The catechist can bring in his/her own topic or listen and be guided by the supervisor. It is possible to attend only one supervision session, and it is not necessary to attend repeatedly.
- Individual supervision is an option for catechists for whom group supervision is not acceptable/safe or who come with a specific problem.

Mentoring. It is an offer for catechists whose practice is not going as expected, or who are stagnating and looking for a way to continue teaching or catechesis. It is personal accompaniment in the development of the catechetical ministry. It takes the form of a conversation between two people, tailored to the needs of the religion teacher. It always occurs in a safe space. The content of the conversation remains between the mentor and mentee. It lasts one hour, and several follow-up conversations may be conducted (the usual time between conversations is one month). Mentoring is an offer of the KPC, for teachers of religion and catechists not to be left alone in their ministry[59].

An offer of individual support for beginning teachers of religion and catechists.[60] Objectives of support for beginning teachers of religion and catechists:

- To guide the beginning religion teacher in working with methodological materials with an emphasis on the grade or group of grades he/she teaches in a given school year.

59 See: Catechetical and Pedagogical Centre of the Ostrava-Opava Diocese, Course of Religious Teaching and Christian Education, [online] [Cit. 8. 1. 2025], available from: [https://kpc.doo.cz/podpora-katechetu/mentoring/].

60 See: Catechetical and Pedagogical Centre of the Ostrava-Opava Diocese, Course of Religious Teaching and Christian Education, [online] [Cit. 8. 1. 2025], available from: [https://kpc.doo.cz/podpora-katechetu/pro-zacinajici-ucitele/].

- Provide support to the teacher based on an analysis of his/her needs.
- To familiarise him/her with the support offered by the KPC and to link him/her to its system.

Offer of formation programmes of the CBK for catechists and teachers of religion

Inter-diocesan cooperation in the field of catechesis and religious education in the Czech Republic is organised and ensured by the Catechetical Section of the CBC. Its tasks include monitoring, initiating, and creating conditions for this cooperation. The Catechetical Section of the CBK also performs tasks assigned by the CBK that go beyond the possibilities of individual dioceses. Since 1996, it has been organising National Catechetical Congresses. These congresses are held periodically at least once every 2 years.

The first national congress was held on 25–28 October 1996 in Ústí nad Orlicí. Up to 450 participants were registered. The congress was attended by domestic and foreign experts in the field of catechetics, pedagogy and related fields, such as the Director of the National Catechetical Centre of the CBC, Dr. Helena Šťastná, P. Bohumil Kolář, Doc. Ludmila Muchová, Doc. Rudolf Smahel, guests from Slovakia and the main guest was P. Walter Ruspi, Head of the Catechetical Section of the Italian Bishops' Conference[61]. The second national catechetical congress was held again in the same place in 1998. The Third National Catechetical Congress in 2001 was held in Hradec Králové. All three congresses although they did not have a main topic, were certainly a great enrichment for all those who worked in the catechetical ministry.

Since the IV. The programme of the National Catechetical Congress has a clear focus, according to which the speakers are chosen. In addition to theoretical lectures, there are practical, thematic, according to the addressees of catechesis, workshops. The number of participants has stabilised at 200 catechists (priests, religious and laity).

[61] See: Archive of the Catechetical Section of the Czech Episcopal Conference; National Meeting of Catechists, News from the Diocese, in. Monthly of the Litoměřice Diocese 1 (1996) 13, p. 12.

An overview of other thematic congresses is given[62]:

- IV. The National Catechetical Congress in Hradec Králové (2003), theme: Catechism of the Catholic Church and its challenges for the third millennium.
- V. The National Catechetical Congress in Hradec Kralove (2005), theme: I believe in the forgiveness of sins.
- VI. National Catechetical Congress in Kroměříž (2007), theme: I believe in the resurrection of the body and eternal life.
- VII. National Catechetical Congress in Kroměříž (2009), theme: Faith.
- VIII. National Catechetical Congress in Velehrad (2011), theme: Christian Initiation.
- IX. The National Catechetical Congress in Velehrad (2013), theme: Living Faith and the Cyril and Methodius Tradition.
- X. The National Catechetical Congress in Třešť (2016), theme: Family and its role in religious education.
- XI. The National Catechetical Congress in Třešť (2018), theme: Missionary Dimension of the Church.
- XII. National Catechetical Congress in Kroměříž (2023), theme: The Art of Communication.

The next Congress will be held in 2026. The Catechetical Subcommission of the CBC for Catholic Education will have another working meeting on this topic in the first half of 2025.

In addition to the aforementioned congresses, the CBC Catechetical Section organises scientific conferences for the staff of diocesan catechetical centres or occasional study days for bishops in the framework of the CBC's Plenary Sessions.

The last study day for bishops on the Christian Initiation of Adults occurred on 22 January 2024 at the Archbishopric of Prague. An analysis of the current pastoral and catechetical practice in this area in each diocese is presented. Theoretical anchoring of the topic, presentation of the results of the sociological survey in the dioceses, examples from pastoral and catechetical practice, all were intended to serve the bishops to respond adequately to the pastoral challenges of today.[63]

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[62] See: Archive of the Catechetical Section of the Czech Episcopal Conference; National Meeting of Catechists, p12.

[63] See: Czech Bishops' Conference, The 138th Plenary Session of the CBK ended, in: Církev.cz | News: https://www.cirkev.cz/skoncilo-138-plenarni-zasedani-cbk_32315 (9.01.2025).

Some important challenges related to teaching religion and catechesis

The current status quo of religious education in schools. The Czech Republic is a country with a strong degree of secularisation. Therefore, due to the low interest in religion in state schools, religious education there fulfils mainly a cultural function. Nowadays, especially in secondary schools, instead of classical religious education, religious studies are offered, sometimes in the framework of civic education, which is a useful tool for learning about and understanding other cultures and other world religions or worldviews.

Support religious education. In most cases, churches introduce compulsory religious education within their established schools. Schools established by the Roman Catholic Church follow diocesan instructions; the specific form of instruction is part of the school's curriculum. The Report on the Activities of the Roman Catholic Church in the Czech Republic for 2022 states that the Roman Catholic Church operates 120 schools and educational institutions. Methodological support for catechists and religion teachers is provided by the diocesan catechetical or school centre.

The new identity of the subject *Teaching Religion*. The term "religion" in schools seems to be associated with several prejudices. The name itself often has negative connotations and gives the impression that it is a subject that is exclusively for children from families who attend religious services regularly.[64] In the future, therefore, a new alternative for this subject is being sought. The name alone is telling. The name Foundations of Christianity or Foundations of Christian Faith and Culture is a suitable alternative.

Offer new programmes for the continuing education of teaching professionals. Given the poor awareness of Christianity in the pedagogical environment of public schools, an important challenge for the Czech Bishops' Conference is the preparation of accredited programmes for the continuing education of teaching staff. These programmes can focus on introducing the basics of the Bible and theology to teachers of social studies subjects, especially history and the Czech language.

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[64] L. Muchová, *Výuka náboženství v českých zemích: pro Evropu ještě realita nebo již dějiny?*, "Studia Theologica" 5 (2003) no. 4, pp. 82–83. Online z: https://studiatheologica.eu/pdfs/sth/2003/04/07.pdf

Preparation of new curricula. Another current challenge is the preparation of alternative curricula for religion, or the basics of Christianity (Basics of Christian Faith and Culture), the content of which is not catechesis, but an introduction to the basic content of Revelation and its reflection in the history and culture of the Czech (also Moravian and Silesian) country.

Conclusions

The presented topic of the preparation and lifelong (permanent) education of the catechists and teachers of religion of the Roman Catholic Church in the Czech Republic responds to the needs of the local church and also responds to the challenges of today's time associated with the work of the Church in a secular society. A brief historical excursus helps to understand the transformation of religious education and catechesis from the fall of communism to this day.

Fluid times pose new challenges, and the Church is looking for new ways to better reach today's people. On the other hand, the established legislative framework sets specific requirements for the qualification of teachers of religion. Hence, the urgency of their professional and personal formation.

Today's catechetical ministry requires a comprehensive approach that combines professional training with spiritual formation and with the art of communicating with modern man.

The system of training for catechists and teachers of religion has a good foundation; however, the Church sees the need for change, especially in the area of practical preparation for teaching. Adapting religious education to the current needs of a young generation living in a highly secularised environment remains a current challenge.

These challenges show that teaching religion and catechesis in the Czech environment requires methodological and conceptual changes. The Church should also think about new ways of communicating with the public. On the one hand, the secular character of public education must be respected, but the cultural and historical significance of Christianity should be more emphasised.

As a necessary prerequisite for all the Church's evangelising and catechetical activities, systematic and systemic work to overcome the prejudices associated with the teaching of religion is essential. It is necessary to search for new forms that are comprehensible both for the believer and for a secularised society. The introduction of alternative curricula and new subject names could thus contribute to a better acceptance of the Christian message. Also, offering accredited programmes for the continuing education of teaching staff may help deepen the understanding of the Christian heritage on which Czech society is also based.

If in the future the Church is able to respond adequately to today's needs and challenges, religious education and catechesis can play an important role in communicating Christianity and its cultural, historical and spiritual heritage. The Church can therefore enrich the education system and contribute to a better understanding of the Christian values and traditions that are the foundation of European civilisation.

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Closeness in human relationships from an interdisciplinary perspective

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Abstract

Interpersonal closeness is a research issue, the exploration of which requires an interdisciplinary approach. The realisation of this objective has resulted in the presentation of closeness from a proxemic, haptic, psychopedagogical, philosophical and theological perspective. The outcome of the exploration is showing the contexts for understanding and implementing closeness in different areas of life. The article presents an attempt to conceptualise interpersonal closeness, which draws on the author's research. Its findings complement the literature search on the subject. Closeness is the co-presence of people and its purpose is mutual bestowing. The nature of this relationship is determined by internal factors as well as external conditions. What emerges from the analyses are postulates for establishing and strengthening closeness between people.

Keywords

interpersonal closeness, interdisciplinary research, relationships

The Person and the Challenges
Volume 15 (2025) Number 1, p. 195–209

Closeness is a phenomenon of a general human nature, and at the same time, it is deeply connected to the personal life of a particular individual. It is linked to his or her social relationships that allow him or her to feel and bestow goodness, to his or her inner experiences and to the whole context of his or her daily functioning. The good that is experienced and reciprocated is the very presence of the other, especially when it is full of empathy, commitment and, at the same time, respect for the freedom and sensitivity of others. Thus, interpersonal closeness belongs to a class of research problems that require interdisciplinary analysis. Interdisciplinarity is now regarded as a kind of intellectual obligation of the researcher. Talking about it is fashionable, ennobling and, above all, necessary in the practice of science, especially in the social sciences and humanities.[1]

The purpose of this article is to present a scientific reflection on the interdisciplinary dimension of interpersonal closeness based on relationships. The main research problem involves characterising interpersonal closeness in relation to its proxemic, haptic, psychopedagogical, philosophical and theological sources and interpretations. The article takes a theoretical and review-based approach, using methods such as the analysis of scientific literature and existing data from various studies. The interdisciplinary analyses will conclude with the author's attempt to conceptualise interpersonal closeness.

Proxemic and haptic aspects of closeness

The proxemic view of closeness emphasises the importance of space in the communication process. The term *proxemics* was introduced to science by Edward T. Hall, who used it to describe the spatial behaviour of people in their everyday, reciprocal interactions, as well as to describe the importance of the spatial organisation of dwellings, buildings and cities for human communication.[2] The proxemic approach draws attention to the importance of "silent speech," which is produced in personal space. Such a space surrounds every human being, and access to it is determined individually. Habits and rules of spatial behaviour influence people's daily lives. The use of space defines that is a member of the inner

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1 J. Kurczewska, *Wariacje na temat interdyscyplinarności*, in: Sz. Biliński (ed.), *Oceny nauki*, vol. 1, Kraków 2014, Polska Akademia Umiejętności, p. 80.

2 A. Sztejnberg, T. Jasiński, *Proksemika w komunikacji społecznej*, Płock 2007, Novum, p. 4.

community and who is outside it. Spatial distance signals the degree of mutual familiarity, closeness, and intimacy.

Wiesław Sikorski cites, following Amos Rapoport, three types of space: permanent space, semi-permanent space and non-permanent space.[3] The first is expressed in buildings, the spatial layout of towns and villages, the surrounding landscape, and the construction and arrangement of houses and flats. The permanent space is a matrix of part of human behaviour and the quality of communication. The semi-permanent space refers to the location of things in a particular living, office, or other physical environment. The non-permanent space, also known as the informal space, directly surrounds the body, setting boundaries of privacy and intimacy.[4]

The latter space is related to the haptic dimension of human life, which is expressed through touch. The basic premise of haptics, a scientific reflection on the tactile aspect of communication, is that touch as a type of social behaviour can sometimes say more than words.[5] In this sense, Krzysztof Maliszewski argues that touch can be considered as "a fundamental factor in relationship-building, without which a sense of security, normal development, interpersonal closeness – and sometimes even survival itself – are not possible."[6] Touch has its own cultural context, which derives from belonging to a particular cultural circle, and in some ways is also dependent on a given longitude and latitude. A haptic crisis is also evident in education, which affects the process of forming social attitudes.[7]

The link between touch and closeness is emphasised by Cem Ekmekcioglu, who says that touch is an important communication tool that builds mutual trust and brings people together. At the core of human relationships, there "are the physical closeness and sense of security we experience from birth. From this sense of security and inviolable connection, a sense of self-worth can develop,

3 W. Sikorski, *Przestrzeń w kształtowaniu relacji międzyludzkich*, Warszawa 2023, Difin, p. 91.
4 W. Sikorski, *Przestrzeń w kształtowaniu relacji międzyludzkich*, Warszawa 2023, Difin, pp. 91–105.
5 K. Jarząbek, *Słownik mowy ciała Polaków*, Katowice 2016, Wyd. Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, p. 14.
6 K. Maliszewski, *Dotknięcie pedagogiczne – nauczyciel jako wydarzenie*, in: J. Kurek, K. Maliszewski (eds.), *W przestrzeni dotyku*, Chorzów 2009, MDK "Batory", p. 211.
7 G. Godawa, *Znaczenie dotyku w edukacji. Model węgierski*, in: A. Kamińska, P. Oleśniewicz (eds.), *Edukacja jutra. Zróżnicowane obszary rozwoju edukacji instytucjonalnej*, Sosnowiec 2020, Akademia Sztuki Wojennej, pp. 121–122.

allowing us to find our own personality. This, in turn, is an important condition for contentment, enjoyment of life and happiness."[8] Touch is important in the realm of higher needs. It is because it is a carrier of content that transcends the touch of the skin. Therefore, a deficit of touch does not just mean a lack of stimuli to stimulate bodily responses. A deficit of touch is a sign of social and cultural changes that undermine social closeness.

Closeness in the proxemic dimension is thus a relationship in which spatial, social and physical conditions are intertwined. The last type of conditioning, in turn, draws attention to the haptic context of proximity, which is expressed in behaviours whose intensity should be proportional to the sense of interpersonal intimacy.

Psychopedagogical perspective of closeness

According to Arthur P. Aron et al. *closeness* may be understood as closeness in physical terms. In a broader context, it can be seen as the inclusion of others in the self, in the personal world of an individual. Greater closeness means that the cognitive representations of self and others overlap and mutually activate, interacting with each other.[9] Closeness can be understood as a causal relationship between two people. In this context, the use of the term *affiliation* is helpful, as it allows us to consider both closeness and distance as essential parts of the construction of interpersonal relationships. It also highlights the importance of sets of behaviours that reinforce closeness or distance.[10] Trust is necessary to establish closeness and to express it. Józef Stala emphasises that trust is important for the development of an individual and one's social relations, as well as for the development of societies, which contributes to their welfare.[11]

8 C. Ekmekcioglu, *Dotknij mnie. Dlaczego dotyk jest tak ważny*, Łódź 2019, Feeria, pp. 12–13.

9 A. P. Aron, D. J. Mashek, E. N. Aron, *Closeness as including other in the self*, in: D. J. Mashek, A. P. Aron (eds.), *Handbook of closeness and intimacy*, New York 2004, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers, p. 36.

10 *J. A. Hess, A. D. Fannin, L. H. Pollom, Creating closeness: Discerning and measuring strategies for fostering closer relationships*, "Personal Relationships" 14 (2007) no. 1, p. 26.

11 J. Stala, *Personal and social trust in contemporary poland in the light of empirical research*, "The Person and the Challenges" 11 (2021) no. 2, p. 47.

An important component of closeness is similarity, which is expressed in the sharing of attitudes and opinions. Being affectionate to someone is easier when that person is not too different in the way they see the world and when they reciprocate the affection. Similarity is influenced by personal attributes, which include competencies or physical attractiveness. The closer the relationship, the greater the focus on the other person's needs.[12]

Closeness in developmental psychology is considered a crisis described by Erich H. Erikson. This crisis occurs at the intersection of closeness and isolation in early adulthood, when the need and ability to form close relationships with others is countered by isolation, understood as avoidance of relationships and reluctance to form close relationships. Disorders in establishing an intimate relationship are expressed in keeping people at a distance. Meanwhile, achieving proper intimacy in marriage is a preparation for raising offspring in the atmosphere of love.[13]

Closeness in psychology is also considered attachment, which is most often embedded in the attachment theory developed by John Bowlby. Attachment is understood as the totality of relationships formed between a child and its mother, both in terms of the child's perceptions of his or her mother and, conversely, of the mother in relation to her child.[14] Bowlby's concept of attachment is used by researchers to understand the conditions for the formation of close bonds in romantic relationships, as well as to understand the loneliness of adults and why they do not enter into relationships. Studies of the nature of attachment bonds was deepened by Mary Ainsworth, who distinguished between three attachment styles: secure, avoidant and anxious-ambivalent.[15]

Closeness can be defined by the frequency with which individuals experience positive and negative emotions in a relationship. This approach emphasises the emotional element and, thanks to its universal approach, it is applicable to the analysis of relationships in family systems.[16] Emotional

12 E. Aronson, J. Aronson, *Człowiek – istota społeczna*, Warszawa 2020, PWN, pp. 296–300.
13 E. H. Erikson, J. M. Erikson, *Dopełniony cykl życia*, Gliwice 2011, Helion, p. 131.
14 *izolacja*, *przywiązanie* in: N. Sillamy, *Słownik psychologii*, Warszawa 1994, Książnica, pp. 229–230.
15 M. D. S. Ainsworth, S. M. Bell, *Attachment, exploration, and separation: Illustrated by the behavior of one-year-olds in a strange situation*, "Child Development" 41 (1970) no. 1, p. 49.
16 E. Berscheid, M. Snyder, A. M. Omoto, *The relationship closeness inventory: Assessing the closeness of interpersonal relationships*, "Journal of Personality and Social Psychology" 57 (1989) no. 5, p. 800.

closeness has a clear impact on the development of family members. In the parent-child relationship, it is a particularly important factor influencing the child. Parental warmth mitigates the impact of traumatic stressors and supports development.[17]

Noteworthy is the notion of closeness proposed by Alicja Żywczok, according to whom "proximity is the intensified or deepened presence of two or more subjects participating in an affective-spiritual relationship."[18] This definition draws attention to the relational dimension of closeness. The subjective view of this relationality directs attention to the other individual conceived as a person; hence, the personal character of closeness is born. Closeness also defines the quality of social life, because "future citizens are born in the family, which becomes the place where they first learn about civil virtues that determine the development and growth of every society. By nature, the family opens up to other families and societies, thereby performing its social tasks."[19]

Maria Ryś et al., relating the concept of closeness to marital relationship, distinguish between three types of closeness: emotional closeness, intellectual closeness and action closeness. Emotional closeness is expressed by showing tenderness, sensitivity and understanding. It allows spouses to share experiences of joy and worries, helped by empathy. Intellectual closeness is built by harmonising thinking regarding views, insights and values, giving a sense of a similar grasp of reality. Action closeness builds and strengthens bonds and helps to achieve common goals.[20]

The psycho-pedagogical view of interpersonal closeness shows it as a value and, at the same time, an attitude that is important in building relationships. The pursuit of closeness is determined by many factors, but it is always possible when an individual is willing to transcend what divides and isolates.

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17 S. Kerr, W. J. Hudenko, D. A. Godfrey, S. N. Lundgren, A. J. O'Malley, C. Sharp, *Validation of the emotional tone index for families (ETIF): A multi-informant measure of emotional closeness*, "Family Process" 60 (2021) no. 3, p. 936.

18 A. Żywczok, *Hermeneutyka uczuciowej i duchowej* bliskości, in: A. Żywczok (ed.), *Miłość – akt preferencji duchowości człowieka. Studium bliskości duchowej*, Warszawa 2013, Żak, p. 29.

19 T. Borutka, *Caring for the person and the human family as a priority for the state and the Church*, "The Person and the Challenges" 10 (2020) no. 1, p. 249.

20 M. Ryś, E. Greszta, K. Grabarczyk, *Intelektualna, emocjonalna i działaniowa bliskość małżonków a ich gotowość do rozwiązywania konfliktów oraz przebaczania*, "Fides et Ratio" 38 (2019) no. 2, pp. 245–246.

The philosophical inspirations of interpersonal closeness

When analysing philosophical reflections on closeness, it is worth quoting the words of Paul Ricoeur, a representative of philosophical hermeneutics. He refers to remoteness as a category that co-creates true closeness:

> *Remoteness* is preserved within *closeness*. Seeing similar is as much about seeing identity despite and through difference. This tension between identity and difference characterises the logical structure of similarity. As can be seen from this, imagination is the capacity to create new kinds through likeness; to create them not over differences, as in the understanding, but in spite of and through differences.[21]

Ricoeur notes that referring to the structure of the process of metaphorical cognition, we can speak of the paradox of remoteness and closeness. Closeness implies confrontation and, at the same time, the need for mutual recognition. This recognition is fundamental to the development of social order and peace and is at the same time an expression of human autonomy.[22] The ability to create bonds in spite of and through differences seems to be a very difficult task, but it is helped by an appeal to the imagination, which creates a kind of visualisation of this model of closeness and makes it more accessible.

Emmanuel Lévinas gives a descriptive definition of closeness. Characteristically, he distinguishes it from a static vision of a relationship:

> Closeness is not a state, a rest, but, precisely, an incomprehensible lack of space, an exclusion of relaxation that disturbs the peace of being, which is not omnipresent and rests in a certain place. Thus, closeness is never quite as close as a loving embrace […]. Closeness as 'nearer and nearer' becomes a subject.[23]

Dynamic closeness is characterised by a subjectivity that is irreducible only to consciousness. Closeness manifests itself as a relationship with another

[21] P. Ricoeur, *Proces metaforyczny jako poznanie, wyobrażenie i odczuwanie*, "Pamiętnik Literacki: czasopismo kwartalne poświęcone historii i krytyce literatury polskiej" 75 (1984) no. 2, p. 275.

[22] K. Bembennek, *Problem rozpoznania (reconnaissance) Innego w kontekście Ricoeurowskiej dyskusji ze stanowiskami Husserla i Lévinasa*, "Filo-Sofija" 18 (2018) 42, p. 73.

[23] E. Lévinas, *Inaczej niż być lub ponad istotą*, Warszawa 2000, Aletheia, pp. 137–138.

The Person and the Challenges
Volume 15 (2025) Number 1, p. 195–209

individual that presupposes the existence of a distance necessary to perceive and experience its essence. This distance is not isolation, but rather remoteness, which prevents the boundaries of closeness from being breached.

Józef Tischner draws attention to the dialogical dimension of interpersonal closeness. It implies the need to get to know the other person and enter into a relationship with him or her: "In a sense, we are windowless monads. I don't know what is going on in you, nor do you know what is going on in me. Nevertheless, I know that you – *you* for me – are *I* for yourself, and likewise I – I who am *I* for myself – am *you* for you. This knowledge is a bridgehead on which it is possible to set a bridge between me and you."[24] Just as Ricoeur appealed to the imagination, Tischner evoked the importance of knowing another individual in order to build unity with him or her. Achieving closeness thus becomes possible when it is built on a personal yet mutually experienced fundamental knowledge of the other person that initiates the encounter with him or her.

Karol Wojtyła refers to the theory of participation, which explains what true closeness is. This theory is based on the assumption that the other person is a fellow human being and that therefore, everyone's humanity should be recognised and valued. It belongs to everyone and, at the same time, is ontically independent of any human being and any community. The fellow human being is more than a member of a community, because his or her being in the community has a deeper meaning, which is expressed by participating in the community. It is a participation in the personal humanity of each person, a mutual penetration in the subjective dimension of participation.[25]

A philosophical account of closeness reveals it as an existential experience of humanity and, at the same time, as a category requiring an in-depth reflection. As the understanding of interpersonal closeness is not finalised, the concept can still be discovered and built up in the everyday lives of individuals and communities.

Closeness in theological terms

The transcendental dimension of closeness assumes the legitimacy of relating it to a relationship with God. The validity of this assumption is confirmed

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[24] J. Tischner, *Filozofia dramatu*, Kraków 2006, Znak, p. 80.

[25] K. Wojtyła, *Osoba i czyn*, Kraków 1969, Polskie Towarzystwo Teologiczne, pp. 321–323.

by Romano Guardini, who depicts the Creator as the initiator of a profound relationship with man, while at the same time emphasising the disconsonancy of human terms to describe this relationship. The expression of this is remoteness. It allows man to experience a closeness to God that is not a blurring of persons, meanings and identities.[26] The source of this closeness is the oneness of God in the unity of the Trinity. The three Divine Persons, united by the most intimate bond, are a model of closeness for all professing Christians.[27] The relationship with God teaches the meaning of relationships with others, and the image of moving between the poles of life is a content-bearing parable.

A more apophatic emphasis on the understanding of closeness is placed by Thomas Aquinas. According to him, God rises above all being and cognition.[28] Making this assumption means that the way of knowing God is through negation. The seemingly pessimistic overtone of these words gives way to admiration for the goodness of the Son of God, who, forsaking his own rights, enters the world of human relationships, transforming them through His death and resurrection. The incarnation of the eternal Logos is the basis for God's healing activity in Jesus Christ. Through physical closeness, it is possible to touch Christ, lay the sick at His feet, talk to Him, or follow Him. This is God's new way of acting. For a human being, the physical closeness of Jesus becomes an as yet unknown opportunity to be healed physically and spiritually.[29]

The truth of God's closeness was emphatically stressed by Pope Francis in his words:

> Our God is a God of closeness, He is a close God who wanders with his people […]. This is not a God who leaves written ordinances and says: 'Go on.' He gives ordinances, He writes them with his own hands on a stone, He gives them to Moses, He entrusts them to Moses, but it is not that He leaves them

[26] R. Guardini, *Bóg daleki, Bóg bliski*, Poznań 1991, W Drodze, pp. 90–91.

[27] P. Holc, *Trójca Święta przyczyną sprawczą i wzorczą jedności Kościoła: eklezjologiczne pryncypium na kanwie teologicznego dialogu katolicko-luterańskiego*, in: A. Baron, J. Kupczak, J. D. Szczurek (eds.), *Rozwój dogmatu trynitarnego: perspektywa historiozbawcza*, Kraków 2015, Uniwersytet Papieski Jana Pawła II w Krakowie Wydawnictwo Naukowe, p. 235.

[28] st. Thomas, *Traktat o Bogu, Summa teologii 1, kwestie 1–26*, Kraków 1999, Znak, p. 59.

[29] M. Zborowski, *Teologia bliskości Boga – soteryjne implikacje bliskości Boga w Jezusie Chrystusie w komentarzach i homiliach do Ewangelii synoptycznych Orygenesa*, "Teologia w Polsce" 9 (2015) no. 2, p. 233.

and goes away – He wanders, He is close by. 'Which nation has such a close God?' This is closeness. Our God is a God of closeness.[30]

God's involvement in man's creation and redemption, and accompanying him on the paths of life, is an invitation to closeness. Man's free response is the condition for building this unique relationship of creation with the Creator. It prompts us to establish closeness with another human being through a bond of love. Showing this love, especially towards those in need of various kinds of support, completes the meaning and scope of the theological understanding of closeness: "All that you did to one of the least of these my brethren, you did to me." (Mt 25:40). This attitude is out of step with the trends of post-modern culture, in which it is not uncommon for people to declare that they do not need a relationship with another man and can live without love. However, it is still in human nature to be oriented towards another human being.[31]

The issue of closeness is also present in theological studies on mysticism. Christian mysticism describes the experience of extraordinary closeness to God. It is accompanied by intense love and a desire to be completely united with God and even to dissolve in Him as "in a boundless ocean."[32] Such closeness is a gift that the chosen already experience during their earthly life.

Closeness in theological terms, then, is a special relationship with God that presupposes ultimate union with Him, but also contains apophatic elements. They are a form of remoteness that is essential for a profound experience of closeness.

Attempt of an interdisciplinary conceptualisation of interpersonal closeness

The variety of understandings of closeness has necessarily been limited to a fragmented account of the research issue. The cited interdisciplinary approaches

[30] Francis, *Our God is close and asks us to be close to each other*, 18 March 2020, https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/cotidie/2020/documents/papa-francesco-cotidie_20200318_pergli-operatorisanitari.html (26.11.2023).

[31] E. Osewska, *Rodzina i szkoła w Polsce wobec współczesnych wyzwań wychowawczych*, Kraków 2020, Uniwersytet Papieski Jana Pawła II w Krakowie Wydawnictwo Naukowe, p. 55.

[32] T. Dola, *Czułość Boga*, "ACADEMIA. Magazyn Polskiej Akademii Nauk" (2020) no. 1 (61), p. 57.

to interpersonal closeness show its depth and wide range of meanings. An exploration of the literature on the subject shows how much of a role closeness plays in social relationships. This becomes particularly evident in situations that threaten the emergence and development of closeness, such as the COVID-19 pandemic state. The social isolation associated with it has undermined interpersonal closeness, while demonstrating that this category requires commitment and effort.

In the pandemic situation of the SARS-CoV-2 virus outbreak, the author's research on interpersonal closeness was conducted.[33] It was carried out according to the methodological assumptions of the theory grounded in its constructivist version.[34] The research problem was stated in the form of a question: "What is the conceptualisation of interpersonal closeness in an interdisciplinary context?"

The research was conducted in 2022 in 48 participants selected according to the methodology adopted. The first results of the research were published in a book entitled "Pedagogy of Interpersonal Closeness."[35]

On the basis of the research carried out, a definition of interpersonal closeness can be proposed that refers to its interdisciplinary nature: Interpersonal closeness is the intense co-presence of people forming a relationship with the aim of mutual endowing. The intensity and way of expressing closeness depend on the individual circumstances and beliefs of the participants in the relationship. The understanding and experience of interpersonal closeness are related to the multidimensionality of human life, which builds its interdisciplinary character.

Closeness is experienced in individual, social, spatial and spiritual contexts, which gives it the status of a highly universal category. It is important to emphasise that closeness understood in this way has a personal dimension. Even if we speak of human closeness from a juridical perspective, it is only the participation of a human being in this relationship that gives it its full

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33 The research was part of a research project called "Closeness and remoteness in the situation of illness and social isolation experienced in a society emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic". The research was approved by the Ethical Committee for Scientific Research of the Pontifical University of John Paul II in Cracow, by the committee's decision of 23 March 2022 KE/01/03/2022.

34 K. Charmaz, *Constructionism and the grounded theory method*, in: J. A. Holstein, J. F. Gubrium (eds.), *Handbook of constructionist research*, New York 2008, The Guilford Press, p. 402.

35 G. Godawa, *Pedagogia bliskości międzyludzkiej*, Kraków 2023, Impuls.

dimension. The purpose of closeness is mutual bestowal, i.e., sharing a good that serves the other person. The pursuit of closeness contains a nurturing context that is expressed in practical behaviour aimed at its constructive fulfilment. Closeness appears as an important social category, the lack or excess of which is harmful. Above all, however, it is an essential value that inspires, attracts and encourages us to explore its mysteries. The reference of closeness to transcendental reality gives it a vertical perspective, the fruits of which are visible in horizontal relationships.

Closeness is a reality that presupposes the co-existence of opposites: courage and withdrawal, dynamism and meekness, determination and concession, heroism and ordinariness. It is a dynamic reality, constantly in the process of becoming and never having a fully "finished" status. This is expressed in the view of closeness as a *continuum* of being close and remote. Moving along the continuum is an expression of the freedom of people forming the relationship and offers the possibility to define the limits of intensity of experiencing another individual's presence.[36]

Finally, it is worth emphasising that interpersonal closeness is a fragile and sensitive value, even if it is built on strong bonds. Fragility stems from the threat to life, proximity of death, inevitability of fate and human frailty. Fragility implies the possibility of a rupture of what is good, i.e., a rupture of relationships and falling into conflict. Therefore, closeness requires constant care. The key to its establishment and development is love, which is the essence of any true interpersonal closeness.

Conclusions

The inclusion of an interdisciplinary perspective in research carries the risk of dealing vaguely with particular areas of the phenomenon. This risk is balanced by the benefit of showing a cross-sectional picture of the reality under study. To conclude, the analyses carried out can be assumed to have revealed the theoretical complexity of the phenomenon of interpersonal closeness and, at the same time, the contexts in which it is experienced. From the perspective of psychology, sociology, pedagogy, philosophy or theology, closeness appears

[36] G. Godawa, *Pedagogia bliskości międzyludzkiej*, Kraków 2023, Impuls, p. 323.

as a complex phenomenon. There is a need to distinguish this subject matter within the analysed approaches so that they contribute to expanding the scientific foundation related to defining and regulating the intensity of relationships, to the extent relevant to each scientific discipline. The portrayal of closeness as a value and the presentation of its meaning from an interdisciplinary perspective is a scientific result that can also be used to conceptualise further research into the phenomenon of interpersonal closeness.

The interdisciplinary view of closeness also provides a basis for determining the demands for actions to build and deepen interpersonal closeness. These include the need to strengthen family ties, which are the basis for developing closeness. It is important to shape closeness in everyday social relations, education and the mass media. An important recommendation for building closeness is to implement the principles of closeness pedagogy that define its methodology. By pursuing these demands, interpersonal closeness will be further recognised, valued and enhanced, benefiting the social relationships and individual experiences of each person.

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Contradictions between understanding sexuality in Catholic education (CE) and comprehensive sexuality education (CSE)

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Abstract
The article raises the problem that understanding sexuality in comprehensive sexual education strongly contradicts an understanding of sexuality in Catholic education. To establish these contradictions and main differences, the qualitative content analysis method was used to evaluate the concept of sexuality in the content of the guidelines for comprehensive sexuality education from a Christian anthropological perspective. An evaluation of the comprehensive sexuality education document in the light of Christan anthropology reveals that the concept of sexuality in comprehensive sexuality education is fundamentally inconsistent with the concept of sexuality in Catholic education.

Keywords
Catholic education, comprehensive sexuality, postmodernism, anthropology, love, self-giving, inseparable unity of body and soul, procreation, integrated sexuality, disintegrated sexuality

The Person and the Challenges
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Introduction

Today, many countries around the world are debating the concept of sexuality and its education. As noted by the Congregation for Catholic Education, "We are now facing with what might accurately be called an educational crisis, especially in the field of affectivity and sexuality"[1].

The comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) and Catholic education (CE) is not only a question of content or methods but also a question of two different worldviews. The mission of education today takes on a whole new context due to an ideology that is generically called 'gender theory', which "denies the difference and reciprocity in nature of a man and a woman and envisages a society without sexual differences, thereby eliminating the anthropological basis of the family. This ideology leads to educational programmes and legislative enactments that promote a personal identity and emotional intimacy radically separated from the biological difference between males and females. Consequently, human identity becomes the choice of the individual, one which can also change over time".[2]

Currently, two different conceptions of sexuality prevail, based on different worldviews.

From one side, the concept of *integrated* sexuality is dominated when sexuality is accepted as a given by nature (in the anthropological sense). In this case, human beings are treated as rational and free bodily sexual persons as a woman or as a man, whose bodily and spiritual areas constitute the indivisible unity. On the other hand, there is a concept of *disintegrated* sexuality, in which human beings and sexuality are perceived as products of social reality. This conception is characterised by a certain separatism, with the indivisible whole being separated and divided into parts. In the concept of disintegrated sexuality, the body is treated as separate from the human being, gender is separated from the person, love is separated from procreation, the family is separated from marriage, sexual identity is chosen, and sexual orientation is the main category used to categorise persons, society is not made up of males and females, but rather

[1] Congregation for Catholic Education, "*Male and female He created them*". *Towards a path of dialogue on the question of gender theory in education*, Vatican City, 2019, 1.
[2] Congregation for Catholic Education, "*Male and female He created them*", 1.

of depersonalised genders, and gender is split into two categories—social and biological sexes.[3] (Obelenienė and Narbekovas 2023).

The worldview determines educational goals

The problem of worldview is relevant to pedagogy not only in terms of the construction of educational goals but also in terms of the view of the human being itself. In the construction of educational goals, there is always the problem of worldview questions: "What is a human being?" "What is valuable?", and "Why is it valuable?" They derive from an understanding of human nature and are addressed to human beings themselves.[4] The outlook on life and humans, and hence the worldview, taken in its broadest sense, determines all educational work.[5]

According to Dennis McCallum, "There are too many philosophical and religious views to comprehend. Indeed, there are more than six thousand distinct religions in the world today. But the world's religions and philosophies tend to break down into a few major categories."[6] Dennis McCallum identified four main categories (reality, man truth, and values) to describe the differences between the five main worldviews: Naturalism, Pantheism, Theism, Spiritism and Polytheism and Postmodernism. Based on this worldview model, it can be argued that the most incompatible conceptions of the human being in today's educational content are those of postmodernism and Christian anthropology (Theism). According to the postmodernist worldview: "Humans are nodes in a cultural reality – they are a product of their social setting. The idea that people are autonomous and free is a myth."[7] By comparison, the Christian anthropology understanding of human beings is as follows: "Humankind is the unique creation of God. People were created 'in the image of God,' which means that we are personal, eternal, spiritual,

[3] B. Obelenienė, A. Narbekovas, *Evaluation of the concept of sexuality in the "Life Skills General program" from the perspective of catholic church teaching*, "Soter" (2023) no. 87, pp. 37–54.
[4] K. Pukelis, *Mokytojų rengimas ir filosofinės studijos*, Kaunas 1998, Versmė.
[5] A. Maceina, *Kultūros filosofijos įvadas*. "Raštai", Tomas I, Vilnius, 1991, Mintis, p. 126.
[6] D. McCallum, *Christianity: The faith that makes sense*, Tyndale House Publishers, 1992, pp. 36–37.
[7] D. McCallum, *Christianity: The faith that makes sense*, Tyndale House Publishers, 1992, pp. 36–37.

and biological." Other categories are also inconsistent with each other. For example, *values* category: Christian anthropology treats values differently: "Moral values are the objective expression of an absolute moral being." Values according to postmodernism: "Values are part of our social paradigms as well. Tolerance, freedom of expression, inclusion, and refusal to claim to have the answers are the only universal values."[8] If the curriculum is based on a post-modernist understanding of humans that treats human beings as "products of a socially constructed reality", that is fundamentally contradictory to the Christian anthropological concept of human beings as creations of God. The concept of *sexuality* does not exist as an independent concept. The concept of human nature determines the concept of sexuality. The concept of sexuality determines the content and objectives of sexuality education. Sexuality is an essential worldview category that determines the content and goals of sexuality education. Understanding worldview differences helps people understand how their worldviews impact their behaviour.

The background of the study: Components of different conceptions of sexuality and the categories that express their differences

Sexuality is a person's way of being in a masculine or feminine way. In a general sense, sexuality is the totality of qualities – feminine and masculine – that encompass the whole reality of human existence, both bodily and spiritual. There is a tendency today to devalue sexuality, to identify it with sexual orientation, the expression of sexual desire, and sexual pleasure, and there is a danger that this tendency is permeating the content of education. As noted in the *Policy standards on human sexuality in Catholic education*: "Errors in understanding human sexuality can lead to errors in understanding human nature, the moral order, and even truth and reality itself".[9] Likely, the contradiction between understandings of sexuality in Catholic education and comprehensive sexuality

[8] D. McCallum, *Christianity: The faith that makes sense*, Tyndale House Publishers, 1992, pp. 36–37.

[9] Cardinal Newman Society, *Policy standards on human sexuality in Catholic education*, 2020, https://cardinalnewmansociety.org/wp-content/uploads/Human-Sexuality-in-Catholic-Education-FINAL-LAYOUT-PUBLISHED-121720.pdf.

education will only deepen because a decade ago, the "Sustainable Development Goals" were approved by the member states of the UN. One of the objectives set out in this document invites member countries to guarantee universal access to: "information and education, and the integration of reproductive health into national strategies and programmes".[10] For this purpose, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) issued the 2nd edition of the revised International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education (Guidance) to help education and other authoritative institutions "in the design and development of comprehensive sexuality education programmes and methodological materials both within and outside the general education school."[11] The definition of sexuality, according to the Guidance:

> 'Sexuality' may thus be understood as a core dimension of being human which includes: the understanding of, and relationship to, the human body; emotional attachment and love; sex; gender; gender identity; sexual orientation; sexual intimacy; pleasure and reproduction. Sexuality is complex and includes biological, social, psychological, spiritual, religious, political, legal, historic, ethical and cultural dimensions that evolve over a lifespan.[12]

According to this definition, sexuality includes some components ("sex, gender, gender identity, sexual intimacy") that need to be explained in more detail. *Gender identity* "refers to a person's deeply felt individual experience of gender, which may or may not correspond with the sex assigned at birth and includes the personal sense of the body and other expressions of gender (that is, "gender expression") such as dress, speech, and mannerisms. The sex of a person is usually assigned at birth and becomes a social and legal fact from there on. Gender identity should be differentiated from sexual orientation".[13]

The definition of *gender*:

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[10] UN, *Transforming our world: the 2030 agenda for sustainable development*, 2015, para. 3.7. https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld/publication.

[11] UNESCO, *International technical guidance on sexuality education*, 2018, p. 12, https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/ITGSE.pdf.

[12] UNESCO, *International technical guidance on sexuality education*, 2018, p. 17.

[13] Council of Europe, *Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity* (SOGI), (2014) p. 2, https://edoc.coe.int/en/lgbt/7031-sexual-orientation-and-gender-identity-sogi-questions-and-answers.html

> Refers to the social attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female and the relationships between women and men and girls and boys, as well as the relations between women and those between men. These attributes, opportunities, and relationships are socially constructed and are learned through socialization processes.[14]

During analysing the definition of sexuality given in the Guidance, several categories can be identified, which are the most obvious. The sexuality according to the Guidance:

- is socially constructed;
- is not permanent but changing;
- the component of sexuality "gender identity" is not a given, but is optional;
- the concept of sexuality is dominated by the expressions of sexual desire;
- the concept of sexuality is not based on a binary sex system, i.e. it is not about male and female, but about social and biological gender;
- It can be assumed that love is attributed to emotions.

The concept of sexuality in Catholic education is fundamentally different. CE is founded on Christian anthropology[15]. The Pontifical Council for the Family defines sexuality as a fundamental component of personality:

> one of its modes of being, of manifestation, of communicating with others, of feeling, of expressing and of living human love". This capacity for love as self-giving is thus "incarnated" in the *nuptial meaning of the body*, which bears the imprint of the person's masculinity and femininity".[16] The love as self-giving of two opposite-sexual persons is a central component of sexuality. Even more, "every form of love will always bear this masculine and feminine character[17]

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[14] UNESCO, *International technical guidance on sexuality education*, 2018, p. 112 (referred as: Guidance).

[15] Cardinal Newman Society, *Policy standards on human sexuality in catholic education*, 2020, p. 4.

[16] Pontifical Council for the Family, *The truth and meaning of human sexuality*, 1995, 10, https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/family/documents/rc_pc_family_doc_08121995_human-sexuality_en.html.

[17] Pontifical Council for the Family, *The truth and meaning of human sexuality*, 1995, 11, https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/family/documents/rc_pc_family_doc_08121995_human-sexuality_en.html.

The concept of sexuality expressed in the Guidance seeks to cover all aspects of human life as a complex that includes "biological, social, psychological, spiritual, religious, political, legal, historic, ethical and cultural dimensions."[18] It would seem to be similar to the concept of sexuality in Christian anthropology:

> Sexuality characterizes man and woman not only on the physical level but also on the psychological and spiritual, making its mark on each of their expressions.[19]

However, the main difference in understanding sexuality in the light of Christian anthropology is that sexuality is not and cannot be an optional sexual identity, and cannot be treated outside the binary sex system, because sexuality reveals the totality of a man or woman's characteristics as received at the moment of Creation. Words from the book of Genesis "God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them" (Gen 1:27), according to John Paul II:

> constitutes the immutable basis of all Christian anthropology. This concise passage contains the fundamental anthropological truths: man is the highpoint of the whole order of creation in the visible world; the human race, which takes its origin from the calling into existence of man and woman, crowns the whole work of creation; both man and woman are human beings to an equal degree, both are created in God's image.[20]

However, the fact that the concept of sexuality in Guidance encompasses *ethical*, *cultural*, and even *religious* dimensions requires a more detailed analysis of that concept.

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[18] UNESCO, *International technical guidance on sexuality education*, 2018, p. 17.
[19] Pontifical Council for the Family, *The truth and meaning of human sexuality*, 1995, 13.
[20] John Paul II, Apostolic letter *Mulieris dignitatem,*1988, 6.

Methodology of the study

To identify the fundamental differences between the concept of sexuality in Christian anthropology (sexuality_CA) and the concept of sexuality in comprehensive sexuality education (sexuality_CSE), an evaluation of the comprehensive sexuality education document in the light of Christian anthropology was carried out using a qualitative *content* analysis method. The evaluable document is the *International technical guidance on sexuality education*, which guides comprehensive sexuality education. The evaluation process consisted of several steps:

1. Identification of evaluation parameters, which consist of dimensions and categories representing them, on the concept of human sexuality in Christian anthropology;
2. Extracting keywords based on the evaluation parameters and creating word pairs;
3. Multiple reading of the text of the Guidance, searching the keywords and extracting its contexts;
4. Categorisation of the context data received to define categories of sexuality_CSE;
5. Comparison of the categories of sexuality_CSE with categories sexuality_CA and discussion on the data analysis.

Determining the evaluation parameters

Christian anthropology is unambiguous in that sexuality is tied to the order of creation and therefore called to be faithful to this inner purpose. "Love and fecundity are meanings and values of sexuality which include and summon each other in turn and cannot, therefore, be considered as either alternatives or opposites."[21] Therefore, it can be argued that love as unconditional self-giving between man and woman and procreation, and their inseparability are seen as the fundamental values and the inner purpose of sexuality. These sexuality goals: (1) love as a goal of sexuality and (2) an inseparable expression of love

[21] Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, *Educational guidance in human love. Outlines for sex education*, 1983, 32, https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_19831101_sexual-education_en.html.

and procreation, have been chosen as dimensions for the evaluation of understanding sexuality_CSE.

The categories of the first dimension *love as a goal of sexuality*

Love is unconditional self-giving

The word "love," however, is commonly used and often misused, said Pope Francis[22]. Love is most often identified with feelings. However, in Christian anthropology, the concept of love derives from God's love, since He created man out of love and for love. "As the image of God, man is created for love. […] Love is therefore the fundamental and innate vocation of every human being".[23] As John Paul II pointed out in *Familiaris Consortio* "for sexuality is an enrichment of the whole person-body, emotions and soul-and it manifests its inmost meaning in leading the person to the gift of self in love."[24]

Love is the integration of the raw material of love and the values of the person.

Karol Wojtyla, in his work "Love and Responsibility," revealed the deepest meaning of love. Love is not a given but always a task. What is given is only the raw material of love. "Experiences which have their roots in the sensuality or the natural sensibility of a woman or a man constitute only *the raw material of love*".[25] Love is a human creation in which is given by nature (sensuality and natural sensibility) is integrated into the whole person's existence. It is a mistake to identify the *raw material of love* with love itself. "This is a mistake, and at the bottom of it's lies that utilitarian, 'consumer' outlook, which as we is contrary to the very nature of love."[26] Therefore, sexuality education is first and foremost the education of the capacity to love, which is inseparable from the education of chastity, from the capacity to integrate sensuality (libido) into love, to shift the interest from sexual values to the value of the whole person.

[22] Francis, Post-synodal apostolic exhortation *Amoris Lætitia*, 2016, 89.
[23] Pontifical Council for the Family, *The truth and meaning of human sexuality*, 1995, 8.
[24] John Paul II, Apostolic exhortation *Familiaris Consortio*, 1981, 37.
[25] K. Wojtyla, *Love and responsibility,* San Francisco 1993, Ignatius press, p. 139.
[26] K. Wojtyla, *Love and responsibility,* San Francisco 1993, Ignatius press, p. 139.

Chastity is a prerequisite for the ability to love

Love as self-giving is impossible without self-possession. A person cannot give what he does not have. Therefore, the education of chastity is inseparable from the education of love. “Chastity is the spiritual power that frees love from selfishness and aggression.”[27] Among all virtues, chastity “proves invaluable for the genuine growth of love between persons.”[28]

> Chastity is understood as a virtue, which expresses the integration of a person’s sexual desire according to moral convictions about personal life. It supposes self-control, openness to life, as well as love, which is beyond the pressure of physical sexual desire.[29]

Summarising what was said, the 3 categories that describe the first dimension – *love as a goal of sexuality* – have been highlighted: (1) love as unconditional self-giving; (2) *love is the integration of raw material of love and values of the person;* (3) *chastity is a prerequisite for the ability to love* (*sexual desire must be mastered by oneself*).

The categories of the second dimension: The inseparable expression of love and procreation

According to Christian anthropology, the human person is an inseparable unity of the soul and body. “The unity of soul and body is so profound that one has to consider the soul to be the ‘form’ of the body: i.e., it is because of its spiritual soul that the body made of matter becomes a living, human body; spirit and matter, in man, are not two natures united, but rather their union forms a single nature”.[30] In short, a human being is a corporeal sexual person. Cristian Anthropology always underlines the unbreakable existential and psychological link between the love-transferring or personal bonding dimension and the

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[27] The Pontifical Council for the Family, *The truth and meaning of human sexuality*, 1995, 16.
[28] Francis, Post-synodal apostolic exhortation *Amoris Lætitia*, 2016, 206.
[29] B. Obelenienė, *The anthropological dimensions of the preparation of youth for marriage and family*, in: *Global Perspectives on Catholic Religious Education in Schools. Volume II: Learning and leading in a pluralist world*, 2019, Springer Nature, p. 413.
[30] *Catechism of the Catholic Church,* 1993, 365, https://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/_INDEX.HTM

procreative or life-transferring dimension of human sexuality.[31] The dimension that binds people together comes from the need to express love in body language. Love comes from the spiritual dimension of man. Life-giving (procreative power) is only possible because of human corporeality. When these two dimensions of sexuality are separated in sexual intercourse and "divorced from this context of reciprocal gift – a reality which the Christian enjoys, sustained and enriched in a particular way by the grace of God it loses its significance, exposes the selfishness of the individual and is a moral disorder".[32] Woman and man are moral beings and can decide when and how many children to have. Expressing love in body language must not interfere with their free choice regarding children. Woman and man are intelligent and free human beings; they can be aware of human nature and fertility and manage their sexual needs following their plans, because "nature cannot be conquered by violating its law. Mastery over nature can only result from a thorough knowledge of the purposes and regularities which govern it. […] If he does violence to nature he also violates the person by making it an object of enjoyment rather than an object of love".[33] Each person expresses his or her sexuality through a person of the opposite sex. However, a person can never be a means; as a person, he is always the task. "A human being cannot be solely or mainly an object to be used, for this reason, that the role of a blind tool or the means to an end determined by a different subject is contrary to the nature of a person".[34]

To implement the inseparability of love and procreation in education, students must learn the correct facts about the beginning of human life and that it logically follows that pregnancy is a direct consequence of sexual relations and not of the misuse of contraception. It should also be argued that sexual relations are only justified in the context of marriage because teenagers are not mature for fatherhood or motherhood, that is, they are not capable of either committing or taking responsibility for another person nor are they mature in a physical sense. Discussing sexuality in the context of unwanted pregnancy or unplanned

[31] W. E. May, *Sex, marriage and chastity,* Chicago 1981, Franciscan Herald Press, p. 11.
[32] Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, 1983, 5.
[33] K. Wojtyla, *Love and responsibility,* San Francisco 1993, Ignatius press, pp. 129–130.
[34] K. Wojtyla, *Love and responsibility,* San Francisco 1993, Ignatius press, p. 28.

pregnancy is talking about using another person, which does not comply with the Catholic concept of human dignity and sexuality[35].

Summarising what was said, the 3 categories that describe the second dimension *The inseparable expression of love and procreation* have been highlighted: (1) information about sexual relations only in context with love, marriage and parenthood, (2) the knowledge required for fertility awareness; (3) information that human life begins at the moment of conception.

The results of the evaluation

The understanding of love in Guidance

The first dimension "love as unconditional self giving" was searched for the word *love*, which occurs 42 times in the Guidance. Analysing the context of the word *love*, the 7 categories characterising the concept of love in the Guidance were identified (Table 1):

Table 1. Categories characterising the concept of love in the Guidance

Category	Proving statement:	Page number in the Guidance
Love as a positive aspect;	"to present sexuality in a way that also includes its positive aspects, such as love and relationships based on mutual respect and equality"	18
Kind of love belongs to a person's status	"Relationships involve different kinds of love (e.g. love between friends, love between parents, love between romantic partners) and love can be expressed in many different ways"	40
Love as positive feelings:	"Friendship and love help people feel positive about themselves"	40

[35] B. Obelenienė, *Raktiniai žodžiai pagarbaus santykio tarp vyro ir moters atkūrimo link*, "Logos" 101 (2019), pp. 192–198, https://doi.org/10.24101/logos.2019.86.

Category	Proving statement:	Page number in the Guidance
Love in context with affection and sexual relationships:	"There are different ways to express affection and love as one matures; describe a range of ways to express affection within healthy sexual relationships; recognize that sexual behavior is not a requirement for expressing love;" "People can show love for other people through touching and intimacy; state that people show love and care for other people in different ways, including kissing, hugging, touching, and sometimes through sexual behaviours "	41
Love is outside of the binary system of sexes:	"Homophobia and transphobia are harmful to people of diverse sexual orientation and gender identity; recognize that all people should be able to love whom they want free from violence, coercion or discrimination";	50
Love as care:	"demonstrate how to support a friend or loved one who experiences intended or unintended pregnancy, or who has a child, with regards to their health, education and well-being"; "describe how people need love, care and support, regardless of their health status";	75
Love as a right:	"recognize that people living with HIV have the right to equal love, respect, care and support (and timely treatment; Everyone, including people living with HIV, have the equal right with all others to express sexual feelings and love for others, through marriage and long-term commitments – should they choose to do so"	77

Understanding chastity is a prerequisite for the ability to love in Guidance

The keyword *chastity* was not found in the Guidance. Therefore, the meaning of the term "abstinence" as an option for chastity has been searched for and its context has been distinguished and categorised. The term abstinence is repeated 10 times in the text of Guidance. Analysing the context of the word *abstinence* the 3 categories characterising the concept of abstinence in the Guidance were identified (Table 2)

Table 2. Categories characterising the concept of abstinence in the Guidance

Category	Proving statement:	Page number in the Guidance
Abstinence as the safest method to prevent pregnancy and STSs	”While abstinence is an important method for preventing pregnancy, STIs and HIV”;	18
	“understand that abstinence means choosing not to have sex, or deciding when to start having sex and with whom, and is the safest way to prevent pregnancy and STIs, including HIV”;	71
	”and curricula had to encourage more than abstinence as a method of protection against pregnancy and STIs.”	127
Abstinence is not a permanent condition	“CSE recognizes that abstinence is not a permanent condition in the lives of many young people and that there is diversity in the way young people manage their sexual expression at various ages.”	18
Abstinence-only programme are ineffective	“Programmes that promote abstinence-only are ineffective in delaying sexual initiation, reducing the frequency of sex, or reducing the number of sexual partners.”	29

Summarising the categories of love identified by the assessment in the guidelines, it can be seen that the concept of love in Guidance is fundamentally at odds with the concept of love in Christian anthropology. The Guidance does not express that love is an integration, that love remains within the boundaries of sensuality and sensuality. Love is not a self-giving relationship between a man and woman. Sexual abstinence is not presented as a condition for developing love but as the safest method to prevent pregnancy and STDs.

Understanding the indivisibility of love and procreation in Guidance

To determine how the first category information about sexual relations only in context with marriage and parenthood, of the second dimension *inseparability of love and procreation* is reflected in the Guidance, keyword pairs were selected for search: *sexual relation*, *sexual intercourse and sexual pleasure*. These keyword pairs were searched in the marriage context.

The words *sexual relation* in the text of Guidance are repeated 34 times and the word *marriage* is repeated 27 times. But no one time they have been meat together. During the analysis of the context of marriage, we found categories such as *marriage as long-term relations*, *forced marriage*, *and arranged marriage*. Note that the word man or woman were not found with the word *marriage*.

Thus, sexual relations are not only discussed in the Guidance in isolation from marriage as the relation of a man and a woman but it is also stressed that sexually active young people have the right to contraception, which is understood to include sexual relations, regardless of marital status: "Young people who are sexually active and could benefit from contraception should be able to access it without significant barriers, regardless of ability, marital status, gender, gender identity or sexual orientation."[36]

The term "sexual intercourse" 19 times occurs in Guidance. All of them have a context related to the use of contraception and the prevention of pregnancy but not to love or procreation

Sexual pleasure occurs in Guidance 5 times, but not one time in context with marriage and procreation. *Sexual* pleasure is an integral part of the definition of sexual health, which was repeated in Guidance 36 times. According to the definition of the WHO: "Sexual health is a state of physical, emotional, mental and social well-being in relation to sexuality; it is not merely the absence of disease, dysfunction or infirmity. Sexual health requires a positive and respectful approach to sexuality and sexual relationships, as well as the possibility of having pleasurable and safe sexual experiences (*underlined by the author*), free of coercion, discrimination, and violence. For sexual health to be attained and maintained, the sexual rights of all persons must be respected, protected and fulfilled"[37]. Moreover, there are more aspects included in sexual health "such as being able to control one's fertility through access to contraception and abortion, and being free from sexually transmitted infections (STIs)"[38]. To prevent coercion, discrimination and violence, Guidance proposed consent between sexual partners: "Consent is critical for healthy, pleasurable and consensual sexual behaviour with a partner."[39] Based on this, it can be argued that the Guidance does not base sexual relations between partners on love, respect and responsibility, but on consent.

The second category: *the knowledge required to fertility awareness*. The monograph "From birth control to self-awareness and free decision making"

36 UNESCO, *International technical guidance on sexuality education,* 2018, p. 75.

37 WHO, *Defining sexual health,* 200, https://www.who.int/teams/sexual-and-reproductive-health-and-research/key-areas-of-work/sexual-health/defining-sexual-health.

38 WHO, *Sexual health, human rights and the law,* 2015, p. 1, https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/175556/9789241564984_eng.pdf;jsessionid=ac430bcf31a98b32799ad5810f74fc86?sequence=1P.

39 UNESCO, *International technical guidance on sexuality education,* 2018, p. 57.

follows a detailed analysis of the information provided in the Guidance on fertility awareness and concludes that the Guidance "does not require the provision of essential knowledge of a woman's fertility neurophysiology that is relevant to a woman's health and lifestyle choices." Neither the names of sex and gonadotropic hormones nor their activity and influence on the functioning of a woman's reproductive system, as well as the overall health of a woman, are understood as a state of physical and mental well-being. In the Guidance section, there is no requirement to report differences in female and male fertility or differences in sexual drive between a woman and a man. It means that the information that is essential for a woman's sexual health literacy and for a young woman's decision to start having sex is not provided at all."[40]

The information that human life begins at the moment of conception. There is no information in the guidelines that human life begins at the moment of conception. But more than once it is pointed out that "A pregnancy begins when an egg and sperm unite and implant in the uterus."[41]

Discussion of the evaluation data

Based on the Guidance's evaluation of the concept of sexuality, it must be stated that none of the dimensions of the concept of sexuality_CA corresponded to the category of sexuality _CSE. First, the concept of love in sexuality_CSE does not refer to women and men. This is fundamentally at odds with, sexuality_CA: "The relationship between a man and a woman is essentially a relationship of love: "Sexuality, oriented, elevated and integrated by love acquires truly human quality".[42]

The second, sexuality_CSE love category is related to positive feelings i.e., love material, but not with love as integration and self-giving of persons. According to K. Wojtyla, those who identify love with feelings already have

[40] B. Obelenienė, *From birth control to self-awareness and free decision making. A model for the evaluation of comprehensive sexuality education from the perspective of women's health and free informed choice*, Kraków 2022, The Pontifical University of John Paul II in Krakow, pp. 165–167.
[41] UNESCO, *International technical guidance on sexuality education,* 2018, p. 66.
[42] Pontifical Council for the Family, *The truth and meaning of human sexuality,* 1995, 11.

a consumerist attitude.[43] Thus, the consumerist attitude is strongly expressed in sexuality _CSE. This is confirmed by the absence of chastity education as a prerequisite for love and the right access to contraception and abortion (in terms of sexual health). Special attention should be paid to consent between sexual partners mentioned in the Guidance as a means of avoiding violence. In the absence of information on the differences in the dynamics of female and male sexual desire, the consent to sexual intercourse is very unfavourable to women because it legitimises the pursuit of a form of masculine pleasure. "While sexual pleasure is presented as a gender-neutral right in sexual rights literature, the application of feminist research and theory to it reveals it as a deeply political right that opposes a range of women's human rights. […] While the authors of the five major sexual rights documents stipulate that violence, coercion, and exploitation are unacceptable (in the absence of consent), they do not address the fact that masculinity requires the sexual subordination and exploitation of women as a male right and as a form of the male pleasure."[44] Moreover, comprehensive sexual education is not only very unfavourable to women's health but also contradicts gender equality due to the unequal consequences of the experience of sexual intercourse: "sexual pleasure is for two (woman and man) but the consequences of abortion and the side-effects of hormonal contraceptives will only be suffered by the woman".[45] This is fundamentally at odds with sexuality_CA, which has unequivocally established that "different sexuality does not necessarily mean one person's superiority over another person." According to Pope John Paul II, it is important to stress the equality of a woman's dignity and a man's responsibility. This equality is inimitably implemented by self-gifting to one another and to one's children, which is common in marriage and family. By creating 'male and female' humankind, God

[43] K. Wojtyla, *Love and responsibility,* San Francisco 1993, Ignatius press.

[44] J. Oriel, *Sexual pleasure as a human right: Harmful or helpful to women in the context of HIV/AIDS?,* "Women's Studies International Forum" 28 (2005) no. 5, p. 396, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wsif.2005.05.002.

[45] B. Obelenienė*, From birth control to self-awareness and free decision making. A model for the evaluation of comprehensive sexuality education from the perspective of women's health and free informed choice*, Kraków 2022, The Pontifical University of John Paul II in Krakow, pp. 165–167.

gave man and woman equal human dignity by gifting them with inalienable rights and responsibilities".[46]

The third, the focus on sexual pleasure and intercourse, and on avoiding the consequences of using contraception and abortion, raises the very serious concern that such programmes may render children incapable of loving. "It must never be forgotten that the disordered use of sex tends progressively to destroy *the person's capacity to love* by making pleasure, instead of sincere self-giving, the end of sexuality and by reducing other persons to objects of one's own gratification. In this way, the meaning of true love between a man and a woman (love always open to life) is weakened as well as the family itself. […] The trivialization of sexuality is among the principal factors that have led to contempt for new life. Only true love is able to protect life".[47]

The Guidance bases sexuality education on reducing the consequences of risky behaviour (risk reduction programme). However, risk reduction programmes are aimed at people at risk (such as women in prostitution), but not school-based programmes. The logic of health education and pedagogical prevention requires the integration of risk-avoidance-based content into the general curriculum of schools.

Conclusions

An evaluation of the comprehensive sexuality education document in the light of Christan anthropology reveals that the concept of sexuality_CSE does not correspond to any of the two purified dimensions of sexuality_CE: (1) *love as a goal of sexuality*; (2) *the indivisibility of love and procreation.* According to the results of the evaluation, it must be stated that the concept of sexuality_CSE is not based on a binary sex (male and female) system, sexuality is socially constructed and placed in the options category. CSE programme presents sexuality as a dangerous phenomenon for human health. In summary, the CSE concept of sexuality is fundamentally inconsistent with the concept of sexuality in Catholic education.

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[46] John Paul II, Letter to families *Gratissimam Sane,* 1994, 22, https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/letters/1994/documents/hf_jp-ii_let_02021994_families.html

[47] The Pontifical Council for the Family, *The truth and meaning of human sexuality*, 1995, sec. 105.

There is confusion in the terminology of sexuality education today. Two different processes: risk avoidance and risk reduction, are referred to by the same name: sexuality education. Therefore, it is necessary to clarify which sexuality education is being referred to in one or the other case. Based on the evaluation carried out in this work, two different concepts of sexuality can be described. The concept of integral, complete sexuality, which underpins risk avoidance programmes (in religion education), and the concept of disintegrated sexuality, which underpins risk reduction programmes, such as comprehensive sexuality education. Paradoxically, while the definition of sexuality at comprehensive sexuality education includes all possible aspects of a person's life, even religious beliefs, the content is dominated in it of partial sexuality.

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Biology versus gender ideology: What we can learn from the successful lawsuit of Prof. Ulrich Kutschera

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Abstract

Professor Ulrich Kutschera, a renowned German biologist, is known not only for academic work but also for engaging the public in scientific debate. He strongly criticizes gender theory, which he considers pseudoscience, warning against its spread at universities and the misuse of research funding. Kutschera defends the biological family model as key to human development, a stance that led to public backlash and legal charges filed by a same-sex couple. After a lengthy trial, he was acquitted in all instances, presenting scientific arguments to support his position. Kutschera's case exemplifies resistance to ideologies imposed without scientific grounding, often enforced with totalitarian methods. His attitude evokes comparisons to Andrei Sakharov's fight against Soviet ideology. Kutschera stands as a model of courage in defending science, truth, and freedom—offering encouragement to those committed to the common good and the pursuit of truth.

Keywords

gender ideology, Moneyism, philosophical criticism of ideology, biological criticism of gender theory, homosexuality, totalitarianism in science and the state

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Proponents of gender theory claim that it is a credible and well-founded theory that fulfils the contemporary requirements for scientific research. As a result, they demand that it becomes a universally accepted and permanent basis for all university and social life (especially education, politics, law, media, and art). In many countries, these demands have already been largely met, and powerful political forces are working to ensure that they are implemented everywhere and to the highest degree possible. However, the political success of those who support this theory does not contribute to its validity. Our historical experience and theoretical philosophical considerations show that even the most absurd and harmful theories can be imposed through violence and dominate not only entire countries but also continents if a sufficiently determined and politically, media, economically, or even militarily influential group of people imposes them. This has been the case with many forms of imperialism and nationalism but also with communism. In particular, gender theory appears to have much in common with communism – in fact, it seems to be its modern-day incarnation.[1]

What gender theory and communism share is their alleged "scientific" character. Also, just like communism, gender theory is "free from violence."[2] With these two traits, it has been under scrutiny (and consequently rejected) from various standpoints. However, in science, the most important arguments must be scientific and philosophical. Accordingly, we shall focus on them. It is impossible to overlook the fact that gender theory is heavily criticised especially in the field of biology. Biologists find it to be blatantly contradictory to biological data, so they usually treat it as yet another false ideology, a collective fantasy of humanists who lack the basic biological/natural knowledge and scientific integrity or do not fully adhere to the principles of formal logic and scientific methodology.

As soon as proponents of gender theory gain political power in a given country, they suppress or even prevent any criticism directed at themselves and their

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1 On the Marxist roots of gender ideology see, for example, K. Karoń, *Historia antykultury 1.0. Podstawy wiedzy społecznej*, Warszawa 2019, pp. 470–492; as well as D. Rozwadowski, *Marskizm kulturowy. 50 lat walki z cywilizacją Zachodu*, Warszawa 2018.

2 As for meeting the requirements of scientific rigor, one can see the similarities between gender theory and communism while reading a work by Moscow Marxists that used to be particularly representative: P. N. Fiedosiejew, W. G. Afanasjew, K. N. Brutenc et al., *Naukowy komunizm* [Scientific communism], transl. by M. Skwieciński, Warszawa 1975. The book may discourage one from embracing communism, just like Leszek Kołakowski's visit to Moscow and encounters with these types of specialists put him off.

theory (in this regard they are also similar to their spiritual, and sometimes actual, forefathers – communists). To conduct such criticism, aside from knowledge, scientific proficiency, and integrity, one also needs many courage to take risks and speak out for the truth. As was evident during communism, few scientists actually possess these traits. Therefore, as difficult as it was to find such heroes of truth then, so it remains now. Fortunately, there is too much honesty and nobility in most people for even the most totalitarian power to completely silence the voice of truth, critique, or opposition. Eventually, there will always be people like Andrei Sakharov, who, as one of the most eminent Russian physicists and later a Nobel Peace Prize laureate, challenged Soviet authorities. Thanks to his knowledge, he could no longer bear the alleged scientific truths (in reality absurd) that these authorities were guided by and which they were imposing on society by force. Subsequently, he was subjected to cruel persecution by these authorities to the full extent of their law. Significantly, his rebellion began with criticism of the biological theories of Trofim Lysenko, Joseph Stalin's golden boy, who, in the field of biology, propagated absurdities similar to those propagated by gender theorists today.[3] Just as the absurdities proclaimed by Lysenko were unbearable for Sakharov, so too should the follies proclaimed by gender theorists be unbearable to us. Lysenko's anti-scientific theories were implemented in biology and agriculture with the aid of Soviet state apparatus violence, with resulting catastrophic consequences. Today, what is being implemented is anti-scientific gender theories.

1. Criticism directed at Professor from Kassel and his subsequent trial

It seems that one of the greatest dissidents in a similar mould to Andrey Sakharov, who has the requisite knowledge, skills, honesty, and courage to criticise theories that are tools in the hands of totalitarians, is the German professor of evolutionary biology and physiology, Ulrich Kutschera (born 1955). The author of over 300 scientific papers and 15 books, he is one of the most eminent biologists in the world. He has worked in leading scientific centres in Germany (mainly at the University in Kassel), the United States, and the United Kingdom.

3 On the life and activity of Trofim Lysenko see, for example, S. Amsterdamski, *Życie naukowe a monopol władzy (casus Łysenko)*, Warszawa 1981.

He feels a duty towards the integrity of the world of science and the consciousness of society. Many years ago, he started paying special attention to the theses of gender theory. Due to his vast biological knowledge, he realised that its various fundamental theses are ideological absurdities that have nothing to do with sound science. And yet they are very dangerous for they are politically imposed on the entire society which (the young generation in particular) is to be formed and governed by them.[4]

At first, prof. Kutschera started to criticise theses of the so-called "Darwinian feminism", and then moved on to comprehensively scrutinise gender theory that seems to him an ideology.[5] As a result, his fundamental oeuvre *Das Gender-Paradoxon* [The paradox of gender] was published in 2016 and immediately gained widespread recognition among experts on the subject.[6] As a father of five children, he pays special attention to the homosexual ideology, which is at the centre of gender theory and poses a threat to the upbringing and education of children.

A critical remark he made on this issue, which was part of one of his interviews, had ramifications: he was taken to court. He said: "If the right to adoption were to be established for erotic relationships between men or between women, I see it as state-supported pedophilia and the worst violence against children."[7] Following this statement, two German homosexuals filed a judicial

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4 Many people may find the criticism that Kutschera undertakes all the more convincing because he is an atheist previously known for his critique of so-called creationism (a belief shared by some believers – from the United States in particular) within which one tries to reconcile biological data with the creation of the world by God; however, it is often done too literally and in a simplified manner. (Fr Prof. Michał Heller, a great Polish scientist, physicist, philosopher, and theologian, agrees with such critique to a large extent). At present, Prof. Ulrich Kutschera collaborates with scientists with a Christian background to criticise gender ideology. Surely, his Catholic education contributes to his stance and so he is an atheist that is friendly towards Christianity much more than towards atheistic gender theory created mainly by militant atheists.

5 On the critique of such feminism, see, for example, G. Vandermassen, *Who's afraid of Charles Darwin? Debating feminism and evolutionary theory*, Rowman&Littlefield Publishing Group Inc. 2020 (Polish translation: G. Vandermassen, *Kto się boi Karola Darwina? Feminizm wobec teorii ewolucji*, Warszawa 2018), and P. Schlafly, *Feminist fantasies*, Spence Pub, 2003 (Polish translation: P. Schlafly, *Feministyczne fantazje*, transl. by N. Dueholm, M. Dueholm, Kąty Wrocławskie 2006).

6 Cf. U. Kutschera, *Das Gender-Paradoxon. Mann und Frau als evolvierte Menschentypen*, Berlin 2016, p. 446.

7 *Professor will umstrittene Aussagen zu Homosexuellen belegen*, https://www.faz.net/aktuell/rhein-main/prozess-wegen-volksverhetzung-gegen-professor-16222726.html (12.02.2024).

complaint against him, which was accepted by the prosecutor's office at the District Court in Kassel and turned into an accusation of "incitement to hatred" (Volksverhetzung). As a result of this charge and trial, despite the various scientific evidence presented by Professor Kutschera, which perfectly justified his stance, on August 3, 2020, the court sentenced him to either 60 days in prison or a fine of 6000 Euros. He did not accept the verdict and appealed to a higher court, which acknowledged his arguments. As a result, the District Court in Kassel acquitted him on 4 March 2021. His accusers, however, did not accept the verdict, and the Prosecutor's Office appealed. Nonetheless, the Higher Regional Court in Frankfurt on the Main confirmed the finding of the District Court on 8 February 2022. Consequently, the legal battle this time ended with a victory for the besieged scientist.[8]

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[8] This trial has been all the more important to me as I was sued for similar reasons and with a similar result. In the January/February 2021 issue of the German theological magazine "Theologisches", I published a paper *Über die Notwendigkeit, homosexuelle Cliquen in der Kirche zu begrenzen* [On the Need to Limit Homosexual Cliques in the Church], which was part of my book *Lawendowa mafia. Z papieżami i biskupami przeciwko homoklikom w Kościele* (Kraków 2020) [Lavender mafia: With the Popes and Bishops against homosexual cliques in the Church]. The book turned out to be a bestseller – over 35,000 copies sold. Due to the publication of my paper, the German priest, Wolfgang Rothe, filed a report to the prosecutor's office in Cologne, and, based on that, the District Court in Cologne, on July 6, 2021, sentenced me to 120 days in prison or a fine of EUR 4,800 for "incitement to hatred" (Volksverhetzung). A similar verdict was received by the publisher of the magazine, Fr. Prof. Johannes Stöhr. However, this verdict caused widespread outrage and became known in the Polish and foreign media. Over 85,000 people signed a protest in my defence on the website of the legal organisation *Ordo Iuris*, which was an absolute record. Many prominent people stood up for me, including the greatest living theologian, Cardinal Gerhard Ludwik Müller. All this made a great impression on the court, which is why at the hearing on May 20, 2022, in Cologne, it withdrew almost all of its allegations. The judge first publicly read the entire article (which took her over three hours), and, at the end, she received applause from the people gathered in the courtroom. Then, she admitted that she agreed with the contents of the paper and found only a few words to be inappropriate – when translated into German, they are too strong because of this nation's Nazi past (this, however, does not refer to other nations, like the Polish). We were told that if I changed these words and made a voluntary donation of 3,150 Euro to charities for victims of pedophiles (especially homosexual ephebophiles and pedophiles), this article could be accepted and published in Germany, and the court could withdraw all charges and penalties and finally end all proceedings in this case – without the possibility of any review in a higher court. A similar proposal was received by Fr. prof. Johannes Stöhr. Our lawyers said that such a withdrawal by the court was great for us and, in fact, meant our victory. Therefore we accepted it and that is how the lawsuit finally ended. See also D. Oko, *Bericht über das Gerichtsverfahren in Deutschland,*

2. The biologist's argumentation

Professor Kutschera's comprehensive argumentation with which he convinced the court is crucial to us. Apart from the already mentioned *Das Gender-Paradoxon*, he conveyed it in the book he wrote on the occasion of the trial: *Strafsache Sexualbiologie. Darwinische Wahrheiten zu Ehe und Kindeswohl vor Gericht* [A *Criminal* Case in the *Biology* of Sexuality: *Darwinian Truths About Marriage and Children's Welfare in Court*].[9]

According to Prof. Kutschera, the brain child of gender ideology and its fundamental fallacies is the New Zealand-American psychologist John Money (1921–2006) who specialised in research on sexual identity and gender biology. His studies on hermaphroditism convinced him that we are born sexually neutral, and proper sex, or gender, is only assigned during the process of socialisation and upbringing, roughly from the second year of life onwards. This also corresponded with Simone de Beauvoir's well-known statement that *one is not born, but rather becomes, a woman*, and served as the main thesis of "Moneyism" (as Professor Kutschera put it), which is the basis of gender ideology.[10] To prove that his theory was valid, Money did not hesitate to conduct experiments on living individuals, including the identical twins David and Brian Reimer.

As a 7-month-old baby, David completely lost his penis due to a medical error, so Money advised his parents to castrate him and subject him to hormonal

gegen Prof. Dr. Dr. Dariusz Oko von der Philosophischen Fakultät der Päpstlichen Universität Johannes Paul II. in Krakau, "The Person and the Challenges" 13 (2023) No. 2, pp. 293–299. The court case involving Father Professor Manfred Hauke, the publisher of this article who lives in Switzerland, also concluded successfully. Like me in Germany, he was accused of publishing an article allegedly offensive to all homosexuals. However, the court in Bellinzona, in its session on April 22, 2024, determined that this was not true because the article only contained criticism of those Catholic clergy with homosexual tendencies who committed very bad deeds within the Church. As a result, the court acquitted Father Professor Hauke and ordered the prosecutor's office, which had baselessly accused him, to pay him 20,000 Swiss francs as compensation for legal costs.
See *Text zu homosexuellen Priestern: Theologe Hauke freigesprochen*, https://www.katholisch.de/artikel/52826-text-zu-homosexuellen-priestern-theologe-hauke-freigesprochen (23.04.2024) and *Mutmasslich homophobe Textstellen in umstrittenem Aufsatz: Gericht spricht Theologieprofessor aus Lugano frei*, https://www.nzz.ch/schweiz/homophobie-vorwurf-theologieprofessor-freigesprochen- ld.1827482 (23.04.2024).

9 Cf. U. Kutschera, *Strafsache Sexualbiologie. Darwinische Wahrheiten zu Ehe und Kindeswohl vor Gericht*, Hamburg 2021, p. 572.

10 Cf. U. Kutschera, *Das Gender-Paradoxon*, p. 56.

therapy to raise him as a woman. The confused parents agreed. As part of this "therapy" and further education, Money then forced David (named Brenda) and Brian to play female and male sexual roles, respectively, under his direction. Money must have found it all the easier because he was a known supporter of pedophilia. This "experiment", however, did not confirm his theory. As soon as David could influence his fate, he returned to his male identity as a teenager, firmly rejecting the female identity that was imposed on him and which he never identified with in any way. He also tried to reverse the medical effects of the procedures performed on him, which, of course, could only be successful to a small extent because the changes were essentially irreversible. However, the spiritual and psychological wounds inflicted on both twins by Money's therapy were so great that both adult men, despite their attempts to live normal lives, committed suicide: Brian at the age of 36 and David at 38.[11] Their deaths notwithstanding, dr. Money continued to present this "experiment" as a success that proved his theory. He avoided, however, facing his critics and opponents.[12] Followers and proponents of his stance are, unfortunately, still active today.[13]

It is with hard biological facts that Prof. Kutschera responds to Money's concept. He ceaselessly stresses that women and men are equal to dignity, but they are not the same in terms of their nature, especially biologically. Our common experience and reliable scientific studies from all over the world show that over 99% of all newborns can be unequivocally biologically identified as either boys or girls.[14] Their biological differences cannot be underestimated. It turns out that between men and women, there is only about a 1,5% genetic difference

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[11] The most comprehensive description of the tragic fate of the twins can be found in: J. Colapinto, *As nature made him: The boy who was raised as a girl*, New York 2006.

[12] Por. J. Money, A. Ehrhardt, *Man and woman, boy and girl: the differentiation and dimorphism of gender identity from conception to maturity*, This Week's Citation Classic, 11 Baltimore Current Contents 11.03.1972. Among the leading critics of Money's theory was his colleague, professor of biology Milton Diamond, which is why Money's experiment on the twins may have served as his self-defence. Cf. M. Diamond, *A critical evaluation of the ontogeny of human sexual behavior*, "Quarterly Review of Biology" 40 (1965), pp. 147–175 and M. Diamond, *Sex, gender, and identity over the years: A changing perspective,* "Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Clinics of North America" 3 (2004), pp. 591–607 and U. Kutschera, *Strafsache Sexualbiologie*, pp. 113–115.

[13] Cf. U. Kutschera, *Das Gender-Paradoxon*, pp. 300–320.

[14] Cf. for example, M. Blackless, A. Charuvastra, A. Derryck, A. Fausto-Sterling, K. Lauzanne, E. Lee, *How sexually dimorphic are we? Review and synthesis*, "American Journal of Human Biology" 12 (2000) Issue 2, pp. 151–166.

out of approximately 20,000 protein-coding genes. A similar difference of only 1,5% in these genes can be found when we compare humans and chimpanzees. Therefore, to ignore such a genetic difference between humans is like overlooking the genetic difference between humans and chimpanzees (of course, we maintain and assume complete equality of dignity of women and men).[15]

As for the differences between adult men and women, one of the most noticeable is the greater height of men. Worldwide, this difference ranges from 6% to 11% (with an average of 8 percent). Young men typically have several percent more muscle mass, making their physical effort significantly more effective. On the other hand, women have several percent more body fat, which decisively helps as a reserve during pregnancy and breastfeeding. Greater body mass also translates into an 8% greater brain mass in men. This, however, does not result in differences in intelligence. Moreover, women's brains have significantly more connections between the nerve cells and both hemispheres. Nonetheless, there are significant differences in abilities conditioned by these brain differences. Generally, it can be said that women, on average, are more inclined towards humanistic, personal, and relational spheres, while men excel in material, objective, and technical areas. Of course, both men and women possess certain abilities in other areas; we are only discussing dominant tendencies here. Principally, women excel in various language skills and have greater empathy, emotional understanding, communication abilities, and conflict-resolution skills. They tend to be better at dialogue and compromise, have a quick comprehension of personal relationships, better imagine new situations among people, and possess a greater ability to perform precise micro-movements.

Generally, men have greater mathematical skills, spatial imagination and orientation, and can theorise and systematise. In addition, they tended to have greater aggressiveness, courage, the ability to take up the glove and engage in a fight and impose their opinions. They also work better in teams and obey leaders. Women are also much more sensitive, especially to touch – the least sensitive woman is more sensitive than the most sensitive man. Obviously, this is evolutionarily conditioned by the tasks men perform during fighting

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15 Cf. E. D. Wildman, M. Uddin, G. Liu, I. L. Grossman, M. Goodman, *Implications of natural selection in shaping 99.4% nonsynonymous DNA identity between humans and chimpanzees: enlarging genus Homo*, "Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America" 100 (2003) No. 12, pp. 7181–7188.

or hunting while working in agriculture or construction. Meanwhile, the women were engaged in housework, gathering, and caring for children and the elderly.[16]

These differences are also (or especially) evident in children, even infants, manifesting themselves within a few hours of birth. Girls tend to be more interested in faces leaning over them for longer, while boys quickly transition to playing with the toys presented to them. Girls are more sensitive to sounds and tend to prefer dolls as toys, whereas boys prefer toy cars and toolboxes (despite all the fruitless efforts of atheist feminists to reverse these preferences). Girls also tend to start speaking earlier and with more grammatical correctness, forming complete sentences. These differences are noticeable in schools, where girls generally reign supreme in the humanities, while boys tend to outdo them in mathematics and natural sciences. These differences are perhaps most obvious in their choices of vocational schools or fields of study at universities, where young people have great or even complete freedom. Despite the efforts of the activists of gender ideology, young women still generally choose fields related to working with people: pedagogy studies, psychological, medical and linguistic studies, whereas men are more likely to choose studies in engineering, construction, mathematics and natural sciences. One look at the classes and lecture rooms in technical schools and universities shows how much their attendance contradicts gender ideology. For example, in Germany, in 2013, about 83% of graduates from technical universities were men, while only 17% were women. Meanwhile, among philologists, 80% of graduates were women, with only 20% being men. This is very similar to the situation in the United States, where as recently as 1972, 88% of PhDs in mathematics and other sciences were awarded to men.[17] Naturally, this also translates into job choices. One can barely find women working in mines, on construction sites, fishing trawlers, oil rigs, and high-voltage lines. Similarly, men are rarely nurses or kindergarten teachers.[18]

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16 Cf. A. Moir, D. Jessel, *Brain sex: The real difference between men and women*, Dell Bantam 1997 and W. Larimore, B. Larimore, *His brain, her brain: How Divinely designed differences can strengthen your marriage*, Zondervan 2008.

17 Cf. U. Kutschera, *Das Gender-Paradoxon*, p. 185 and P. Schlafly, *Feministyczne fantazje*, p. 146ff.

18 Cf. A. Moir, D. Jessel, *Brain sex*. Another chief German biologist, Professor Axel Meyer, thus writes about educational attempts to change sex-specific interests, for example by organising days devoted to them (in fact, devoted to the interest of the other sex): "If girls have different inclinations than boys, then we should not waste any more resources on the so-called girls' days and boys' days. Instead of trying to change the differences typical of a given sex,

All this has deep biological foundations—biochemical dimorphism is visible in the entire body of a woman and the entire body of a man, in each of their cells and organs. Based on the morphology of their genital organs, 99.95% of newborn children can be classified as a girl or a boy. The consensus among scientists is that the so-called "hermaphrodites" or "intersex babies" in individual countries constitute no more than 0.2% to 2% of the total population. Therefore, it can be assumed that their number may be less than about 1% globally.[19] This is a well-known reality for biologists because they often encounter in living organisms certain small deviations from the typical systems found in a given species; this cannot be understood as any biological ideal, but just a typical, average system.[20] These are not, however, grounds to discriminate against such organisms or people. Similarly, these are not grounds to be called "the third", "nth" or "x" gender since they are simply the result of various kinds of divergence or disorders in one's biological development whether that be in foetal life, childhood, puberty, or adolescence. Our body is biologically the most wonderfully complex organism on Earth, a system of systems. Still, we know well that each such system, each component of it, may be subject to some deformation or disease, including our gender and sexual systems. Just as we may have cardiological, immunological, diabetic, etc. disorders, so may we develop disorders in the sphere of sexuality and gender. One should neither deny this nor treat the sphere of gender as if it does not have such problems. Neither should we demand that almost everything here is "approved of" – especially if the interested parties wish it. It is as if a narcissistic patient dictated to their doctor how they should be diagnosed and treated.

The obvious division into two sexes is vital regarding the transmission of life and the upbringing of offspring. In the course of evolution, an especially strong relationship has developed between the child and the mother. She plays a huge,

we should make much more use of every strong suit of these sexes. Let me repeat this: it is difficult to determine which differences between genders are conditioned biologically and which are conditioned culturally. However, the radical standpoint of Simone de Beauvoir that no one is born a woman but is made one is certainly completely false just like the statement that everything is genetically determined." A. Meyer, *Adams Apfel und Evas Erbe. Wie die Gene unser Leben bestimmen und warum Frauen anders sind als Männer*, München 2015, p. 342.

19 M. Blackless, A. Charuvastra, A. Derryck, A. Fausto-Sterling, K. Lauzanne, E. Lee Ellen, *How sexually dimorphic are we?*, pp. 151–166.

20 Cf. U. Kutschera, *Das Gender-Paradoxon*, p. 187.

irreplaceable role not only in conceiving the child and nurturing its biological development but also in its upbringing and shaping them as a human being, particularly in the formative years. From the very beginning, an infant needs a central person like this in their life, and the mother is the most suitable person for this role, not only because of their biological relationship but also because of her feminine biological, emotional, and personal characteristics. This relationship between a child and their mother, its depth, intensity, and long duration, is also a great evolutionary achievement. Moreover, it decisively distinguishes us from all other animals. This kind of care best protects the child and contributes to their optimum growth. As such, it contributes to the development of society as a whole, composed of children who have been raised in the best conditions possible in a family, with their biological mothers and fathers who usually best fulfil the child's needs and contribute to their ongoing development. These conditions decisively contribute to the emergence and maintenance of our advantage over other species on Earth.

It is a fundamental right of every child to be raised by their mother and father. Therefore, one cannot remove this right of the child for any ideological reason since this may entail great harm and injustice which might cause them to unduly suffer for the rest of their lives.[21]

Therefore it is the basic duty of the state to guard the elementary rights of children and defend them against the designs of ideologists. The state should also do so in the name of its best-understood interest and the welfare of all of society; the fate of the state fundamentally depends on the propagation and condition of future generations. This includes how well children are brought up, and in what conditions, which translates into what kind of people they become, and how healthy and strong biologically, mentally, intellectually, emotionally and spiritually they will be. We need to be careful and watchful because we already

[21] Cf. U. Kutschera, *Strafsache Sexualbiologie*, p. 243ff. This gender-based disregard for biological data and succumbing to this ideology has led to a real epidemic of teenage white girls from wealthy middle-class families in the USA identifying as trans people. Impacted by gender theory propaganda, they increasingly explain their problems typically related to puberty and growing up as evidence that they are trans-sexual. They believe that the only solution is to immediately undergo hormonal treatment (without their parents' knowledge) and take testosterone regularly. This causes some irreversible changes in their body (including lifelong infertility). Often, it is only a single stage on the road towards the amputation of their internal and external female organs, which is irreversible. Cf. A. Shrier, *Irreversible damage. The transgender craze seducing our daughters*, Regnery Publishing, 2020.

know the results of a wealth of reliable research and the aftereffects of bringing children up in relationships forged within the boundaries of gender ideology. They prompt us to be decisive and not allow children to be harmed in the name of ideologies that contradict science at the most elementary, biological level.[22]

One cannot carelessly question basic biological truths, one cannot devalue what it means to be a woman and a man, a mother and father, growing up and being educated in the secure surrounds of one's own family. An anti-biological ideology cannot be imposed on children in nurseries, kindergartens, or schools. From a strictly scientific perspective, prof. Kutschera firmly rejects the statements of Judith Butler (the successor of John Money, and the main guru of contemporary gender ideology). She claims that "gender" precedes and dominates biological sex (and not vice versa as had been commonly claimed until today). She also speaks about the discursive, performative construction of the very term. As Butler explains: "Gender ought not to be conceived merely as the cultural inscription of meaning on a pregiven sex (a juridical conception); gender must also designate the very apparatus of production whereby the sexes themselves are established. As a result, gender is not to culture as sex is to nature; gender is also the discursive/cultural means by which 'sexed nature' or a 'natural sex' is produced and established as 'prediscursive', prior to culture, a politically neutral surface on which culture acts."[23]

Prof. Kutschera reports that he has often discussed such statements, which constitute the essence of gender theory and prove its anti-biological character,

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22 Cf. M. Regnerus, *How different are the adult children of parents who have same–sex relationships? Findings from the New Family Structures Study*, "Social Science Research" 41 (2012) Issue 4, pp. 752–770; M. Regnerus, *Parental same-sex relationships, family instability, and subsequent life outcomes for adult children: Answering critics of the new family structures study with additional analyses*, "Social Science Research" 41 (2012) Issue 6, pp. 1367–1377 and *Jephthah's daughters: Innocent casualties in the war for family 'equality'*, ed. R. O. Lopez, Los Angeles 2017 and *Jephthah's children: The innocent casualties of same-sex parenting*, eds. R. O. Lopez, B. Klein, Los Angeles 2016.

23 J. Butler, *Gender trouble: Feminism and the subversion of identity*, New York 1990, p. 7 and J. Butler, *Excitable speech: A politics of the performative*, New York 2021. The already-mentioned Axel Meyer, a renowned professor of biology, thus comments on such statements: "While conducting research for this book, I noticed increasingly often that dogmatic feminists from the field of gender studies find it difficult to agree with the discoveries of biology. Indeed, biology is even demonised and presented as a kind of superstition." A. Meyer, *Adams Apfel und Evas Erbe*, p. 351. This is exactly what we should have expected: as in the case of Marxism, if an ideology is considered a science, then science must be seen as superstition and ideology.

with his colleagues – some of the most renowned biologists in the world. As a result of such conversations held during the international congress in San Jose, California in 2015, Prof. Kutschera made the following observation: "During an informal discussion regarding 'gender ideology' in Europe, we realised that this fundamentalist, anti-Darwinian ideology has the same roots as creationism, i.e. a literal biblical understanding of the Creation. Moneyistic representatives of gender [ideology] believe that a person's 'social gender', i.e. masculinity or femininity (being a man or a woman), can be expressed and interpreted as a 'social construct' regardless of biological sex (XY or XX chromosome arrangement, testosterone or estrogen levels, etc.). We do not yet have a based-on-facts and natural sciences analysis of this destructive, quasi-religious belief. The following conclusion can, however, be definitely drawn: In the humanities, nothing can make sense if it is not consistent with biological data. The discussion in San Jose led to the following consensus: evolutionary biologists should analyse gender theory, i.e., university pseudo-science that costs German taxpayers millions of euros annually (jobs for professors of pointless gender studies), and refute it equally seriously as they do with creationism, which is in a similar vein."[24]

3. State violence against children, society, and science

Adhering to a false, erroneous ideology, however, is far from innocent, for it surpasses the framework of theory. The proponents of gender theory, like Marxists, are not only interested in constructing theories, even the most absurd, but they also want to impact reality, which is much worse. Moreover, they do not undertake their aims by democratic means, for with such an agenda they would

[24] U. Kutschera, *Das Gender-Paradoxon*, p. 77n. Prof. Kutschera also states that: "Indeed, gender-creationism is a closed, subjective system of belief and no science open to facts", ibid., p. 188, see also pp. 199, 237 and 331. In many ways, gender ideology resembles a significantly distorted (or rather mocked) religious faith. We need to work on its fundamental critique in a similar way as on the critique of Marxism, its predecessor. See my texts that are part of this indispensable critique: *Gender jako współczesna namiastka religii*, in: *Religie w dialogu kultur. Materiały z V Międzynarodowego Kongresu Religioznawczego, Toruń 14–16 września 2017*, eds. M. Szulakiewicz, Ł. Dominiak, vol. 2, Toruń 2017, pp. 271–295 and *Gender jako dzieło rozumu ateistycznego. Dekonstrukcja dekonstrukcjonistów*, in: *Gender – spojrzenie krytyczne*, eds. J. Jagiełło, D. Oko, Kielce 2016, pp. 157–180.

lose every election. Instead, they lobby, take over and subdue culture, media, and state institutions so that they can "forcefully" spread and impose their ideas. Otherwise, these ideas would not be persuasive enough to disseminate and take root.

Professor Kutschera sees such strategies and lays them bare. As a father of five, his main concern is the good and protection of the new generation: its correct development thanks to the achievements of evolution and human culture, refusing to be suppressed because of ideology (as it was in the Soviet Union). In particular, he criticises raising a child without her/his father or mother as if their presence was not needed. Our everyday experience and scientific research show that it is exactly the opposite. Furthermore, it is not homophobia or lesbophobia, but an unequivocal scientific maxim. Atheists also believe that man has the highest natural value on Earth. That is why, we have to do whatever we can to make the new generation fine, strong, and capable of using and achieving their potential – for the good of themselves and society. Apart from genetic "composition" and their free will, it is being brought up in one's family that determines what a given person will be like. A newborn is like a priceless diamond that is shaped throughout the long process of upbringing – first in one's family, then in school and culture. They are like molten gold that is poured into the form of one's family and culture – it later solidifies and takes on their shape. Men and their lives are, to a large extent, what their families were like in the first years of their existence. That is why all of society and the state should do whatever they can to ensure the very best conditions of education at home, in school, and culturally. Nothing, no ideology should ever disturb or distort this educational process. Should it happen, it would mean destroying the most crucial and "sacred" process of becoming a person, the shaping of the very foundations of their humanity. In fact, this would mean destroying someone, blocking the key aspects of their growth. If we apply maximum requirements in the production process of valuable objects (integrated, miniature electronic circuits or diamonds), should we not apply the same high standards in the process of "producing" priceless diamonds such as people?

Prof. Kutschera, who understands what is at stake, is decisively against typical "gender" attacks on the fundamental good of the new generation (the earliest possible sexualization and depravity of children). They were evident in e.g. the actions of Prof. Helmut Kentler, one of the greatest German authorities on "gender" sexual education. However, he turned out to be a supporter and organiser of crimes against boys by adult homosexuals.[25] Prof. Kutschera also consistently criticises lessons introduced into the school system by Prof. Elisabeth Tuider (for example, *Der neue Puff für alle* [A new brothel for everyone]. In Germany, 15-year-old children have to participate in such classes during which they should develop *personal freedom to use and provide sexual services.*[26] These are only a few out of many examples of serious abuses against children and youth committed in the name of gender ideology. Moreover, this way of dealing with the younger generation is supported and financed by the state, which threatens people who oppose it with legal "violence." The Green Party, which today co-governs Germany, has supported the legalisation of pedophilia, even preparing a draft law on this matter, which Prof. Kutschera discusses with horror.[27] The media (especially the left-wing one) effectively helps the state "genderize" society. This, however, entails the depravity and downfall of the essence of objective science and a democratic state. In his trial and books, Professor Kutschera has referred to many scientific works that reveal that this path is fundamentally wrong and unacceptable, and that it resembles actions that in totalitarian states are intended to impose a given ideology. As prof. Axel Meyer states: "In my opinion, it is exactly these political and politicised aspects that should be rooted in solid scientific foundations, and not in ideological convictions. Therefore scientists should engage even more in social debates and politics so that they are not left to ideologists."[28]

The engagement in political and social matters has brought Prof. Kutschera recognition, but also attacks and ultimately a court trial in three instances. His

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[25] Cf. U. Kutschera, *Strafsache Sexualbiologie*, pp. 147–156. Kutschera also refers to such works as, for example, *Healing sexually betrayed men and boys. Treatment for sexual abuse, assault, and trauma*, ed. R. B. Gartner, London 2018 and R. M. Sapolsky, *Behave: The biology of humans at our best and worst*, New York 2017.

[26] E. Tuider, M. S. Müller, S. Timmermans, P. Bruns-Bachmann, C. Koppermann, *Sexualpädagogik der Vielfalt. Praxismethoden zu Identitäten, Beziehungen, Körper und Prävention für Schule und Jugendarbeit*, Weinheim/Basel 2012, p. 77; Cf. U. Kutschera, *Strafsache Sexualbiologie*, pp. 157–174. To see what introducing gender ideology with the help of state institutions may look like, see: J. Barcentowicz, D. Oko, K. Petryszak, *Ethical perfectiorism as one of the solutions to prevent anti-civilization activities: an analysis based on the case study of Joseph Beuys*, "Logos i Ethos" 29 (2023) 2 (62), pp. 193–166.

[27] Cf., for example, Michael Grandt, *Die Grünen: Zwischen Kindersex, Kriegshetze und Zwangsbeglückung*, Rottenburg 2015, pp. 93–121 i 200–234 and Franz Walter, Stephan Klecha, Alexander Hensel, *Die Grünen und die Pädosexualität: Eine bundesdeutsche Geschichte*, Göttingen 2015, pp. 160–227.

[28] A. Meyer, *Adams Apfel und Evas Erbe*, p. 317.

arguments, however, were so diverse and so water-tight that this time the ideology lost out. The fact that he managed to defend his case in court and win the trial is a great personal success for anyone who, like him, tries to defend the truth and the common good, and is against all the ideologies that oppose this. This gives us a scent of victory and a new sense of hope, and so we must continue these struggles, the defence of society – especially children and young people – against such ideologies. Obviously, one successful trial does not end an ideology. The spirit of man is weak and frail, so it is susceptible to creating such appearances of truth and succumbing to them. Therefore we need people who will expose and refute these illusions and delusions to best serve science and society.

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The genesis and variants of the Polish song "Krzyżu święty nade wszystko"

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Abstract

The Polish Song *Krzyżu święty nade wszystko*, was created on the basis of a translation of three stanzas (no. 8–10) from the hymn *Pangue lingua gloriosi preolium certaminis* and a compilation with the content of the 13th-century *Vita beatae Virginis Mariae et Salvatoris rhytmica* and selected verses from the 15th-century Polish song *Żale Marji Panny pod krzyżem*, starting with an incipit *Posłuchajcie, bracia miła*, also known as *Lament świętokrzyski*. Such treatments seem to be rare in the religious poetry used in Polish sacred songs. In terms of content, the hymn in honour of the Cross was accompanied by meditations of the Mother of God, who suffered from the Crucified. The studied song has one version, and the variations are limited to changes caused by the number of stanzas, the change of words due to the modernisation of the language, or the use of synonyms. Only a few lines or words have been changed. This proves the use of the song in a commonly known form, without actually introducing changes to our times. Some sources (in the 20th-century) shortened the text to 4- or 5-stanzas. Most editions transmit the most common 16-stanzas song.

Keywords

crucifixion, compassion, Mary, Cross, regrets, song, lamentation

At the heart of the early medieval cult of the cross was the conviction of Christ's passion as a theophany of his saving power, manifested both on the cross and in the glory of the resurrection. The cult of the cross with the image of the Crucified takes on a devotional character, especially in monastic circles. The Hieratic Christ on the Cross becomes an object of adoration in a prayer addressed directly to Him. Emphasising the dignity of Christ, resulting from the opposition to the Arians, led to the term used towards Him as "Lord our God." For even on the cross, Christ does not give up his royal power over the world. This conviction of his power had an impact on the creation of the famous hymns of the bishop of Poitiers, Venantius Fortunatus (died ca. 610): *Pangue lingua gloriosi* and *Vexilla regis prodeunt*.[1]

1. Sources of the song *Krzyżu święty nade wszystko*

Three sources of the studied song can be discerned: in selected verses of the hymn *Pangue lingua gloriosi preolium certaminis*, in a Latin work *Vita rythmica* and in a Polish song *Żale Marji Panny pod krzyżem*, which begins with an incipit: *Posłuchajcie, bracia miła*, also known as *Lament świętokrzyski*.

1.1. The Hymn *Pangue lingua gloriosi preolium certaminis – Sław języku, bój chwalebny* is intended for the days of Holy Week.[2] Praises God's action through Christ's cross. Some attribute its authorship to C. Marmet.[3] However, Fr. Bronisław Gładysz is in favour of Fortunate, who, according to him, was initially the secretary and then the chaplain of Saint Radegunda, the widow of Klotar I, the king of the Franks, who spent her old age in a convent. Around 569, she received from the (Greek) Emperor Justin the relic of the Holy Cross for her monastery, Venantius Fortunate was to commemorate this celebration with two

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1 J. J. Kopeć, *Nurt pasyjny w średniowiecznej religijności polskiej*, in: *Męka Chrystusa wczoraj i dziś*, eds. H. D. Wojtyska CP, J. J. Kopeć CP, Lublin 1981, pp. 39–40.

2 There is also a second hymn with the same incipit: *Pangue lingua gloriosi* with a further extension *corporis misterium – Sław języku, tajemnice ciała* intended for the celebration of the Body and Blood of Christ. Its author is probably St. Thomas Aquinas. The work points to the Last Supper as the source of Christ's Eucharistic presence and the transubstantiation carried out by the Holy Spirit. See: B. Nadolski, *Leksykon liturgii*, Poznań 2006, p. 1141.

3 B. Nadolski, *Leksykon liturgii*, p. 1141.

hymns mentioned above: *Pangue lingua gloriosi* and *Vexilla regis prodeunt*.[4] The mentioned researcher characterised the hymn *Pange lingua gloriosi* by saying that: “it enjoyed extraordinary popularity, the proof of which (are) numerous imitations in later hymnographers,”[5] which is confirmed by the 32 hymns beginning with the same incipit (*Pange ligua gloriosi*) collected at Chevalier.[6]

1.2. The second song at the beginning of the song *Krzyżu święty nade wszystko*, especially verses 7–10 and 13–16 – according to Brükner – is a Latin song *Vita rythmica* (full title *Vita beatae Virginis Mariae et Salvatoris rhytmica – Wierszowany żywot błogosławionej Dziewicy Marii i Zbawiciela*), also known as Lamentations of the Mother of God by an anonymous author from the 13th-century.[7] Sometimes the authorship is attributed to Hugo von Trimberg.[8] This is an example of works referring to the tradition and models of the Christian Apocrypha of the New Testament.

1.3. There are interesting traces of the third source, namely a 15th-century Polish song – *Żale Marji Panny pod krzyżem*, that begins with an incipit: *Posłuchajcie, bracia miła*, also called *Lament świętokrzyski* from the Benedictine monastery of St. Cross on Łysa Góra, where it was stored. It was written in the seventies of the 15th-century by the prior of this monastery, Andrzej of Słupia. According to Jerzy Woronczak, this is an anonymous sequence, perhaps derived from a passion drama, while according to Stanisław Windakiewicz and Julian Lewański, it refers to the so-called planctus – monologues of the suffering Mary at the foot of the cross.[9]

Lament świętokrzyski consists of 38 lines of irregular structure, transferring full of lyricist monologue of the Mother who is suffering from the crucified Son. The masterful composition and the folk simplicity of the linguistic structure cause that *Żale* takes a prominent place among Polish medieval poetry.[10] The

4 B. Gładysz, *Krzyżu święty… (Pieśń i jej twórca)*, “Kurier Poznański” 9.03.1927, no. 144, p. 8.
5 B. Gładysz, *Krzyżu święty*, p. 8.
6 *Repertorium hymnologicum. Cataloque des chants, hymnes, proses, sequences, tropes ex usage dans L’Église latine depuis les origines jusqu’a nos jours par le chanoine Ulysse Chevalier*, Louvain 1892, pp. 288–289.
7 Cf. A. Brückner, *Średniowieczna pieśń religijna polska*, Kraków 1923, pp. 84–87; *Vita beatae Virginis Mariae et Salvatoris rhytmica*, ed. A. Vögtlin, Tübingen 1888.
8 T. Michałowska, *Średniowiecze*, Warszawa 2008, pp. 882–883.
9 R. Mazurkiewicz, *Posłuchajcie, bracia miła (tekst i komentarz)*, see: http://staropolska.pl/sredniowiecze/ poezja_religijna/posluchajcie.html (07.04.2021); *Średniowieczna pieśń religijna polska*, ed. M. Korolko, Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków–Gdańsk 1980, pp. 142–143.
10 *Średniowieczna pieśń religijna polska*, ed. M. Korolko, p. XXXVIII.

obvious disorder of speech intensifies the impression of despair, pain, and helplessness. In this regard, *Żale* refers to Dolorism (Latin dolor – pain, suffering), a religious trend vital in Europe of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, exhibiting the cult of the Lord's Passion and Our Lady of Sorrows.[11]

The three sources mentioned above influenced the structure of the song. This will be shown in the juxtaposition of the oldest known version of the song *Krzyżu święty nade wszystko* with excerpts from the source texts. The first three stanzas are directed to the cross; they are a literal translation of the three stanzas (no. 8–10) of the hymn *Pangue lingua gloriosi preolium certaminis* and begin with an incipit *Crux fidelis. inter omnes*. Beginning with the fourth stanza and further on, the content indicates the awareness of the Newborn Jesus that he will have to suffer for the salvation of people, and from the 7th stanza passes into Our Lady's lamentation over the suffering and dying Saviour. As a result, it refers quite loosely to *Vita rhythmica*, and in some places quite close to the Polish Lamentations of Our Lady – *Posłuchajcie, bracia miła*. Brückner's thesis about the Latin quotation of *Vita rhythimca* has not been directly confirmed. These relationships are very loose and rely on the use of the content of the cited work rather than quoting the work itself. Researchers also differ in their observations. Brückner points to stanzas 7–10 and 13–16[12] as taken from the 13th-century work of *Vita rhythmica*, while Fr. B. Gładysz lists the stanzas 6–10[13]. Connections with the third source – Polish Lamentations – *Posłuchajcie, bracia miła* which are borrowings shown in (Table No. 1).

11 R. Mazurkiewicz, *Posłuchajcie, bracia miła*.
12 A. Brückner, *Średniowieczna pieśń*, pp. 84–87.
13 B. Gładysz, *Krzyżu święty*, p. 8.

Table No. 1

Manuscript of the Biblioteka Kórnicka No. 44, pp. 128–130v	Source text for the song *Krzyżu święty nade wszystko*	Jag$_1$ (1638)[14] – latin version
	AH, L, 71–73	
1. Krzizu shvyeti nadewsitko, Drzewo nashlachetnyeysche, V żadnim lyessye nÿe yest takye, Yedno na ktorim bog bil, Shlodkye drzewo. Shlodye gos-dzye, Shlodky owocz noshylo.	8. Crux fidelis. inter omnes arbor una nobilis, Nulla talem silva profert flore, fronde, germine, Duke lignum dulce clavo dulce pondus sustinens.	Crux fidelis inter omnes, Arbor una nobilis: Nulla sylva talem profert, Fronde, flore, germine: Dulce lignum, dulces clavos Dulce pondus sustinet.
2. Sklony galasky drzewo schw-yete, Ulzyy czlonky rospyete, Odmyen theras onę srogoscz, Ktorą mas s prirodzenya Spuscz lekuczko y czychuczko Czyalo Krola nyebyeskyego	9. Fleete ramos, arbor alta, tensa laxa viscera Et rigor lentescat ille, quem dedit nativitas, Ut superni membra regis mite tendas stipite.	Flecte ramos arbor alta, Tensa laxa viscera: Et rigor lentescat ille, Quem dedit nativitas: Ut superni membra Regis; Miti tendas stipite.
3. Tish shamo bilo dostoÿne Nossycz tego shwyata sbovyenye. Przes czye przevos yest napra-vyon Shwyatu, ktori bil zatonął, Ktori shwyeta kevy polala, Czo s baranka viplinela.	10. Sola digna tu fuisti ferre pretium saeculi Atque portum praeparare nauta mundo naufrago, Quem sacer cruor perunxit fusus agni corpore.	Sola digna tu fuisti, Ferre secli pretium: Atque portum reparare, Nauta mundo naufrago; Quem sacer cruor perunxit, Fusus agni sanguine.
4. V yaslkach placząncz, gdi tam lezal, Yus to vsitko bil oglądal, Ish tak hanyebnye vmrzecz myal Gdi vsitek shwyat odkupycz mÿal.		Cum in cunis flens iacebat, Cuncta ista videbat: Se tam dirè moriturum, Dando vitam homini, Illic fuit inter bruta, Nunc latronum medius.
5. Nyeshlichana to yest dobrocz, Na krzizu za kogo umrzecz, Ktos to może dzys udzyalacz Za kogo na krzizu trwacz. Sham to pan Jezus udzyalal, Ys nas vyernÿe umÿlowal.		Inauditus hic est amor, Crucem ferre alius, Quisnam potest hoc præstare, Pro quo vitam ponere: Solus IESUS id effecit, Qui dilexit nimium.

14 S. S. Jagodyński, *Pieśni katolickie nowo reformowane. Z polskich na łacińskie, a z łacińskich na polskie przełożone, niektóre też nowo złożone*, Kraków [1638].

Manuscript of the Biblioteka Kórnicka No. 44, pp. 128–130v	Source text for the song *Krzyżu święty nade wszystko*	Jag$_1$ (1638)[15] – latin version
6. Maria matka pattrzala Na czlonky, które povyala, Povyyayancz, czalovala, S czego vyelką radoscz mÿala; Therash ye vydzÿ sczyrnÿale, Krvya polane, smordovane.		Quàm miserum id cor foret, Quod non fleret hodie: Videns suum Creatorem, Ut latronem perpeti, Ad assandum soli datum, Agnum Paschæ debitum.
7. Nedznebi to shercze bilo, Czobi dzys nye plakalo, Vydząncz Sbavyczyela swego, Na krzizu zawyessonego, Na shlonczu upyeczonego, Baranka vyelkonocznego.		MARIA Mater spectabat, Membra pannis quæ fovit: Fovens illa basiabat, Et ex corde gaudebat: Nunc illa videt livere, Artus venas distrahi.
8. Nye yest taky, any bendzye, Zadnemu shmutek na shvyeczye, Jaky panna czista myala Vonczas, kyedi narzekala: Nendzna ya shyrota nye mam, Ku komu ssyę sklonycz mam,	*Posłuchajcie, bracia miła*, w: *Średniowieczna pieśń religijna polska*, ed. M. Korolko, Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków–Gdańsk 1980, pp. 142–154	Non erat nec unquam erit, Talis mæror hominis: Qualem casta Virgo tulit, Promens tales nænias; O miseram me pupillam, Quo me vertam hodie?
9. Jednegom shinaczka myala, Y tegom s nyeba bicz snala, Tegom yus ozelala, Yednam shama zostala; Czyesky bol czyerpy me shercze, Od smutku my shyę rossyescz chcze.	2. ………………………………. Jednegociem Syna miała I tegociem ożalała.	Unicum natum de cælis, Datum mihi habui: Illum talem Eheu dolor, Sola manens perdidi; Gravis dolor mî premit, Quin præsumit rumpere.
10. V radosczym go porodzÿla, Shmutkum zadnego nÿe myala, Yus teraz wsitky bolesczy Dręczą mÿę bes lutosczy, Abich ya to mogla myecz, Bich ya s tobą mogla umrzecz.		Gaudens illum mundo dedi, Nil doloris senseram: Omnes modò sed dolores, Me unitim perimunt, Ut mors mihi sit optanda, Quæ dolores finiat.
11. Glowka twoya nachilona Nyskat podparczya nye ma, Vranyona v pyerssy pcha. Y kole ostre czyrnye na glovye, Nogy vschle y schyrnyale, Krvyą polane, smordovane.		

15 S. S. Jagodyński, *Pieśni katolickie nowo reformowane. Z polskich na łacińskie, a z łacińskich na polskie przełożone, niektóre też nowo złożone*, Kraków [1638].

Manuscript of the Biblioteka Kórnicka No. 44, pp. 128–130v	Source text for the song *Krzyżu święty nade wszystko*	Jag$_1$ (1638)[16] – latin version
12. Bi my, shinu, nysko vyshyal Vsodibi nyectorą pomocz myal, Glowkebich tvoye potarla, Krew bich s licza ottarla, Ale czyę dossyacz nye mogę, Tobye, myli, nycz nye pomoge.	5. Synku, bych cię nisko miała, Niecoć bych ci wspomagała; Twoja głowka krzywo wisa, tęć bych ja podparła, Krew po tobie płynie, tęć bych ja utarła, Picia wołasz, picia-ć bych ci dała, Ale nie lza dosiąc twego świętego ciała.	Si mî Fili tangi possis, Opem ferrem utique: Caput tuum sustentarem, Guttas vultûs tergerem; Sed te tam altè pendentem, Nec attingo, nec iuuo.
13. Angelskye ssyę shlowa myenyę, Shimeonowe shye pelnyą; On movyl: pelnas mÿlosczy, Napelnyonam dzys zalosczy, Simeon my tak powyedal, Is me shercze myecz przeboscz myal.	6. O anjele Gabryjele, Gdzie jest ono twe wesele, Cożeś mi go obiecował tak barzo wiele, A rzekący: Panno, pełna jeś miłości! A ja pełna smutku i żałości, Sprochniało we mnie ciało i moje wszytki kości.	Angeli verba mutantur, Simeonis permanent: Ille me tam dolorosam, Dixit plenam gratiâ; Sed Simeon mî prædixit, Fore cordi gladium.
14. Ny ya shostri, any brata, Anÿ zadnego przaczyelya, Skandze poczyessenye mam myecz? Volyalabich stokrocz umrzecz, Nys vydzyecz shinaczka mego, Na krzizu zawyessonego.	8. Nie mam ani będę mieć jinego, Jedno ciebie, Synu, na krzyżu rozbitego.	Non mî Pater, Mater, Frater, Nec amicus quispiam: Non ullum solamen adest, Mallem mori centies; Quâm videre durâ hastâ, Fodi latus Filii.
15. Matky, czo shinaczky maczye, Yako ssyę v nych kochaczye, Kyedi vam yeden sh nycz vmrze, Czyesky bog czyrpy vashe shercze, Czos ya, czom mÿala yednego, Yush nye mogę myecz ynnego.		Matres quæ natos habetis, Quantum hos diligitis: Cum unus ex illis obit, Quam doletis grauiter: Quid ego unicum habens, Habitura neminem?
16. O nyestoyczÿe, mÿli panye, Tocz marne roslaczenye, Bilo vyelkye mylovanye, Przestos czyeskye vsdichanye, Czemus, boze Oycze, nye dbas, O Sinaczku pyeczi nye mash?		Ah mî Fili, mi dilecte, Quàm tristè dividimur: Ante eras mî dulcedo, Nunc amara passio; Cur dilectum Pater Natum Derelinquis Filium?

[16] S. S. Jagodyński, *Pieśni katolickie nowo reformowane. Z polskich na łacińskie, a z łacińskich na polskie przełożone, niektóre też nowo złożone*, Kraków [1638].

Manuscript of the Biblioteka Kórnicka No. 44, pp. 128–130v	Source text for the song *Krzyżu święty nade wszystko*	Jag$_1$ (1638)[17] – latin version
17. Ctorzi tey panÿe shluziczye, Shmutky yey rosmishlayczye, Yako czensto omglevala Vonczas, kyedi narzekala. Przes ti shmutky, ktores myala, Upros nam ray noyebyesky. Amen.		Qui Virgini huic servitis, Dolores eius pendite: Quanto dolore languebat, Et languore doluit Quos tu Virgo per dolores, Ora nobis gaudia. Am<en>.

In summary, it should be stated that the three stanzas of the Latin hymn *Pangue lingua gloriosi preolium certaminis* had the greatest and direct impact on the creation of the song under study. The remaining sources were closer or further inspiration for its continuation, in the form of borrowings of text fragments or paraphrases. An issue worth noting is the Latin version of the song *Krzyżu święty nade wszystko*, published in the Cantional Stanisław S. Jagodyński from 1638. According to the assumptions made when editing this *cantionale*, the author in the left column included the original versions, either Latin or Polish and in the second column (on the right), he inserted their translations, also Polish or Latin, depending on the language of the original. In the case of the studied song, in the first column, he included the Polish text that was original for the entire song, even though individual parts of the work used Latin texts as their source. The Latin version of the song, on the other hand, is secondary, as the compilation of the song's text was written in Polish. S. S. Jagodyński, who knew the anthem *Pangue lingua gloriosi preolium certaminis*, used the verses 8–10 and included them literally in the translation, while the remaining stanzas he personally translated into Latin.

The song *Krzyżu święty nade* is a stanza song composed of 6-verse stanzas, isotropic 8-syllable stanzas, with a few exceptions (lines 2 and 4 in some stanzas have 7 syllables and in one case 9). As B. Gładysz points out, the translation of the Latin hymn *Pangue lingua gloriosi preolium certaminis* "gives only a weak idea of the beauty typical to the Latin original, (…) for the poet uses ingenious weaves of words, especially juxtapositions that sound beautiful in the original, but in a faithful translation that causes invincible difficulties"[18] The song is in-

17 S. S. Jagodyński, *Pieśni katolickie nowo reformowane. Z polskich na łacińskie, a z łacińskich na polskie przełożone, niektóre też nowo złożone*, Kraków [1638].

18 B. Gładysz, *Krzyżu święty*, p. 8.

tended for the adoration of the Cross on Good Friday, but some songbooks also mention other church holidays, such as May 3 – the celebration of the Finding of the Cross, or September 14 – the Exaltation of the Cross.[19]

2. Variability of the song texts

The oldest known version in the Kórnicki manuscript[20] of 1551–1555, of the Franciscan provenance, has 17 stanzas. This version is quoted in their studies by M. Bobowski[21] and A. Brückner.[22] This text is included in Table No. 1.

During the preliminary research, one source was found in which the song had as many as 18th verses. It is a songbook from the beginning of the 19th-century *Qui cantat bis orat*[23], edited by Pankracy Folwarski. He added two stanzas at the end, not found in other sources, Table No. 2.

Table No. 2

17. O Drzewo Krzyża Świętego[24] Narzędzie zbawienia mego Drzewo śliczne poświęcone Jezusową krwią skropione. Bądź od wszystkich godnie czczone I na wieki uwielbione. 18. Jezu przez znak krzyża twego Użycz wszelkiego dobrego Daj zwalczyć czarta pokusy Daj wieczne zbawienie duszy. Wybawiaj nas ode złego Doczesnego i wiecznego.

[19] Klon1 (1867), p. 254.
[20] Manuscript of the Biblioteka Kórnicka no. 44, pp. 128–130v.
[21] M. Bobowski, *Polskie pieśni katolickie od najdawniejszych czasów do końca XVI wieku*, Kraków 1893, pp. 312–316.
[22] A. Brückner, *Średniowieczna pieśń*, pp. 84–87.
[23] P. Folwarski, *Śpiewnik "Qui cantat bis orat"*, Kraków 1802 – then: ŚQC (1802).
[24] ŚQC (1802), pp. 393–395.

The singer turns back again to the cross to worship and adore it. It is a kind of closing the content of the song. The author started his meditation with the cross and finally turned to it. Furthermore, in the last stanza, he asks Jesus for all good that will give strength and help to overcome the temptation of Satan, and thus to attain the salvation that Jesus merited through the cross. This complements the short final request in the 16-stanza version, where it is addressed to Mary, who expresses her regrets, and is contained in only the last two lines (Table No. 3):

Table No. 3

16. Ktorzy tey Pannie służycie smutki iey rozmyślawaycie Jako czesto omdlewala czesto na ziemie padała: Przez te smutki coś cierpiala vproś nam wieczna chwala / Amen.

The most common variant of the song under study is the 16-stanza structure. It occurs in the greatest number of sources, both in the 17th, 18th, 19th and 20th-centuries. Among the research for the purposes of this study, the following can be mentioned: *Pieśni postne starożytne*[25], Cantional of S. S. Jagodyński[26], *Kancyonał pieśni nabożnych*[27], *Pieśni katolickie według obrzędów Kościoła Ś. Rzymskiego*[28], *Cancyonal piesni nabożnych*[29], *Śpiewnik kościelny* of M. M. Mioduszewski[30],

[25] *Pieśni postne starożytne, człowiekowi krześcijańskiemu należące, które w Wielki Post śpiewane bywają dla rozmyślania Męki Pańskiej z przyczynieniem piosnek wyrobione* (from c. 1607 before 1618) – then: PPSt (1607–1618).

[26] S. S. Jagodyński, *Pieśni katolickie nowo reformowane. Z polskich na łacińskie, a z łacińskich na polskie przełożone, niektóre też nowo złożone*, Kraków [1638] – then: Jag1 (1638).

[27] *Kancyonał pieśni nabożnych według obrzędow Kościoła Swietego Katolickiego na uroczystości całego roku z przydatkiem wielu nowych, sporządzony y wydany, cum gratia & privilegio S. R. M.*, W Krakowie w Drukarni Jakuba Matyaskiewicza Roku Pańskiego 1721 – then: KPN1 (1721).

[28] *Pieśni katolickie według obrzędów Kościoła Ś. Rzymskiego na uroczystości całego roku z przydatkiem nabożnych wielu nowych o różnych świętych Pańskich. Świeżo wydane*, W Krakowie w Drukarni Akademickiej Roku Pańskiego 1754 – then: PK (1754).

[29] *Cancyonal piesni nabożnych według obrzędów Kościoła Świętego Katolickiego na uroczystości całego roku z przydatkiem wielu nowych sporządzony i wydany. Cum licentia Ordinarii*, W Drukarni Academickiei Colleg. Societ. Jesu, Wrocław 1769 – then: CPN (1769).

[30] *Śpiewnik Kościelny czyli pieśni nabożne z melodyjami w kościele katolickim używane a dla wygody kościołów parafialnych przez X. M. M. Mioduszewskiego Zgrom. XX. Miss. zebrane*,

Szczeble do nieba[31] *Śpiewnik kościelny* of Fr. Walczyński[32], *Cantionale Ecclesiasticum* of J. Surzyński.[33]

The stanza omitted from the 17-stanza version is stanza no. 11 – Table no. 4:

Table No. 4

11. Główka twoya nachilona[34] Nyskat podparczya nye ma, Vranyona v pyerssy pcha. Y kole ostre czyrnye na glovye, Nogy vschle y schyrnyale, Krvyą polane, smordovane.

Its content introduced a description of the Saviour's tormented head, which hung, wounded with a crown of thorns, and "withered and blackened" legs, covered in blood. The Mother of God refers to this image in the next stanza, regretting that she cannot help her Son, support the suffering head, wipe it and all Jesus from the blood flowing down him. Therefore, why this verse was removed from later editions of the song is difficult to say.

The collection of songs closest to us from the 20th-century contains the text of the song shortened to four stanzas. That is a symptom of a general tendency causing the texts of old songs to be shortened to a few strophes, although it must be admitted that quite a large number of editions keep this song in a slightly abbreviated form. Examples of the sets with a song cut to four strophes are: Józef

Kraków w Drukarni Stanisława Gieszkowskiego [1838]. It is a songbook with 3 extras printed: 1842, 1849, 1853.– then: Miod1 (1838).

31 *Szczeble do nieba czyli zbiór pieśni z melodyjami w Kościele rzymsko-katolickim od najdawniejszych czasów używanych, uskuteczniony przez Teofila Klonowskiego nauczyciela przy Król. katol. naucz. Seminarium w Poznaniu*, vol. 1, Nakładem i czcionkami Ludwika Merzbacha, Poznań [1867] – then: Klon1 (1867).

32 Fr. Walczyński, *Śpiewnik kościelny*, Wydanie nowe powiększone, Nakładem Księgarni Zygmunta Jelenia, Tarnów 1910 – then: Walcz3 (1910).

33 *Cantionale ecclesiasticum ad normam Editionis Vaticanae Librorum Gradualis et Antiphonalis S.R.E. jussu SS. D. N. Pii X. Pontificis Maximi restitutorum necnon Ritualis Sacramentorum Petricoviensis cum Intonationibus Missae et Officii Divini edit Dr. Joseph Surzyński Cubicularius Intimus Suae Sanctitatis. Editio Quarta*, Posnaniae, Sumptibus Societatis Drukarnia i Księgarnia św. Wojciecha, 1914 – then: SurzCE2 (1914).

34 Manuscript of the Biblioteka Kórnicka no. 44, pp. 128–130v.

Zawitkowski's Songbook *Alleluja*[35], Hieronim Chamski's *Śpiewnik kościelny diecezji płockiej*[36] and Antoni Reginek's Songbook *Śpiewnik archidiecezji katowickiej.*[37]

The first two editors kept as four verses numbered: 1, 2, 3, and 5. Whereas Fr. Reginek kept the first and successive stanzas: no. 1, 2, 3, and 4. The reason for the first choice was most probably the continuity of the content, without the retrospective stanza no. 4, mentioning Jesus lying in the manger.

Examples of 20th-century editions retaining the full 16-stanza version of the text are: Wojciech Lewkowicz's *Śpiewnik parafialny*[38], Mieczysław Jankowski's *Śpiewajmy Panu*[39], and Jan Siedlecki's *Śpiewnik kościelny*.[40]

There are no significant differences in terms of the content variants of the texts. Table no. 5:

Table No. 5

PPSt (1607–1618); PK (1754); CPN (1769); ŚQC (1802); Miod$_1$ (1838); Walcz$_3$ (1910); Zawit (1978); Cham$_2$ (1983); Reg (2000)	Jag$_1$ (1638); SurzCE$_2$ (1914)
1......................... Rozkoszny owoc nosiło	1.............................. (Słodki[41]) Najsłodszy owoc nosiło

PPSt (1607–1618); Jag$_1$ (1638); PK (1754); CPN (1769)	ŚQC (1802); Miod$_1$ (1838); Walcz$_3$ (1910); SurzCE$_2$ (1914); Zawit (1978); Cham$_2$ (1983)
2........................ Ulży członkom rozpiętym	2............................. Ulży członkom tak (zbyt[42]) rozpiętym

35 J. Zawitkowski, *Alleluja*. *Zbiór śpiewów mszalnych i pielgrzymkowych*, Warszawa 1978 – then: Zawit (1978).

36 H. Chamski, *Śpiewnik kościelny diecezji płockiej*, Płock 1983 – then: Cham2 (1983).

37 A. Reginek, *Śpiewnik archidiecezji katowickiej*, Katowice 2000 – then: Reg (2000).

38 W. Lewkowicz, *Śpiewnik parafialny, czyli zbiór pieśni sakralnych polskich i łacińskich oraz modlitw dla użytku wiernych w kościołach rzymsko-katolickich*, wyd. V milenijne, Olsztyn 1967 – then: Lew (1967).

39 M. Jankowski, *Śpiewajmy Panu*. *Śpiewnik Archidiecezji Warszawskiej*, Warszawa 1971 – then: Jan (1971).

40 J. Siedlecki, *Śpiewnik kościelny*, wyd. XXXVI, ed. K. Mrowiec, Opole 1980 – then: Siedl1 (1980).

41 Manuscript of the Biblioteka Kórnicka no 44, pp. 128–130v.

42 Reg (2000), pp. 137–138.

PPSt (1607–1618); Jag$_1$ (1638); SurzCE$_2$ (1914)	PK (1754); CPN (1769); ŚQC (1802); Miod$_1$ (1838); Walcz$_3$ (1910)
5…………………… Ktoż to może dziś udziałać (zdziałać[43])	5………………………… Ktoż to może dziś wykonać

PPSt (1607–1618); Jag$_1$ (1638); PK (1754); CPN (1769); Miod$_1$ (1838); SurzCE$_2$ (1914); Zawit (1978) Cham$_2$ (1983);	ŚQC (1802); Walcz$_3$ (1910)
5…………………… By nas wiernie umiłował.	5………………………… By nas wiecznie umiłował.

PPSt (1607–1618)	PK (1754); CPN (1769); ŚQC (1802); Miod$_1$ (1838); SurzCE$_2$ (1914)
8…………………… nie wiem ku komu sie skłonić mam.	8………………………… Do kogoś się (wżdy[44]) ia skłonić (udać[45]) mam

PPSt (1607–1618); Jag$_1$ (1638); PK (1754); CPN (1769); ŚQC (1802); Walcz$_3$ (1910)	Miod$_1$ (1838); SurzCE$_2$ (1914)
9…………………… Od smutku mi się rozsieść chce	9………………………… Od żalu mi się rozsieść chce

PPSt (1607–1618); Jag$_1$ (1638); PK (1754); ŚQC (1802); Miod$_1$ (1838); Walcz$_3$ (1910); SurzCE$_2$ (1914)	CPN (1769)
10…………………… Dręczą mie bez litości	10………………………… Dzierżą mie bez litości

PPSt (1607–1618); PK (1754); CPN (1769); ŚQC (1802)	Jag$_1$ (1638); Miod$_1$ (1838); Walcz$_3$ (1910); SurzCE$_2$ (1914)
13…………………… Niż widzieć Żyda złośnego	13………………………… Niż widzieć żołnierza złego.

43 Zawit (1978), p. 289; Cham2 (1983), p. 137–138.
44 Jag1 (1638), p. 53.
45 Walcz3 (1910), pp. 65–67.

PPSt (1607–1618); Jag$_1$ (1638); PK (1754); CPN (1769)	ŚQC (1802); Miod$_1$ (1838); Walcz$_3$ (1910); SurzCE$_2$ (1914)
13......................... włocznia przebość Syna mego.	13.............................. Co przebił bok Syna mego

PPSt (1607–1618); PK (1754); CPN (1769); ŚQC (1802)	Jag$_1$ (1638); SurzCE$_2$ (1914)
15. O niestetysz miły Panie toć marne (niemałe[46]) rozłaczenie:	15. Ach, mój Synu, me kochanie Toć smutne nasze rozstanie:

PPSt (1607–1618); Jag$_1$ (1638); SurzCE$_2$ (1914)	PK (1754); CPN (1769); ŚQC (1802); Miod$_1$ (1838); Walcz$_3$ (1910)
15......................... Czemuż Oycze miły	15.............................. Czemuż Boże Oycze

PPSt (1607–1618); Jag$_1$ (1638); PK (1754); CPN (1769); ŚQC (1802); Miod$_1$ (1838); Walcz$_3$ (1910)	SurzCE$_2$ (1914)
16......................... Często na ziemie padała	16.............................. Często serdecznie wzdychała

PPSt (1607–1618); PK (1754)	Jag$_1$ (1638); CPN (1769); ŚQC (1802); Miod$_1$ (1838); Walcz$_3$ (1910); SurzCE$_2$ (1914)
16......................... Przez te smutki coś cierpiała	16.............................. Przez te smutki, któreś miała

After examining the text, it should be stated that it is uniform, it does not have many variants, but only differences resulting from the modernisation of the language, the word order in the verses is changed, sometimes it uses synonyms, only a few times different terms, such as: "wiernie" – " wiecznie", "dręczą" – "dzierżą, "Żyda" – "żołnierza", "padała" – "wzdychała", "cierpiała" – "miała".

Summarising the above research, one should note a rather specific way of creating the text of the song *Krzyżu święty nade wszystko*, consisting of compiling

46 Miod1 (1838), pp. 88–91; Walcz3 (1910), pp. 65–67.

fragments of other works and their partial translation. We know few songs composed in this way. Most of the songs from this period are translations of the Latin hymnody. In this case, the first three stanzas are the exact translations of the 8th, 9th and 10th stanzas of the hymn *Pangue lingua gloriosi preolium certaminis*. The next part, according to Brückner, comes from the 13th-century work *Vita beatae Virginis Mariae et Salvatoris rhytmica (Wierszowany żywot błogosławionej Dziewicy Marii i Zbawiciela*), which the author failed to confirm. The third part of the song's text uses the text of the 15th-century Polish song *Żale Marji Panny pod krzyżem* that begins with an incipit: *Posłuchajcie, bracia miła*, also known as *Lament świętokrzyski*. It is not known who made this compilation of texts. However, the way the content of the stanzas is arranged indicates that the compiler wanted to combine in the same work the contemplation of the Lord's Passion on the Cross with the experience of the Passion by Mary, the Mother of Jesus. This agreed with the passion spirituality of the 13th and 14th-centuries in Poland. Among other things, in this way, they extended the compassion of Christ to every believer. This way of experiencing the mysteries of the Passion was a response to the great gift of salvation offered by the Crucified.

References

Sources' abbreviations

AH – *Analecta hymnica medii aevi*, eds. G. M. Dreves, C. Blume, H. Bannister, vol. 1–55, Leipzig 1886–1922.

$Cham_2$ (1983) – Chamski H., *Śpiewnik kościelny diecezji płockiej*, Płock 1983.

CPN (1769) – *Cancyonal piesni nabożnych według obrzędów Kościoła Świętego Katolickiego na uroczystości całego roku z przydatkiem wielu nowych sporządzony i wydany. Cum licentia Ordinari*, W Drukarni Academickiei Colleg. Societ. Jesu, Wrocław 1769.

Jag_1 (1638) – Jagodyński S. S., *Pieśni katolickie nowo reformowane. Z polskich na łacińskie, a z łacińskich na polskie przełożone, niektóre też nowo złożone*, Kraków [1638].

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Assumptions and forms of national education in the Second Polish Republic in the years 1918–1926 as a continuation of school ideas of the autonomous Galicia

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Abstract

This article explores how educational ideas developed in Polish Galicia during the autonomous period influenced the concept of national upbringing in the Second Polish Republic (1918–1926). After regaining independence, Polish schools—especially folk and secondary—drew on Galician models of patriotic education. The repolonisation of schools in Galicia enabled the implementation of national pedagogy promoted by thinkers such as Zygmunt Balicki, Mieczysław Baranowski, and Edward Gabryelski. Patriotic values were transmitted through school celebrations, historical anniversaries, student organisations, theatres, orchestras, and reading. Between 1918 and 1926, these ideas were adapted by educators like Lucjan Zarzecki, Władysław Marian Borowski, and Ludwik Skoczylas. Drawing on Galician experiences, schools aimed to rebuild national identity and counteract the effects of the Partitions. National education thus became a key legacy of Polish culture, science, and pedagogy in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Keywords

national upbringing, Polish pedagogical thought, educational activity, schooling, Galician autonomy, Second Polish Republic

1. Formation of national ideas in Polish pedagogical thought before regaining independence

In the early years of the Second Polish Republic, the main aim of education, defined as national, became the question of integrating the Polish community from the three partitions and building a modern model of a Pole. Such was the fundamental aim of the founders of national pedagogy. It would not have been possible if it had not been for the earlier process of the appropriate ideological formation of a significant group of teachers and the shaping of children's and young people's attitudes in the national spirit during the autonomous Galician period. It should be emphasised that Galician teachers, in addition to ideological assumptions, developed numerous forms of educational work that became important in the pedagogical practice of national education at the beginning of the reborn Polish state.

In the second half of the 19th century, the process of patriotic education in Galicia developed slowly but systematically. Loyalism towards the imperial power was increasingly boldly replaced by Polish national and, later, independence accents. Towards the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and especially in the last years before the outbreak of the First World War, the patriotic activity of schoolchildren and a significant proportion of teachers became practically overt. It took various forms of both in-school and out-of-school activities. National celebrations were organised in schools and pro-independence organisations. National values related to Polish history were realised through the influence of scouting and were also the programme content of school trips and pilgrimages. Students also participated in celebrations organised by local communities, such as manifestations, rallies, marches, funerals of prominent Poles and unveiling of monuments to heroes from the national pantheon. Secondary school pupils took part in legal shooting lessons and field exercises, which had a distinctly military aspect, thanks to which they would in future supply the legionary and officer cadres of the Polish Army. The negative influences and effects of the war did not discourage the younger generation from the national cause, but even strengthened it.

After the regaining of independence, a characteristic phenomenon in the field of national upbringing was the fact that its ideas were postulated and promoted by various circles: teachers, politicians, social activists, the then creators of pedagogical thought, scientific institutions and representatives of the Catholic clergy. A representative of the latter group was, among others, Father

W. Kosinski, a theologian and pedagogue and priest of the Sandomierz diocese, who in his work published in 1920, *Pedagogika. Podręcznik dla wychowawców i nauczycieli* emphasised that: "our nation from the smoke of fires, from the dust of fraternal blood, the quickest and surest way to rise is through the rebirth of generations of young, well-mannered people."[1] Accordingly, in the circles of theoreticians and practitioners of upbringing, great emphasis was placed on the importance of patriotism and the formation of national identity, thus creating the model of national upbringing that functioned in the years 1918–1926.

The national idea of upbringing expressed in Polish pedagogical thought in the second half of the 19th century, and its continuation in independent Poland, echoed the period of Romanticism. The spirit of Romanticism permeated, inter alia, the views of Karol Libelt, as well as the authors of many articles published in the Lvov journal "Szkoła" (School), which addressed the importance of national ideas in upbringing.[2] The views of the pedagogues and publicists of the "School" influenced the educational concepts shaping the Polish educational system after the restoration of sovereignty.[3]

In the second half of the 19th century, the ideas of national education were taken up by emerging political parties and their activists, above all Roman Dmowski and Zygmunt Balicki, politicians of the National League and the Polish League.[4] These views were also proclaimed by intellectuals and educators

1 W. Kosiński, *Pedagogika. Podręcznik dla wychowawców i nauczycieli*, Księgarnia Św. Wojciecha, Poznań–Warszawa 1920, p. 8.

2 K. Libelt, *O miłości Ojczyzny*, Nakładem Spółki Wydawniczej Jan Rowiński i Adam Sobieszczański, Warszawa 1907; A. Wałęga, *Dziedzictwo polskiej teorii i praktyki pedagogicznej na kartach "Szkoły"*, in: *Polskie dziedzictwo pedagogiczne. Rozważania o ideach i instytucjach*, ed. J. Falkowska, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, Toruń 2016, p. 59; J. Falkowska, *Myśl wychowania narodowego w Galicji okresu autonomii. Twórcy i idee*, Wydawnictwo Adam Marszałek, Toruń 2013, p. 73; A. Karbowiak, *Polskie pisma pedagogiczne*, Kasa im. Mianowskiego, Warszawa 1912, p. 35.

3 A. Świątek, *Problem patriotycznego wychowania ludu na łamach lwowskiej "Szkoły" w czasie autonomii galicyjskiej*, in: *Czasopiśmiennictwo XIX i początków XX wieku jako źródło do historii edukacji*, eds. I. Michalska, G. Michalski, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, Łódź 2010, p. 184.

4 M. Wiśniewska, *Edukacja w służbie Niepodległej w świetle "Zasad wychowania narodowego" Zygmunta Balickiego*, "Niepodległość i Pamięć" 25 (2018) no. 1 (61), pp. 154–155; H. Konopka, *Między wychowaniem narodowym a wychowaniem państwowym w programach nauczania historii szkoły powszechnej (1918–1939)*, "Annales Academiae Paedagogicae Cracoviensis. 29, Studia ad Institutionem et Educationem Pertinentia" (2005) no. 1, p. 115.

associated with the positivist current, including: Aleksander Świętochowski, Bolesław Prus, Henryk Wernic, Piotr Chmielowski, Adolf Dygasiński.[5] A significant contribution to the development of pedagogical thought based on national ideology was shown in the writings of Stanisław Karpowicz and Stanisław Prus Szczepanowski. In particular, the views of the latter had a significant impact on the later development and formation of Polish national pedagogy.[6] In turn, the common denominator of the Polish positivists' views on the question of the aims of education in times of captivity was "realism, in which the ideology of the state gradually began to give way to the ideology of the nation, an ideology with a national society independent of the state."[7]

Among the authors who raised the issue of the importance of national values in upbringing, Zygmunt Balicki should be counted first. In his writings, he emphasised the important role of upbringing aimed at preparing young people to fulfil their duties towards the nation and the state. He regarded the development of the importance of such values as goodness, truth, beauty, justice and patriotism in the pupils as the fundamental task of the school. All these values were imbued with a religious spirit. Moreover, he emphasised the role and importance of the heritage of the Komisja Edukacji Narodowej (Commission of National Education), bequeathed to the Polish nation as a kind of testament.[8] According to Zygmunt Balicki, the duty towards the future was to educate the nation as a unified, powerful organism, capable of fulfilling the historical tasks facing it.[9]

Views on national upbringing were also presented by Mieczysław Baranowski. He pointed out the importance of the family home in the process of upbringing, stressing that "sincere true patriotism of parents and educators" is the means to develop and ennoble the patriotic feelings of youth.[10] He believed that every

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5 M. Lipowska, *Koncepcje wychowania polskich programów szkolnych okresu międzywojennego*, "Rozprawy z Dziejów Oświaty" 12 (1969), pp. 38–39.

6 R. Zapotoczny, *Preferowane warianty ideału wychowania II Rzeczpospolitej*, "Wrocławski Przegląd Teologiczny" 6 (1998) no. 2, p. 186; D. Figiel, *Nacjonalistyczne koncepcje wychowania we współczesnej myśli narodowo-radykalnej*, "Ogrody Nauk i Sztuk" 2 (2012) no. 2, p. 91.

7 F. W. Araszkiewicz, *Ideały wychowawcze Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej*, PWN, Warszawa 1978, p. 30.

8 Z. Balicki, *Zasady wychowania narodowego*, "Szkoła" (1910) issue 2, p. 65.

9 Z. Balicki, *Zasady wychowania narodowego*, p. 65.

10 M. Baranowski, *Pedagogika do użytku seminariów nauczycielskich i nauczycieli szkół ludowych*, Nakładem Księgarni D. E. Friedleina, Kraków 1907, p. 65.

child, when he or she grows up and whatever his or her position, should work "for the good of the family country and for the good of his or her nation."[11]

On the other hand, the role of folk school teachers in the process of national education was pointed out by Edward Gabryelski. According to him, such a teacher, by appropriately directing education in the present, acts for the benefit of the nation's future.[12] In this dimension, he is assigned the role of "guardian of national feelings."[13]

2. National ideas in the theory and practice of school education in the first years of the Second Polish Republic

At the time of the rebirth of the independent Polish state, educational concepts were clearly influenced by the idea of national upbringing, propagated at the time by National Democracy. It was defined by Lucjan Zarzecki, who believed that the values of national tradition should be used in the process of school upbringing, and that students shaped in this spirit had a duty to multiply them.[14] He pointed out that "upbringing is the creation of a nation."[15] The innovative element in Lucjan Zarzycki's concept was the transformation of the educational ideal in relation to the ideas represented by Zygmunt Balicki, among others. In it, the role of the soldier-hero was replaced by the ideal of the worker-citizen.[16]

An important role in promoting the idea of national upbringing was played by Władysław Marian Borowski, whose works were essential reading in this

11 M. Baranowski, *Wychowanie powinno być narodowe, ale powinno zwalczać przywary narodowe*, "Szkoła" (1898) issue 1, p. 4.

12 E. Gabryelski, *O wychowaniu narodowem i o posłannictwie nauczycielstwa ludowego*, "Szkoła" (1895), issue 23, p. 297.

13 A. Wałęga, *"Powinności" nauczyciela ludowego doby zaborów w przekazie czasopisma "Szkoła"*, "Biuletyn Historii Wychowania" (2020) no. 42, p. 19.

14 L. Zarzecki, *Teoria osobowości i wychowania*, in: *Wychowanie narodowe. Studia i szkice*, eds. Z. Wasilewski, W. Wąsik, Zakład Drukarski F. Wyszyński i Spółka, Warszawa 1926, p. 288; K. Jakubiak, W. Jamrożek, *Polska myśl i praktyka pedagogiczna w II Rzeczypospolitej 1918–1939. W stulecie odzyskania niepodległości*, "Forum Pedagogiczne" 9 (2019) no. 1, p. 26.

15 L. Zarzecki, *O głównych postulatach wychowania narodowego*, in: *Wychowanie narodowe. Studia i szkice*, p. 369.

16 A. Niedojadło, *Wychowanie narodowe i państwowe w szkołach powszechnych Okręgu Szkolnego Krakowskiego w latach 1918–1939*, TN KUL & Biblos, Lublin–Tarnów 2013, p. 83.

area for teachers and educators, especially in the years 1918–1926.[17] He believed that national upbringing should consider three sources. First, he pointed to the resurrection of national tradition, which had been overshadowed by foreign influences during the period of captivity, as well as the extraction of the essence of the educational system from the history of Polish education and the basing of spiritual culture on the historical heritage of outstanding ancestors. The second source was the introduction into the system of national education of elements acquired by foreign civilisations, provided, however, that they harmonised with the spirit of Polish society. Furthermore, as a third source, Władysław Marian Borowski mentioned "life itself and the character of the nation revealed in its process."[18] In addition, he also emphasised the importance of the family, especially the leading role of the mother, in the process of national education of Polish youth.[19] He also specified in this context the tasks of the school, which should perform its educational activities primarily on the basis of national culture.[20]

After the restoration of independence, the Polish school regarded as its main objective, on the one hand, the upbringing of children and young people to become nationally conscious citizens, and, on the other hand, the formation of citizens with a strong sense of their duties towards their own country. The regaining of independence created an opportunity to promote ideals of upbringing more or less related to the issue of national identity, which was exposed in the social and political life of the country by many politicians, people of science and culture, and the clergy. In pursuing its educational aims, the school was to base itself above all on Polish culture, whose task was to create new national values of its own.

In the post-war period, there were some authors who wrote on the role of education in the formation of the nation. These should include Ludwik Skoczylas. In his writings, he emphasised the role that national upbringing should play in the process of rebuilding Polish statehood. He described as the main

[17] I. Kienzler, *Wychowanie w szkole i w domu*, Edipresse Polska, Warszawa 2014, p. 11.
[18] W. M. Borowski, *Wychowanie narodowe*, Wydawnictwo M. Arcta, Warszawa 1922, pp. 207–208.
[19] W. M. Borowski, *Ogólne zarysy wychowania narodowego*, Wydawnictwo M. Arcta, Warszawa 1918, p. 280.
[20] W. M. Borowski, *Wychowanie narodowe*, p. 244; W. M. Borowski, *Ogólne zarysy wychowania narodowego*, p. 311, p. 315.

slogan of national education the rebirth of the nation.[21] Like Zygmunt Balicki before him, he regarded as its fundamental duty the shaping of the nation as a unified, powerful organism pursuing sentences related to the future. Furthermore, he emphasised that the highest ideal of national education should be the homeland.[22]

When the centres of power were being formed after independence, the programmes of the first governments also associated national issues with civic ones, which was partly due to their political nature. Both the programmes of Ignacy Daszyński's and Jędrzej Moraczewski's governments featured ideas emphasising the need to awaken a civic spirit in society and a sense of responsibility for the fate of the state. These were supported by the left-wing part of the teaching community, but did not gain wider social support, mainly due to the lack of emphasis on the role of the Church in the education process. Ignacy Paderewski's government, bringing together right-wing politicians, returned to the classic national ideas of upbringing, which regarded religious and national values as the basis of the nation's moral strength and regarded the Church, school and family as factors in upbringing. National education understood in this way functioned in Polish schools until 1926.

After the May Coup of 1926, the idea of national upbringing slowly began to recede in favour of the concept of state upbringing, which aimed to educate citizens to be good workers, loyal and self-sacrificing towards the state, showing respect for national symbols and state authorities.[23] The idea of work became a constitutive value of the philosophy of Piłsudski's ideology.[24] Moreover, in this conception, a good citizen was supposed to be characterised by discipline, obedience and sacrifice of one's own welfare for the common good.[25] These principles, proclaimed by the then-forming Sanacja political camp, were aimed at the unification and integration of Poland's economically, socially and nationally diverse population around a superior value—the state.

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21 L. Skoczylas, *Wychowanie państwowe a narodowe*, "Oświata Polska" 6 (1927), no. 1, p. 3.

22 L. Skoczylas, *Podstawy wychowania narodowego w szkole powszechnej*, "Szkoła" 56 (1925) issue 6, pp. 110–111.

23 K. Bartnicka, *Koncepcja wychowania państwowego*, in: *Historia wychowania. Wiek XX*, ed. J. Miąso, t. 1, PWN, Warszawa 1980, p. 58.

24 K. Jakubiak, *Wychowanie państwowe jako ideologia wychowawcza sanacji. Kształtowanie i upowszechnianie w periodycznych wydawnictwach społeczno-kulturalnych i pedagogicznych*, Wydawnictwo Uczelniane Wyższej Szkoły Pedagogicznej, Bydgoszcz 1994, p. 40.

25 B. Wagner, *Wiejska oświata w Polsce w latach 1918–1939*, DiG, Warszawa 2021, p. 34.

Analysing the question of the reception of national ideas shaped in autonomous Galicia into pedagogical practice in the schools of the Second Polish Republic, it should be noted that it was marked, on the one hand, in the axiological area, and, on the other, in the forms in which these ideas were put into practice by teachers. This was possible thanks to the patriotic-ideological attitudes of Galician school teachers, who made efforts to cultivate national traditions during lessons and in extra-curricular activities, and who also joined in underground work or supported student communities in independence activities.[26]

In independent Poland, as in Galician education, national upbringing became visible in the work of student organisations and student participation in national, local and school ceremonies that referred to the national heritage.

An common organisation in schools was the scouting movement. During the war with Bolshevik Russia, scouts constituted a significant group of participating volunteers. In inter-war Poland, the work of scouting teams focused on conducting scouting tasks, participating in scout camps and rallies, and taking part in various types of excursions. Scout troops organised fund-raisers and collections of money that were educational in nature and referred to national ideas, e.g. fund-raising for the construction of the Polish fleet, for the plebiscite campaign in Silesia or for the foundation of school and scout flags.

In the work of scout teams, as in the scouting movement in Galicia, it was important to promote and develop the physical fitness of young people. Marches, boat expeditions, trekking camps, shooting classes, drills, and classes in sanitary assistance made it possible for scouts to enlist in rifle squads and legion units after the outbreak of the First World War.[27] In the aspect of national and moral upbringing, both scouting and scouting paid attention to such values as religious life, discipline, dutifulness, perseverance, sacrifice, good manners, and knowledge of Polish history and geography.[28]

In educational terms, scouting and its Polish equivalent "Harcerstwo" were a school of patriotism and civic attitudes for the Polish youth. By combining national and Catholic values, they awakened and shaped the national identity.

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26 D. Grabowska-Pieńkosz, *Zapisani w pamięci nauczyciele zaboru austriackiego w literaturze pamiętnikarskiej*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, Toruń 2016, p. 168.

27 J. J. Czarkowski, *Aktualność pedagogii harcerskiej XX-lecia międzywojennego*, "Harcerstwo. Rocznik naukowy Muzeum Harcerstwa" (2018) no. 1, p. 119.

28 *Polskie skautki. Zarys organizacyjny*, Nakładem Związku Polskich Towarzystw Sokolich, Lwów 1913, p. 4.

Members of scouting and then scouting teams set the tone for patriotic activity, first in the name of national independence and then in the name of the ideals of service to the nation and homeland.[29] Patriotic elements were also noticeable in the activities of such organisations operating in the schools of the Second Republic as the Polish Red Cross, the Polish White Cross, the Air and Gas Defence League, the Maritime and Colonial League, the School Savings Bank and the Country-Lovers' Society.

In the inter-war period, national, local and school celebrations referring to the national heritage played an important role in education. This area of the educational influence of the Polish school was also referred by its tradition and ideological assumptions to education in the period of Galician autonomy. The autonomous changes in Polish education in Galicia, which enabled its repolonisation, directed the educational impact of schools towards patriotic values. The content and methods developed at that time found their continuation in independent Poland. They gained an additional, strong emotional charge related to the fact of regaining independence and one's own country, as well as hopes for its successful development. Following the example of schools in the former Galicia, especially secondary schools in the Second Polish Republic, anniversaries were solemnly celebrated: national uprisings, the adoption of the Constitution, May 3rd, the establishment of Komisja Edukacji Narodowej (the Commission of National Education), the Battle of Grunwald, as well as the deaths of Stanisław Staszic, Adam Mickiewicz, Juliusz Słowacki, Zygmunt Krasiński[30], Adam Asnyk, Mikołaj Kopernik, Napoleon, Henryk Sienkiewicz, or the coronation and death of Bolesław Chrobry. Students participated in ceremonies to unveil commemorative plaques and monuments, which was also a reference to Galician pragmatism.

[29] W. Potkański, *Polski ruch paramilitarny na trenie Galicji przed wybuchem wielkiej wojny w roku 1914*, "Kwartalnik Historyczny" 116 (2009) no. 2, p. 189.

[30] In 1890, the Galician National School Board issued a decree authorising the public staging of the programme "Wieczorek Trzech Wieszczów" (Evening of the Three Bards) dedicated to Adam Mickiewicz, Juliusz Słowacki and Zygmunt Krasiński. The concept behind the event was to portray them as the nation's supreme artists. Its effect was to spread the idea of disseminating this kind of national heritage in plays and theatrical productions in Polish schools in Galicia. E. Juśko, *Rada Szkolna Krajowa i jej działalność na rzecz szkoły ludowej w Galicji (1868–1921)*, TN KUL & Biblos, Lublin–Tarnów 2013, p. 136; R. Pelczar, J. Ryś, *Wychowanie narodowe i patriotyczne w polskich szkołach ludowych w Galicji w latach 1772–1918*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Rzeszowskiego, Rzeszów 2023, p. 175.

Until 1926, the memory of national uprisings, especially the January Uprising, was particularly cherished in the Second Republic.[31] The living participants of this national liberation uprising were held in high esteem and special reverence. The continuous, repetitive and active cultivation of the uprising's tradition was aimed not only at generating respect and appreciation for its heroes but also at showing how, in the difficult times of the Partitions, uncompromising efforts were made to save the national identity.

In addition to the national holidays and anniversaries celebrated in the autonomous period, new ones emerged in interwar Poland, especially those referring to current events that made up the process of regaining independence and shaping the country's borders. These included celebrations commemorating the defence of Lwów, the wedding of Poland to the Baltic, the most important episodes of the Polish-Soviet War, the Silesian Uprising and the Wielkopolska Uprising. From 1926 onwards, school pragmatics began to strongly emphasise ceremonies referring to the person of Józef Piłsudski (including the Marshal's name-day), who was promoted by Sanacja-affiliated educational circles as the 'beloved educator', thanks to whom Poland re-emerged among the nations of the world.[32]

In the ceremonies connected with the commemoration of anniversaries and historical events, as in Galician education, there were accents of a religious nature. In addition, celebrations of a typically religious nature with patriotic elements were organised, such as those in honour of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Queen of the Polish Crown, or the canonisation of St Stanislaus Kostka. Religious education, also referred to as religious and moral education, was also carried out in the framework of religious lessons, during masses on feast days and common days, and during Lenten retreats. Religious student organisations were also active in schools: The Eucharistic Crusade, the Catholic Association of Female Youth, the Association of Polish Catholic Girls, the Catholic Association of Male Youth or the Association of Male Catholic Youth.

31 A. Niedojadło, *Wychowanie narodowe i państwowe*, p. 136.

32 Z. P. Dąbrowski, *Marszałek Piłsudski jako wychowawca*, "Zrąb" (1935) z. 23, p. 37; for example, Józef Piłsudski was described as the "beloved educator" by Irena Posselt in the article *Młodzież – przyszłością narodu* [Youth – the future of the nation] published in the magazine for young people published by the Ursuline Sisters Congregation – "Dziś i Jutro. Pismo dla młodzieży" 10 (1933) no. 3, p. 49.

In the inter-war period, school naming ceremonies fulfilled an important educational function of a patriotic nature. Similar ceremonies were also held in Polish schools during Galician autonomy. Although some of them loyally adopted names associated with the Habsburg court, autonomy freedoms meant that some schools could also have as patrons heroes associated with Polish history, for example: Jan Długosz, Hetman Stanisław Żółkiewski or Karol Szajnocha. In the Second Republic, schools often took the names of heroes such as Tadeusz Czacki, Joachim Lelewel, Adam Mickiewicz, Rev. Józef Poniatowski, Tadeusz Rejtan, Stanisław Staszic[33], King Władysław IV, Maria Konopnicka, Juliusz Słowacki, King Stefan Batory, Jan Kochanowski, King Kazimierz the Great, Tadeusz Kościuszko, King Jan III Sobieski, Mikołaj Kopernik or Stefan Czarniecki[34]. The names of the patron saints were a link to history and strengthened the sense of national identity among children and young people. The national and patriotic dimension of the ceremonies organised in connection with the naming of schools' patron saints affected not only the pupils' environment but also parents and local communities considerably.

Pupils gained their knowledge of historical figures and events by developing their reading of historical books, through activities in interest circles or by participating in school trips. Interest circles, especially those connected with the Polish national tradition, were a form of shaping young people's attitudes in terms of not only patriotic upbringing but also intellectual, social and civic education.

Pupils came into contact with books in school libraries and reading rooms, which, as in the education of autonomous Galicia, fulfilled specific educational aims, including those concerning patriotic education. At the beginning of independence, patriotic literature for children and young people did not lose its importance and continued to develop rapidly. Its content was part of the current of nurturing an awareness of national continuity and the apotheosis

33 An example of a school named after Stanisław Staszic was the Tuchów Comprehensive School, which took the patronage of this great Pole to commemorate the 100th anniversary of his death in January 1926. P. Juśko, *Problematyka pracy wychowawczo-opiekuńczej Szkoły Powszechnej im. S. Staszica w Tuchowie w okresie międzywojennym*, "Teka Komisji Historycznej PAN Oddział w Lublinie" 2 (2005), p. 116.

34 E. Juśko, *Galicyjskie idee w wychowaniu w szkołach II Rzeczypospolitej*, in: *Edukacja i wychowanie od XIX wieku do współczesności. Wybrane zagadnienia w kontekście badań historycznych i współczesnych*, ed. P. Juśko, Biblos, Tarnów 2021, pp. 112–113.

of the forces through which the Polish nation regained its freedom and its own statehood.[35]

Teachers from all types of schools pursued similar goals of strengthening national identity through the popularisation of national heritage during both sightseeing and tourist excursions. Excursions were organised to places connected with Polish history, e.g. in Kraków these were to Wawel Cathedral and Rakowicki Cemetery. The reliving and emotional deepening of patriotic ceremonies and events by pupils was achieved through performances by school choirs and wind or string-mandolin orchestras. Their activity in the context of promoting national and patriotic values in the schools of the Second Republic was also a legacy of Galician school ideas.[36]

3. Conclusions

In conclusion, it should be emphasised that the process of school education in the early days of independent Poland focused on patriotism. The ideological basis of this process was the national pedagogical thought, which drew primarily on the achievements of Polish intellectuals and pedagogues created in the second half of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It also correlated with the pedagogical practice of Polish education in autonomous Galicia. National ideals became the content of the educational activities of Galician schools and teachers in the form of, among other things, school celebrations, historical anniversaries, the work of student organisations, interest groups, the activities of theatres and school orchestras and the development of reading. They were based primarily on the cultivation of national heritage, which strongly influenced the awakening and strengthening of the national identity of the young generation of Poles. These ideas and forms of influence permeated directly into the pedagogical theory and practice of the Second Republic and were clearly present there until 1926.

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[35] I. Michalska, *Wychowanie do czytelnictwa uczniów szkół powszechnych w Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, Łódź 2011, p. 130.

[36] E. Juśko, *Pozalekcyjne formy oddziaływań wychowawczych na młodzież publicznych polskich szkół średnich w autonomicznej Galicji*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Rzeszowskiego, Rzeszów 2020, p. 99.

The display of patriotic values and national heritage in the school educational ideals of the years 1918–1926 corresponded to the objective needs of the early period of the Second Republic and was nation-building in character. By implementing the assumptions of national education, the Polish school contributed to the integration of the societies of the three former partitions and the strengthening of the sense of national belonging on a scale unprecedented in Polish history.

National education and its concepts and forms of practical implementation are an important part of the achievements of Polish education, science and culture in the second half of the 19th century and the first decades of the 20th century. Its propagators contributed to the reconstruction, and then, after the restoration of sovereign statehood, to the formation of a full national identity for Poles, taking into account the realities of the functioning of society in conditions of independence[37].

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[37] J. Falkowska, *Myśl wychowania narodowego w Galicji* , p. 298.

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Reports - Forum

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From the periphery to the heart of the world. Francis and his final journey

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On Easter Monday 2025, the world received the news of Pope Francis' death. Cardinal Kevin Farrell announced it with the following words: "The Bishop of Rome has returned to the Father's House." This biblical metaphor, instantly echoed by the global media, marked the beginning of a week of mourning during which millions bid farewell to the "pope from the end of the world."

From the outset of his pontificate, Francis—who took the name of the Poor Man of Assisi – consistently shaped the image of a close and humble shepherd. The media portrayed him as a pope who renounced pomp and formality, choosing a lifestyle rooted in simplicity and a direct connection with people. His concern for the excluded and voiceless was a constant feature of his ministry. His message and gestures were permeated by themes of mercy, social justice, and spiritual closeness to those who suffer the most in life.

The timing of his passing – during a liturgical season that celebrates life's triumph over death – was seen as deeply symbolic. His funeral coincided with a day dear to his spirituality and emphasised the continuity of his message. His final public acts, remembered by many, confirmed his unwavering fidelity to the path he had chosen. He was a shepherd who never stopped walking with his people – both in joy and sorrow.

The Person and the Challenges
Volume 15 (2025) Number 1, p. 285–286

Francis was often referred to as a pope close to the people and a voice for those who are often overlooked. In his speeches and actions, he appeared less as a ruler and more as a disciple of the Gospel. His pontificate symbolised unity rather than division; he dedicated himself to building bridges: between religions, social groups and between human conscience and institutional authority. He emphasised the importance of dialogue and the need to listen, especially in a world fractured by conflict, inequality, and misinformation.

Reports on his funeral highlighted both the wide international presence and the simplicity of the ceremony. The image of mourners – from global leaders to the most vulnerable – became a poignant reflection of his life and mission. The farewell offered by those to whom he had dedicated his attention was a powerful testament to his legacy. The sense of loss was shared not only by Catholics but also by people of other faiths and even non-believers, many of whom saw in him a genuine prophet for our times.

Francis – often called the "pope of surprises" – was unafraid to address difficult issues and remained open to dialogue. He preached a message of tenderness, courage, and community. He reminded the world that no one is saved alone. He spoke often of solidarity, ecumenism, and care for creation. His teachings shaped an image of the Church as one that listens, remains present on the existential peripheries, and engages deeply with the challenges of the contemporary world.

He left behind a Church that was not enclosed in ritual formalism, but attuned to the real concerns of modern life. Instead of an institution distanced from everyday reality, he proposed a community that accompanies people in both joy and hardship. His teaching continues to inspire efforts towards a more fraternal, sustainable, and open world.

The place of his burial, chosen during his lifetime, reflected his values and sensitivity – simple, modest, and linked to those on the margins of society. Rather than grand forms or symbols, his grave speaks in silence and humility. The inscription bears only one word: Franciscus. Thus ends a pontificate which – as many commentators agreed – "began with a blessing and ended with a blessing."

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Devastation activities of school religious education in Poland by the so-called December 13 coalition government

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In 1990, religious instruction returned to Polish schools. This was an event expected and won by a generation that had experienced tremendous repression by the communist system. John Paul II, meeting with his compatriots in Wloclawek on June 6, 1991, said: "Thanks to the recent transformations in our homeland, catechesis has returned to the classrooms and found its place and reflection in the educational system. Personally, I am very happy about this. At the same time, however, I would like to repeat a phrase I often use, because it reflects the living truth of every grace, every gift: it is given to you and at the same time inflicted on you. This is the spirit in which the gift must be embraced in Christian society and thus implemented. What is needed here is a great amount of goodwill, effort, and all-round willingness on the part of everyone: teachers, educational authorities, parents and, above all, on the part of those most concerned, namely youth and children."[1]

[1] Jan Paweł II, Przemówienie do katechetów, nauczycieli i uczniów, Włocławek, 6 czerwca 1991.

After 34 years of these words, 35 years of increasingly improving religious instruction at school, efforts to develop the programmes, textbooks and a high evaluation of the quality of the educational, cultural and social dimension of these classes, there is a systematic devastation of them by the government of the so-called December 13 coalition. Prime Minister Donald Tusk's government has launched an unprecedented attack on school religious instruction just before Christmas 2023. Entrusting the formation of education in Poland to people who openly proclaim their anti-Catholic views has contributed to the issuance, without any consultation and despite numerous objections, of regulations hitting Catholics and their right to the religious upbringing of their children. Regulations changing the organisation of religious lessons in schools appear with astonishing regularity. One may think that modern schools do not have and do not perceive other serious concerns, but only artificially create the problem of unnecessary religion lessons at school and public sentiment unfavourable to the teaching of religion in the public space. The position of the Ministry of Education has not been set in the context of concrete studies, analyses carried out, which would be presented in a substantive discussion.

However, numerous communities interested in religious or moral-ethical education expressed in the form of petitions, which systematically come to the Ministry of Education, conducted surveys among secondary school students[22] unequivocally indicate the lack of consensus for change and the need of conducting religion lessons at school.

As a response, the Commission for Catholic Education on 13 February 2024 issued a statement at a press conference in Warsaw on 15 February strongly in favour of two hours of religion lessons at school and the retention of the inclusion of the grade in the average of the annual classification marks. On the other hand, the bishops, in a communiqué of the 397th Plenary Meeting of the Polish Bishops' Conference on 14 March 2024, expressed concern about the Ministry's announcements and set up a Working Team for contacts with the Ministry. Despite these actions, on 22 March 2024, the Ministry of National Education issued a regulation amending the regulation on the assessment, classification and promotion of pupils and students in public schools. According to this regulation, as of the 2024/2025 school year, the grade from religion and ethics ceased to be included in the average of the annual classification grades and the average of the final classification grades. The objection expressed by filing a petition on this issue, signed by more than 23,000 people from various educational backgrounds, parents, and youth, was not considered by the Minister of Education.

On April 24 and May 15, representatives of the Polish Episcopate and the Ministry of National Education met to undertake consultations on the announced further changes to the religious education in schools. Unfortunately, they did not provide any concrete results. In the words of Cardinal Kazimierz Nycz, the long-time chairman of the Catholic Education Commission of the Polish Episcopate: "There were difficult talks, but always somehow fruitful and effective. Now, the talks (with the Ministry of National Education) are deafening and one-sided. There is confusion that leads to nothing. If one side is deaf, it won't hear, even if the other side doesn't know how loud it speaks."[2].

On 22 May 2024, diocesan directors of catechetical departments expressed their firm opposition to the Ministry's changes to the organisation of religion lessons in schools. Above all, they emphasised the blatant discrimination against children and young people participating in school religion lessons, their parents as well as religion teachers. They pointed out that the changes in the organisation of religion lessons are being carried out without the legally required agreement with the Church side. The suggestion to place religion lessons only at the beginning and end of classes and to limit them to one per week is a form of discrimination, segregation and intolerance towards religious believers. Increasing the groups size by combining students from different classes and educational levels is an unfair treatment of students and religion teachers.

On June 12, 2024, the Polish Bishops' Conference published its position on the changes introduced by the Ministry in the organisation of religion lessons in schools. Likewise, the chairman of the Commission for Catholic Education of the Episcopal Conference in Poland, Bishop Wojciech Osial, issued a statement in which he expressed strong opposition to actions that discriminate religious practitioners in Poland and appealed for the Ministry to enter into talks.

Despite the efforts made by the Polish Bishops' Conferences, the Commission for Catholic Education of the Episcopal Conference in Poland, directors of catechetical departments and subsequent petitions expressing opposition to the measures taken, on 26 July 2024 the Ministry promulgated another regulation on the conditions and manner of organising religious instruction in public schools and kindergartens. The Ministry of Education allowed religious instruction to be organised in inter-class and inter-departmental groups. This piece of legislation came into force on September 1, 2024. Headmasters

[2] T. Gołąb, *Kard. Nycz o rozmowach z MEN nt. religii: Jedna strona jest głucha*, https://info.wiara.pl/doc/8952702.Kard-Nycz-o-rozmowach-z-MEN-nt-religii-Jedna-strona-jest-glucha.

of kindergartens and schools may, under their authority, combine children into groups in any way they wish. The changes introduced, without reaching a common position with the Church side, do not consider the difficulties that pupils as well as religion teachers will encounter. The core curriculum for the teaching of the Roman Catholic religion is rich in program content, which deals not only with issues of religion itself, or faith, the holy sacraments, or the Church. The curriculum content includes issues related to history, axiology, ethics, bioethics, and art. There is also a strong emphasis on patriotic education and issues related to voluntary work, sensitising young people to the needs of others living in extreme poverty.

Combined classes are a huge challenge for teachers. A degree in any pedagogical subject does not prepare one for such a type of work. The teacher is often helpless, constrained by the limited time allocated for the implementation of not one but two topics in one lesson. The changes to the organisation of religion lessons at school, which were introduced so quickly, have not given the opportunity to the religion teacher to prepare reliably for work in combined classes.

On August 5, 2024, the Commission for Catholic Education of the Episcopal Conferense in Poland issued another statement on the matter, emphasising the discriminatory nature of the changes introduced and the lack of legally required agreements with the ecclesiastical side. According to Article 12 of the Education System Act, changes to the teaching of religion may be implemented by the competent minister only 'in agreement with the authorities of the Catholic Church and the Polish Autocephalous Orthodox Church and other churches and religious associations'. It is noteworthy that none of the parties mentioned in the law agreed with the Ministry, at the same time expressing opposition to the measures taken.

On August 27, 2024, the First President of the Supreme Court challenged the ministerial regulation on the conditions for organising religious instruction to the Constitutional Court. She alleged that the regulation, among other things, violated *the principle of the consensual manner of regulating relations between the state and churches* and made it impossible to teach religion in the manner prescribed by the subject curriculum in connection with the creation of grounds for organising religion lessons in inter-branch or inter-class groups. On August 29, the Constitutional Court issued a protective order, i.e., it suspended the application of the legal act, the regulation, pending a ruling. The head of the Ministry of Education, Barbara Nowacka, did not honour the safeguard issued by the Constitutional Court. The Ministry's website published a cursory official position on the matter, indicating that the Constitutional Court's order has no legal effect. However, it should be emphasised that this was only a statement of the Ministry, so it has no legal force. The Ministry's actions have led to chaos in the implementation of the law and a situation where some schools have been operating with the existing regulations on the organisation of religion lessons and others with regulations that take into account the changes resulting from the regulation of the Minister of National Education suspended by the Constitutional Court.

On the occasion of the beginning of the new school year 2024/2025, the Polish Bishops' Conference once again emphasised that there is no agreement with the Ministry's decisions concerning the organisation of religion lessons at school. During a meeting of the Commission for Catholic Education on 17 September 2024, the debate on the current situation of catechesis and religion lessons in Poland was revisited. In an official announcement, the Commission expressed gratitude to all those who see the value in school religion lessons, both educational and formative. It appreciated the actions taken by various communities to promote and defend the teaching of religion at school, especially in view of the many negative opinions and legislative actions taken by the Ministry. At the same time, it recalled that the overriding motive of all actions promoting religious instruction at school is the good of children and youth, as well as the right of parents to bring them up in the faith.

On 9 October 2024, there was a meeting of delegates from the Commission for Catholic Education of the Polish Bishops' Conference, the Episcopal Conference Working Group for contacts with the Government of the Republic of Poland on the teaching of religion at school, with representatives of the Ministry. At the meeting, the state side presented a project of another amendment to the ordinance of the Minister of National Education of 14 April 1992 on the conditions and manner of organising religious instruction in public kindergartens and schools. The Church side presented its objections and doubts concerning the changes to this ordinance, in particular the reduction by half of the number of hours of religion at all levels of education, as well as the abandonment of the concordat provision present in it, stating that religion lessons take place "as part of the school and kindergarten timetable" (§ 12 paragraph 1), by replacing it with the rigid principle that these lessons will take place before or after compulsory educational classes. Concerns were also previously raised about the formation of groups from pupils at different educational levels. It has been pointed out that such solutions are taken in contravention of the Education System Act and it has been emphasised that they will hinder the realisation of the right of access to religion for pupils whose parents (or they themselves) wish it.

On 7 November 2024, the Subcommittee for Religion at School, appointed by the Joint Commission of Representatives of the Government of the Republic of Poland and the Polish Bishops' Conference, held a meeting. The subject of the meeting was the changes proposed by the Ministry in the organisation of religion lessons at schools and kindergartens. The government side presented proposals for specific solutions, while the Church side submitted its remarks to them. During the discussion with the participation of experts from both sides, a substantive dialogue was undertaken and both sides sought solutions that would be acceptable to them. In view of the declared willingness of both sides to reach an agreement, on the points where doubts arose, it was decided to meet again and look for the best solution from the point of view of the education of children and young people, as well as the organisation of school work.

On 27 November 2024, the Constitutional Court ruled that the regulation was incompatible with the provision of the Education System Act stipulating that the Minister of National Education shall determine, by means of a regulation, the conditions for organising religious instruction in agreement with the authorities of churches and religious associations. The regulation was issued on the basis of this provision. The Constitutional Tribunal ruled that the regulation violated this provision in connection with the provisions of the Constitution stipulating, among other things, that "ordinances are issued by the authorities indicated in the Constitution, on the basis of a detailed authorisation contained in a law", as well as the constitutional principles that "the Republic of Poland is a democratic state governed by the rule of law" and "the organs of public authority act on the basis and within the limits of the law". The Constitutional Tribunal decided to discontinue the proceedings to the remaining extent, i.e., all amendments made by the Ministry were repealed as being inconsistent with the Constitution and the Education System Act. The Constitutional Tribunal also pointed out that the Minister of National Education did not fulfil the requirement to act in agreement with representatives of churches and religious associations, issuing the decision unilaterally, ignoring the positions of representatives of the Catholic Church and other churches and religious associations. In this context, the issue of religion teachers was also raised, who, due to the unexpected reduction in the demand for religion teachers in educational institutions, face a real threat of losing their jobs and being unable to retrain quickly, which violates the principle of labour protection. According to the President of the Constitutional

Court, the right of parents to ensure their children's upbringing and education (moral and religious) in accordance with their beliefs has also been violated.

Unfortunately, in the legal chaos introduced by those currently in power, the judgement of the Constitutional Court is not recognised by them. It is worth emphasising that both the Constitutional Tribunal and the Supreme Court are organs of judicial power whose activities find their legitimacy in the Constitution of the Republic of Poland. The Basic Law states in Article 10, paragraph 1, that the system of the Republic of Poland is based on the division and balance of the legislative power, the executive power and the judicial power. The statement of the Minister of National Education and the so-called 13 December coalition, while undermining the actions and rulings of the judiciary, at the same time violates the principle of the tripartite division of power mentioned above.

On 9 December 2024, at the request of the Church side, a meeting of the Joint Commission of Representatives of the Government of the Republic of Poland and the Polish Bishops' Conference was held. It was convened in connection with the lack of agreement after the talks within the Subcommittee on Religion in School established by the Joint Commission. The Church emphasised the contradiction of the regulation of the Minister of National Education with higher-order regulations, with the Constitution of the Republic of Poland at the forefront. Furthermore, it recalled that regulation by the Minister of National Education of matters concerning the organisation of religious instruction in kindergartens and schools requires action 'in agreement with the authorities of the Catholic Church and the Polish Autocephalous Orthodox Church and other churches and religious associations' (Article 12 paragraph 2 of the Education System Act). It expressed its opposition to the government's proposed limitation of religious instruction to one hour per week and its placement before or after other school activities. As part of the search for a compromise, it outlined a proposal for reform involving a staggered, gradual reduction in the size of religion lessons in secondary schools, with respect for the labour rights of catechists and the introduction of the principle of compulsory teaching of religion or ethics because of the need for the axiological formation of pupils. In primary school, the situation should remain unchanged. It stated its disapproval at the rejection of its suggestions by the government side and the lack of agreement. It also emphasised that such action by the Ministry could lead to an escalation of tensions surrounding the teaching of religion at school, which is regarded as a standard in the vast majority of democratic countries in Europe and one of the symbols of the post-1989 freedom transition in Poland.

On 23 December 2024, the Presidium of the Polish Bishops' Conference pointed out that the Ministry's actions constitute a large-scale process of changes to the organisation of religious instruction in public schools, the like of which has not been seen since 1989. Both those adopted from September 2024 and those announced for September 2025 are not only unequivocally contradictory to higher regulations but, above all, harmful and discriminatory for many students and teachers of religion. The changes also harm the rights of parents and guardians to raise their children according to their own beliefs, as guaranteed by the Republic of Poland's Constitution (Article 53).

The bishops emphasised in a subsequent announcement that the talks undertaken by the Church side with the Government of Poland did not lead to an agreement, and the compromise proposal of the Church side, which was to introduce the principle of obligatory religious or ethics teaching due to the need for axiological formation of students, was rejected by the government side. Similarly, as for spreading over several years the gradual reduction in the size of religious instruction in secondary schools, while respecting the labour rights of religious teachers.

On 19 January 2025, in connection with the publication by Minister of Education Barbara Nowacka information about the signing of another ordinance on the organisation of religious instruction in schools and kindergartens on January 17, 2025, the Presidium of the Polish Bishops' Conference expressed firm opposition to violating the principle that "public authorities act on the basis and within the limits of the law" (Article 7 of the Polish Constitution). The ordinance, which is scheduled to come into force on September 1, 2025, is an unlawful act, as the statutorily required agreement with the Catholic Church and other interested religious associations has not been reached on its content. The reduction of religious instruction to one hour per week and the order to organise religious instruction before or after compulsory education classes restricts the right of religious parents to raise their children in accordance with their own beliefs (Article 53 paragraph 3) in conjunction with Article 48 paragraph 1 of the Polish Constitution) and the right of students themselves to systemic support "in their development towards full maturity," which includes the spiritual sphere (Article 1 paragraph 3) of the Education Law). The changes being introduced also strike at the constitutionally guaranteed, labour rights of religious teachers. The Ministry, despite the demonstration of violations of the law by legal circles, has not returned to applying the standards of the rule of law and has not refrained from taking confrontational actions against religious believers, who are full citizens of the Republic of Poland. The Commission for Catholic Education of the Episcopal Conference in Poland also expressed its opposition to the Ministry of Education's actions on January 24, 2025.

On February 27, 2025, the Presidium of the Polish Bishops' Conference forwarded to the First President of the Supreme Court a petition requesting the Constitutional Court to examine the compatibility of the mode of issuance of the Minister of Education's decree of January 17, 2025. In their justification, the bishops stressed that they are guided by the conviction that the case concerns an important public interest, that is, such values as the correctness of legislation, the implementation of the constitutional requirement of consensual regulation of relations between the state and churches and other religious associations, labour protection, the prohibition of discrimination, the right of parents to raise their children in accordance with their own beliefs, and the right of children and young people to educate and care appropriate to their age and achieved development. As in the previous case (the amending decree of July 26, 2024), the agreement required by Article 12 paragraph 2 of the Law of September 7, 1991 on the educational system was not reached. For this reason alone, the regulation of January 17, 2025 should be deemed in its entirety to be inconsistent with the superior regulation.

The ruling of the Constitutional Tribunal has not been published in the Journal of Laws. Accordingly, the Presidium of the Polish Bishops' Conference has submitted a request to the Prime Minister of the Republic of Poland Donald Tusk for public information on the failure to publish in the Journal of Laws the verdict of the Constitutional Tribunal of the Republic of Poland of November 27, 2024. The Polish Bishops' Conference also sent a letter to the President of the European Bishops' Conferences to inform all the Conferences of Europe and, at the same time, the communities in the European Union about the situation in Poland. Despite the actions taken by the Polish Bishops' Conference, legal opinions and labour associations negating the actions of the Ministry of National Education, numerous protests by parents and the students themselves, the devastating actions of school religious instruction in Poland are progressing.

Despite blatant discrimination against religious believers by the Ministry of Education, the Committee for a Citizens' Legislative Initiative was formed. This is a civic initiative to collect signatures for a bill on the entrenchment in the educational system of religious and ethical lessons at school. At the beginning of April 2025, the collection of signatures for the bill, colloquially known as *Yes to religion and ethics in school!* With the certainty that most Poles want religious

The Person and the Challenges
Volume 15 (2025) Number 1, p. 287–296

and ethical education for their children in schools, paraphrasing the words of St. John Paul II, despite the recent changes in our homeland, it is to be hoped that the religious lesson will remain in school and find its place and reflection in the educational system.

Reviews

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Review of the monograph "Cherish Family Life", edited by prof. Elżbieta Osewska

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The family is one of the oldest and unique institutions in society, dating back thousands of years. It is intertwined not only with the family's problems but also with those of society. It has always been identified as a valuable and natural environment for the life and development of every human being, and the one that has the greatest influence on the individual's future life. The family becomes the foundation of the state and an investment guarantee of future stability, where future socially active, sociable citizens are recognised, valued and educated, and where the nation's distinctive identity is preserved. It can be said that society and the state are what the family is. It is for this reason that the institution of the family must be legally recognised, protected and promoted in the State.

However, in today's rapidly changing world, the institution of the family is facing very serious challenges that threaten the survival not only of the family but also of society as a whole.

The monograph "Cherish family Life", authored by scholars from several European countries, seeks to shed light on the contemporary situation of the family in Europe. As stated in the introduction to the monograph: "The monograph emphasises what makes a stable, lasting, and happy family life, and what patterns and concepts of family life are worth presenting and implementing to the young generation. The book highlights the significance of family and family life in building a strong society, nation, and state."

The monograph is divided into three distinct parts, in which the authors analyse different family issues. In the first part of the monograph, the authors discuss the family and life within it from the perspective of the value of family. It discusses how modern family transformation affects the inner life of the family in Europe and the upbringing of children. The second part of the monograph is devoted to the problem of addiction. The third part of the monograph " Various Family Problems and Strategies to Resolve Them" is devoted to family divorce, self-harm by family members, sexual abuse, and online infidelity.

The monograph "Cherish Family Life" is a very serious scientific contribution to the study of family problems. It is both relevant and timely. The monograph clearly demonstrates that family issues are becoming global, i.e., they go beyond the borders of a single country. It is worth mentioning that the authors of the monograph not only expose and analyse the most difficult challenges for the family but also make recommendations on how to strengthen the family institution.

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