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***W 10. rocznicę beatyfikacji
ks. Michała Sopoćki***

*Bishop Henryk Ciereszko**Archidiecezjalne Wyższe Seminarium Duchowne w Białymstoku*

Blessed Michael Sopocko: The Apostle of Divine Mercy

Fr. Michael Sopocko played a unique and exceptional role in the history of spreading the devotion to Divine Mercy in our times. As Jesus revealed to St. Faustina during her visions, Fr. Sopocko was chosen by Him to serve as St. Faustina's confessor and spiritual director. In the process, Fr. Sopocko became open to the apostolate of Divine Mercy. Sr. Faustina considered Fr. Sopocko the co-creator and continuator of the mission entrusted to her to proclaim the truth about and spread devotion to Divine Mercy. Specifically, Fr. Sopocko was the one who told St. Faustina to keep her Diary, and he oversaw the painting of the first image of the Merciful Jesus in Vilnius in 1934. Initially, Fr. Sopocko began spreading devotion to Divine Mercy by writing about it. In 1937, he published the prayers of the Chaplet and Novena to Divine Mercy. He also sought to establish the Feast of Divine Mercy and to have devotion to Divine Mercy approved by the church authorities. In addition, he tirelessly taught the faithful about Divine Mercy and published a number of works devoted to this truth and devotion. His dedication, perseverance in difficulties, and apostolic zeal were undoubtedly indispensable in establishing the apostolate of Divine Mercy in our times and spreading the message of Divine Mercy in Poland and throughout the entire world.

Key words: Divine Mercy, Divine Mercy apostolate, devotion to Divine Mercy, St. Faustina Kowalska, Bl. Michael Sopocko.

As Sr. Faustina's confessor and spiritual director, co-organizer and continuator of her mission, and a tireless apostle of the truth of and devotion to Divine Mercy, Fr. Michael Sopocko played an exceptional role and has a unique place in the history of spreading the devotion to Divine Mercy in our times.

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Michael Sopocko was born on November 1, 1888 in northeastern Poland, which had been enslaved for almost one hundred years. After a difficult journey to the priesthood due to his family's impoverishment and the difficulties that the tsarist administration posed, Fr. Sopocko was ordained in Vilnius in 1914. From 1914-1918, Fr. Sopocko served as the vicar of the parish of Taboryszki, and he served as a military chaplain both in Warsaw and in Vilnius from 1919-1932. At the beginning of the 1920s, Fr. Sopocko began studies at the University of Warsaw's Faculty of Theology and subsequently completed his doctorate in 1926. During that time, he also studied at the National Institute of Pedagogy. In 1927, Fr. Sopocko was hired by the Stefan Batory University (SBU) to work in its Faculty of Theology as the Chair of Pastoral Theology. He lectured at the university until it closed during World War II. In 1934, he obtained his postdoctoral degree (habilitation) from the University of Warsaw and was appointed Associate Professor in the Faculty of Theology of the SBU in Vilnius. From 1927-1932, Fr. Sopocko also served as the spiritual father for the students of the Metropolitan Seminary in Vilnius. In 1933, he became St. Faustina Kowalska's confessor and spiritual director and served her in this role until she died in 1938. Through the influence of St. Faustina's visions and revelations, Fr. Sopocko dedicated himself to spreading the truth and apostolate of devotion to Divine Mercy until the end of his life. During World War II and the German occupation of Poland, Fr. Sopocko went into hiding in order to escape being arrested by the Germans. He ministered in Vilnius until 1947, when he moved to Białystok and served as a professor at the seminary there. In 1962, Fr. Sopocko retired and served as a priest for a number of years in the chapel located at ul. Poleska until he died in the opinion of holiness on February 15, 1975. He was beatified in Białystok in 2008.

The short biographical sketch of Fr. Sopocko above conveys only the stages of his life and not the greatness of his works, the uniqueness and eminence of his character, nor his rich spiritual life. He had an extraordinary personality, a lively faith, a deep spirituality, and a distinctive Christian attitude; he practiced heroic virtue, and his achievements were great, as evidenced by the fact that the Catholic Church has declared him Blessed. Many published biographical studies provide insight into the life of this holy man.¹ Bl. Fr. Sopocko's rich legacy of

¹ The following biographical works have been published: S. Strzelecki, *Wkład księdza Michała Sopoćki w formację duchowieństwa*, Białystok 1983; M. Paszkiewicz, *Ks. Michał Sopoćko 1888-1975*, Białystok 1987; H. Ciereszko, *Sługa Boży ksiądz Michał Sopoćko*, 1st Edition, Białystok 1955, 2nd Edition, Białystok 1998; H. Ciereszko, *Droga świętości ks. Michała Sopoćki*, WAM, Cracow 2002;

writings, some of which have been translated into other languages, is of inestimable value.

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The role that Fr. Sopocko played in the life and mission of St. Faustina Kowalska and his efforts to spread the Divine Mercy apostolate are that which set him apart from other great figures in the Church. Fr. Sopocko's greatness, which stemmed from his faithfulness in his daily life and his heroic efforts to cooperate with God's grace, prepared him to take on the responsibility to serve as the confessor and spiritual director of a holy mystic and visionary and to help realize her mission and the Divine Mercy apostolate. He responded to God's call through his apostolic efforts. He patiently endured setbacks and sufferings while exercising unwavering trust in God's mercy, about which he preached, even though he did not live to see the fruits of his labors. His work in spreading the Divine Mercy apostolate is Fr. Sopocko's greatest achievement.

Maturing in His Apostolate and His Motives

In his own *Diary*, Fr. Sopocko admits that, when Sr. Faustina told him the truth about Divine Mercy, she inspired him to research, study, and contemplate this mystery. At the same time, he also confessed that he was unable to properly understand what Sr. Faustina told him about her interior experiences and what the work that God had entrusted to her meant in the beginning. For this reason, he listened to her more closely, pondered what she said, studied, sought the counsel of others, and, only after a few years, understood the greatness and value of the truth about God's mercy for the Christian life as well as the importance of spreading this message to the entire world. He also became convinced of the extreme importance of this truth in pastoral ministry as well as the spiritual fruits of worshipping Divine Mercy.²

H. Ciereszko, *Ksiądz Michał Sopoćko apostoł Miłosierdzia Bożego*, WAM, Cracow 2004; H. Ciereszko, *Życie i działalność księdza Michała Sopoćki (1888-1975). Pełna biografia apostoła Miłosierdzia Bożego*, 1st Edition, WAM, Cracow 2006; H. Ciereszko, *Życie i działalność błogosławionego Michała Sopoćki (1888-1975). Pełna biografia apostoła Miłosierdzia Bożego*, 2nd Edition, WAM, Cracow 2013.

² "There are truths that one knows and often hears and speaks about, but that one does not understand. That is how it was with me regarding the truth of Divine Mercy. I spoke about this truth so many times in my homilies and I repeated it in prayers—especially in the psalms—but I did not understand the meaning of this truth, nor did I penetrate its meaning—that it is the highest attribute of God's external activity. It was not until a simple Polish nun, Sr. Faustina, from the Congregation of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy briefly told me about her insights and repeated them frequently, thus inspiring me to do research, study,

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Sr. Faustina's statements about Divine Mercy made it possible for Fr. Sopocko to discover more fully how God had mercifully guided him in his life.³ Her indications inspired him to study the Church's teaching on this mystery, which confirmed that mercy is God's highest attribute in his action toward his creatures. One can assume that Fr. Sopocko gradually encountered the mystery of God's mercy in his own soul. As the one who would promote the Divine Mercy apostolate, Fr. Sopocko himself had to discover what God's mercy is—he had to experience the grace of coming to know this mercy and its power and to discover the truth about the need for Christians to turn to God's mercy in their own spiritual and religious lives. There is no other way to explain his fervor in promoting this idea and devoting himself to this work. Through his profound apostolic zeal, his own personal growth in a life of faith, the deepening of his theological knowledge, and the continual enrichment of his pastoral practices, he was formed and prepared to be the Apostle of Divine Mercy. Sr. Faustina and her revelations were an inspiration for Fr. Sopocko, and they pushed him to persevere in his studies on the theology and spirit of the mystery of Divine Mercy. Ultimately, his own research efforts, which were supported by his prayer, were the source of his apostolic involvement. These studies opened him to that to which God was calling him. It was for this reason that Fr. Sopocko wrote the following in his *Diary* in 1938: "To trust in God's continued mercy, spread devotion to this mercy, among other things,

and think about this truth often. I cannot repeat—or rather capture—the details of our conversation, but rather only generally point out that at the beginning I did not really know what was going on. I listened, I did not believe what I heard, I reflected, I examined and questioned, and I sought the advice of others. It was not until a few years later that I understood the importance of this work and the greatness of this idea, and I found out for myself how effective this old and neglected, but also demanding and life-giving worship is for our time, which is in much need of renewal." (M. Sopoćko, *Dziennik*, 3rd Edition, Białystok 2015, pgs. 97-98.)

³ "Looking back on my childhood, I see one long train of manifestations of the immeasurable mercy of God, who permitted me to be born to godly Christian parents; who cared for me in my many illnesses; who protected me from certain death in accidents; who has saved me from eternal death so far despite the numerous and dangerous occasions [for it]. I owe my priestly vocation most of all to God's mercy—a vocation that I sensed quite early [in life]. It was his mercy that sustained my desire [to become a priest] despite so many obstacles, that led me through numerous experiences in which I would have surely fallen and died if the Creator had not had pity on me and sent me obvious help in advance. I have often clearly seen how this mercy withdrew its natural cooperation with human forces, to warn me and to pull me away from that which threatened my body or soul and to stir me to work and act in one way or another" (M. Sopoćko, *Dziennik*, Białystok 2015, pgs. 100-101).

and completely dedicate all of my thoughts, words, and actions [to it] without self-seeking will be, through the help of God's immeasurable mercy, the guiding principle for the rest of my life."⁴

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Fr. Sopocko's was prepared for his role in spreading the Divine Mercy apostolate over time, during which his confidence in the importance of the apostolate ever increased. As he came to recognize the significance of the truth about Divine Mercy in pastoral ministry, Fr. Sopocko—in his own intuition and devotion to pastoral ministry—noticed that the Divine Mercy apostolate and pastoral care are interdependent and connected in many ways. If the essence of pastoral ministry is to lead people to God, then what more can turn people to God than the truth that God is merciful? What more can change man than worshipping God in His mercy and imitating Him by performing works of mercy? In fact, as Fr. Sopocko stated, he himself began to discover how this truth had a beneficial influence on the faithful, especially those who experienced their own misery, weakness, and sin. As he witnessed how people converted; how their lives of faith deepened; and how their hope and trust in God strengthened, Fr. Sopocko became more and more convinced that teaching about Divine mercy was very fruitful. In this way, it became clear to him that both pastoral ministry and the Divine Mercy apostolate are inextricably linked.⁵

Another one of Fr. Sopocko's motives for being involved in and promoting Divine Mercy was that he discovered that it had its foundations in public revelation and in the teachings of the Church. For this reason, Fr. Sopocko did not even reveal Sr. Faustina's extraordinary experiences to anyone for many years, nor did he consider her revelations as the basis of the apostolate. This is also why he often pointed out in his later statements that he did not connect the spreading of the message of Divine Mercy with Sr. Faustina's revelations in the sense that these revelations were the source and basis of the worship

⁴ M. Sopoćko, *Dziennik*, 3rd Edition, Białystok 2015, pg. 101.

⁵ Fr. Sopocko described the relationship between pastoral work and the apostolate of Divine Mercy in the following way: "Pastoral work is the work of the Church that concerns the salvation of souls. The subject of pastoral work is man who, after his earthly life, passes over to eternal life in a state of happiness, purification, or rejection depending on whether and to what extent he strove to love God during his life and at the moment of his death. Since love for God best arises, develops, and grows under the influence of one's knowledge and worship of God in his infinite mercy, pastoral care needs the role of the Most Merciful Savior, which is the personification of infinite Divine Mercy" (M. Sopoćko, *Miłosierdzie Boga w dziełach Jego*, Paris 1967, pg. 173; 3rd Edition, Wydawnictwo św. Jerzego, Białystok 2017, pg. 204).

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of Divine mercy.⁶ This does not mean, however, that Fr. Sopocko's involvement in the Divine Mercy apostolate, which differed from St. Faustina's involvement, was not the fulfillment of the call that was made manifest in St. Faustina's revelations. On the contrary, Jesus' command to celebrate Divine Mercy in His merciful image, to establish the Feast of Divine Mercy and the devotion to it, and to announce the truth about Divine Mercy could not be achieved better than through Fr. Sopocko's work to establish Divine Mercy's theological and biblical foundations. This was all the more necessary because, as a simple nun, Sr. Faustina could not fulfill these demands in the same way that Fr. Sopocko could as a priest, pastor, and theologian. Through her life and spiritual sacrifice, Sr. Faustina became the instrument through whom God admonished mankind to worship Him in His Divine Mercy, while Fr. Sopocko, as her spiritual director, was chosen by God to carry out this apostolic work through his external involvement and efforts, which were strengthened by his acceptance of the suffering that this involvement entailed.

The Cooperator in and Continuator of St. Faustina's Mission

Through her personal revelations and interior experiences, Sr. Faustina was called to spread Divine Mercy to the whole world. However, she also expected that her confessor help her in this endeavor, particularly by having the image of Merciful Jesus painted, establishing the Feast of Divine Mercy, and founding a religious congregation. As was shown above, after initially examining the authenticity of Sr. Faustina's apparitions and becoming convinced of the pastoral value of devotion to Divine Mercy, Fr. Sopocko took the necessary steps to fulfill Jesus' demands. At the same time, he also strove to explore the Church's teaching on Divine Mercy. At Sr. Faustina's insistence, Fr. Sopocko oversaw the painting of the image of the Merciful Jesus, and he published works on the truth about and worship of Divine Mercy as well as on the need for and meaning of the Feast of Divine Mercy. He oversaw the printing of the first copies of the Divine Mercy Chaplet, Novena, prayers, and the litanies, which he himself arranged based on the words that Jesus spoke to St. Faustina that she recorded in her

⁶ A copy of Fr. Sopocko's letter to the Archbishop of Cracow, which he wrote on May 19, 1966, can be found in the Archdiocese of Białystok's Archive.

diary.⁷ He appeared before bishops with a letter requesting that the Feast of Divine Mercy be established.

Fr. Sopocko's works, which were significant in and of themselves according to St. Faustina, were only the beginning of his efforts to spread devotion to and worship of Divine Mercy. Fr. Sopocko put a lot of personal effort into this work of God; unfortunately, however, the faithful did not readily receive his initial efforts. As a result, Fr. Sopocko experienced many misunderstandings and difficulties, which were a source of great suffering for him. St. Faustina, who had already named Fr. Sopocko the Apostle of Divine Mercy,⁸ acknowledged that he too had received much light and help from God in this work.⁹ She perceived in him the one God had appointed to cooperate with her in this mission and to continue it after her death. In one of her letters to Fr. Sopocko from December 20, 1936, St. Faustina wrote:

...a lot has already been done in this matter. When I ponder these things, I am seized with holy amazement that you, Father, have already arranged so many things, which at the beginning seemed unthinkable because of the rising difficulties. I am hoping that nobody else but you, Father, will carry out the remaining matters.¹⁰

Similarly, in her *Diary*, she revealed that Fr. Sopocko was chosen to complete the Divine Mercy apostolate and that God would give him the strength to carry out this work despite opposition and difficulties.¹¹ St. Faustina was very interested in Fr. Sopocko's activities (she often asked about them in her letters) and she knew about his undertakings. She highly valued and was very grateful to Fr. Sopocko for his efforts.¹² One can infer the extent and significance of Fr. Sopocko's involvement from St. Faustina's statements in her letters to Fr. Sopocko. In another letter to Fr. Sopocko, Sr. Faustina shared:

Known to me are all your undertakings and intentions in the work of the Divine Mercy; I see how many souls already glorify this

⁷ *Jezu ufam Tobie. Chrystus – Król Miłosierdzia*, Cracow 1937.

⁸ *The Letters of Saint Faustina Kowalska*, Cracow: 'Misericordia' Publications, 2007, September 20, 1936, pg. 55. Hereafter abbreviated as *The Letters*. F. Kowalska, *The Diary of St. Faustina Kowalska*, Stockbridge Massachusetts: Marians of the Immaculate Conception, 2001, no. 1253. Hereafter abbreviated as *Diary*.

⁹ *The Letters*, May 6, 1937, pg. 95; December 20, 1936, pg. 72. *Diary*, 1253.

¹⁰ *The Letters*, December 20, 1936, pg. 73.

¹¹ *Diary*, 422, 1252, 1253, 1401, 1472, 1586.

¹² *The Letters*, December 20, 1936, pg. 73; April 11, 1937, pg. 84.

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incomprehensible mercy of God. My heart flutters with joy when I see the good that is effected in human souls through this work.¹³

Sr. Faustina expected that Fr. Sopocko would be externally involved in the matters related to the Divine Mercy apostolate, while she, on her part, supported him with her prayers and sacrifices. In almost every letter, Sr. Faustina assured Fr. Sopocko of her spiritual help, which was so important for this work:

“Following your suggestion, Father, with all my soul I direct my efforts towards this Feast in order to help you, Father, in this great, divine work through my prayer and whole-burnt offering of myself: I shall entreat God’s blessing for you, dear Father, as regards this whole matter.”¹⁴

As can be clearly seen, St. Faustina cooperated beautifully in the work of the apostolate; she participated more spiritually and interiorly, while Fr. Sopocko carried out much of the exterior apostolic work through the support of St. Faustina’s prayers and sacrifices.

From the very beginning, Fr. Sopocko and Sr. Faustina encountered many difficulties in their work. They wrote about these experiences in their correspondence to each other. However, they both agreed that one always encounters obstacles in carrying out God’s great works and that these efforts always require great sacrifices and entailed great sufferings,¹⁵ both of which they personally and frequently experienced.¹⁶ As she revealed in her correspondence, Sr. Faustina sympathized with Fr. Sopocko and prayed fervently for him when he experienced setbacks: “And now, as regards the issues and adversities which you, Father, are going through personally; it caused me much pain [to learn] that the truth is persecuted, but it often happens that one’s personal sanctity proves to be a thorn in somebody’s side. I prayed fervently for this matter...”¹⁷ In another letter she consoled him by telling him that those who are chosen by God experience difficulties,¹⁸ and uplifted him, saying “...big and noble hearts are always filled with ingratitude and bitterness.”¹⁹

¹³ Ibid, September 20, 1936, pgs. 55-56.

¹⁴ Ibid, May 6, 1937, pgs. 93-94.

¹⁵ Ibid, May 6, 1937, pg. 95; February 21, 1938, pg. 107; May 15, 1936, pg. 37; October 5, 1936, pg. 59; November 21, 1936, pgs. 70-71.

¹⁶ Ibid, February 21, 1938, pgs. 106-109; June 29, 1938, pg. 112.

¹⁷ Ibid, February 21, 1938, pg. 107.

¹⁸ Ibid, January 31, 1937, pg. 77.

¹⁹ Ibid, May 6, 1937, pg. 95.

While Sr. Faustina and Fr. Sopocko both experienced difficulties and sufferings because of their efforts, they mutually supported and encouraged each other, especially through prayer. Sr. Faustina died long before Fr. Sopocko, so he was left with the great and difficult work of continuing the mission that they had begun together. In the final letter that she composed to Fr. Sopocko a few months before she died, Sr. Faustina wrote:

I am curious to know how things are with you, Father? Has your health improved? I asked God to keep you in good health for many years to come because this is necessary for this work. Oh Father, I cannot tell you how happy I am that the Divine Mercy is already being worshipped, in spite of all the adversities and human envy, in spite of Satan's anger and hatred. God's work will not suffer one bit of loss. The Lord God gave me to see His glory, which flows from this work, and this is only the beginning. My heart was amazed at the sight of this knowledge [...] And yet, in spite of the fact that God Himself is in charge of this work, we are obliged to do everything that is in our power in order to move it forward, even though our efforts might seem to be of no avail. However, God's work is built on them.²⁰

These words are as if Sr. Faustina's final testament. They express what had already happened with regard to the mission of spreading the truth about and worship of Divine Mercy and the joy that it brought. They also indicate that much remained to be done, that God was guiding their efforts, and that He would realize his work. But, God needed their efforts along with the unavoidable sufferings they entailed. The fact that Sr. Faustina addressed these words to Fr. Sopocko reveals that she saw in him the one who would continue her mission.

As a very telling sign of the particular role that Fr. Sopocko would play along with Sr. Faustina in the work of the Divine Mercy apostolate is contained in a prophetic vision that St. Faustina had and recorded in her *Diary*:

May 8, [1938]. Today, I saw two enormous pillars implanted in the ground I had implanted one of them, and a certain person, S.M., the other. We had done so with unheard-of effort, much fatigue and difficulty. And when I had implanted the pillar, I myself wondered where such extraordinary strength had come from, and I recognized that I had not done this by my own strength, but with the power which came from above. These two pillars were close to each other, in the area of the image. And I saw the image, raised up very high and hanging from these two pillars. In an instant, there stood a large temple, supported both from within and from without, upon these two pillars.

²⁰ Ibid, June 29, 1938, pgs. 112-113.

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I saw a hand finishing the temple, but I did not see the person. There was a great multitude of people, inside and outside the temple, and the torrents issuing from the Compassionate Heart of Jesus were flowing down upon everyone.²¹

It seems that the initials “S.M.” refer to none other than Fr. Sopocko. Since Sr. Faustina wrote other things like this about Fr. Sopocko, his apostolate, and his work, it is clear that what she wrote about the unheard of effort and fatigue pertain to Fr. Sopocko.

An Outline of the Apostolate’s Main Works

Among Fr. Sopocko’s achievements in his work to spread Divine Mercy, which justify his title as the Apostle of Divine Mercy, was his providential guidance of Sr. Faustina in her interior visions and revelations. Through his help, Sr. Faustina was able to verify the authenticity of her experiences. Because of his indications, she also recorded her experiences in her *Diary*. Thanks to Fr. Sopocko’s indications, Sr. Faustina’s *Diary* is widely available and continues to be an inexhaustible source through which individuals can explore the mystery of Divine Mercy. Fr. Sopocko’s was also the one who had the first image of Jesus, the King of Mercy, painted according to Sr. Faustina’s indications in Vilnius in 1934. In addition, Fr. Sopocko, who was inspired by Sr. Faustina’s visions and, above all else, who himself had discovered the great value of the truth about Divine Mercy in his pastoral ministry, was the first individual to present the topic of Divine Mercy publicly. Even in 1936 he published an article dedicated to the topic of this truth, and he wrote about the worship of and a feast dedicated to Divine Mercy in a subsequent article.²² At that time, he also approached the Polish bishops with a letter requesting that the Feast of Divine Mercy be established, and he approached the Primate of Poland, Cardinal A. Hlond about this issue. In 1939, he also went to Rome to see to this matter. Fr. Sopocko’s work and the information that he obtained while performing it increased his awareness that it was first necessary to prepare the proper conditions into which to introduce the Feast of Divine Mercy. Therefore, he first taught and published articles about Divine Mercy, the meaning of the Feast Divine Mercy, and worship in

²¹ *Diary*, 1689.

²² *Miłosierdzie Boże*, “Wiadomości Archidiecezjalne Wileńskie” 10 (1936), pgs. 44-46, 104-106, 118-121, 134-137, 152-155, 167-170, 181-185; *Miłosierdzie Boże. Studium teologiczno-praktyczne*, Vilnius 1936; *Mysli do kazań o Miłosierdziu Bożym*, “Przegląd Homiletyczny” 14 (1936), pgs. 243-249; *Idea Miłosierdzia Bożego w liturgii*, *Misterium Christi* 8 (1937), pgs.102-116.

order to awaken in the people a desire for this feast. His efforts were successful because, after reading about Divine Mercy, people began to request that such a feast be established. Fr. Sopocko then strove to convince the bishops to petition the Holy See for the feast, which they did. Fr. Sopocko's intuitive understanding of the truth of Divine Mercy as well as his substantiations and explanations for the establishment of the feast and spreading devotion to Divine Mercy, which he developed in the 1930s, served as the basis of ecclesiastical approval of the worship and establishment of the feast of Divine Mercy in this day and age.

Fr. Sopocko did not begin to teach directly about Divine Mercy and spread devotion to it until the Second World War. Having obtained approval from the Archdiocesan Curia of Vilnius, Fr. Sopocko began to distribute images of the Merciful Jesus along with prayers. He also gave homilies and conferences on this topic. He wrote a Latin treatise on Divine Mercy and the need to worship it,²³ which he sent to bishops throughout the world by taking advantage of the migration of peoples that was taking place during the war. He also helped organize the foundation of a future religious order in Vilnius, which, in the spirit of the indications that St. Faustina recorded in her diary, would pray and serve the cause of Divine Mercy. Because of the atmosphere that the threats of war created, people sought God's help and rescue and were readily open to the Divine Mercy image and prayers that Fr. Sopocko shared with them. In turn, people shared the prayers and image with fellow refugees and exiles who went on to spread the Divine Mercy image and prayers far beyond Vilnius into Russia, Western Europe, and even America.

After the Second World War, Fr. Sopocko continued the apostolate and made efforts to obtain the Church authorities' approval of Divine Mercy until the end of his life. He tirelessly taught and researched the biblical, theological, and pastoral foundations for the truth and worship of Divine Mercy. His extensive and rich writings document his activity; he published a dozen or so books, dozens of articles, and numerous texts in manuscripts and typescripts.²⁴ Fr. Sopocko also strove

²³ *De Misericordia Dei deque eiusdem festo instituendo. Tractatus dogmaticus ac liturgicus*, Vilnae 1940; *De Misericordia Dei deque eiusdem festo instituendo. Tractatus dogmaticus ac liturgicus*, Detroit 1943.

²⁴ The major printed publications are: *O święto Najmiłosierniejszego Zbawiciela*, Poznań 1947; *Miłosierdzie Boże nadzieją ludzkości*, Wrocław 1948; *Kult Serca Jezusowego a kult Miłosierdzia Bożego*, AK 48 (1948), pgs. 33-40; *Poznajmy Boga w Jego Miłosierdziu. Rozważania o miłosierdziu Bożym na tle litanii*, Poznań 1949; *Godzina święta i Nowenna o Miłosierdzie Boże nad światem*,

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to correct people's concept of Divine Mercy through the image of the Merciful Jesus. In 1954, Fr. Sopocko obtained the Conference of Polish Catholic Bishops' approval to commission the artist L. Slendzinski to paint an image of the Merciful Jesus that would serve as the ideal example Divine Mercy. Fr. Sopocko also helped to found the religious Congregation of the Sisters of the Merciful Jesus, which grew out of the Vilnius community. From the very beginning, Fr. Sopocko was the spiritual guide for this order of women; he wrote its first constitutions; and he oversaw the spiritual care of the religious congregation for the remainder of his life. He also helped to organize the Secular Institute of Divine Mercy, which had its roots in the Vilnius community. He tried to involve people in the apostolate in different ways, especially the sisters of the newly-formed religious community and secular institute, sisters from St. Faustina's religious community (which was the community from which the newer communities had arisen), priests, and laypeople who were interested in the devotion, whom he also tried to organize into a group that would perpetually worship Divine Mercy. Throughout the 1960-70s, Fr. Sopocko actively participated in academic conferences and symposia that were dedicated to the topic of the truth about Divine Mercy. He continually presented matters pertaining to the worship of Divine Mercy and the establishment of the Feast of Divine Mercy by addressing and appealing to the Primate of Poland and the Polish Conference of Bishops through letters, petitions, and personal meetings. When necessary, he explained, presented arguments, and defended the devotion. In addition, he experienced many painful difficulties and misunderstandings on the part of others who reacted negatively to the spontaneous development of the devotion.

Poznan-Warsaw-Lublin 1949; *Wielbijmy Boga w Jego Miłosierdziu*, Franciscan Publishers, Pulaski, Wisconsin 1958; *Miłosierdzie Boga w dziełach Jego*, vol. 1, London 1959, 2nd Edition, Białystok 2008, 3rd Edition, Białystok 2017; *Wielbijmy Boga w Jego Miłosierdziu. Modlitewnik*, Stockbridge Mass. 1961; *Nowenna i inne modlitwy do Miłosierdzia Bożego*, Stockbridge Mass. 1961; M. Sopocko, J. Chróściechowski, *Divine Mercy Devotions and Prayers*, 1st Edition, Stockbridge Mass. 1961; *Miłosierdzie Boga w dziełach Jego*, vol. 2, Rome - Paris - London 1962, 2nd Edition, Białystok 2008, 3rd Edition, Białystok 2017; *Miłosierdzie Boga w dziełach Jego*, vol. 3, Rome-Paris-London 1962, 2nd Edition, Białystok 2008, 3rd Edition, Białystok 2017; *The Mercy of God in his Works*, vol. 1, Hereford et Stockbridge Mass. 1962; *Gods is mercy. Meditations on God's most consoling attribute*, Stockbridge Mass. 1965; *Miłosierdzie Boga w dziełach Jego*, vol. 4, Paris 1967, 3rd Edition, Białystok 2017; *The Mercy of God in his Works*, vol. 2, Stockbridge Mass. 1968; vol. 3, Stockbridge Mass. 1968; M. Sopocko, J. Chróściechowski, *Domine, miserere nobis! De Christo Salvatore Misere nrissimo adorando et de sua misericordia generi humano imploranda*, Fawley Court, Henley-on-Thames, Oxon 1968.

Church authorities distanced themselves from Fr. Sopocko, and even local bishops forbid the spreading of the devotion in the forms mentioned in Sr. Faustina's diary. In fact, even the Holy See prohibited the devotions in 1959, even though Fr. Sopocko's activities were in accord with the spirit of the Church's thought.

Fr. Sopocko's apostolic efforts are undoubtedly an important contribution to the work of spreading and popularizing the devotion to Divine Mercy. It is because of his efforts that the Church in the modern day approved of worship of Divine Mercy. St. Faustina's testimonies and messages based on her interior inspirations reveal the role and truth about how God chose Fr. Sopocko to carry out the apostolic work described above. In her *Diary*, St. Faustina includes this testimony, among many others, that strongly confirms the inestimable role that Fr. Sopocko was meant from all time to play in God's plan:

So I asked Jesus to give these graces to someone else, because I did not know how to make use of them and was only wasting them. 'Jesus, have mercy on me; do not entrust such great things to me, as You see that I am a bit of dust and completely inept. But the goodness of Jesus is infinite; He had promised me visible help here on earth, and a little while later I received it in Vilnius, in the person of Father Sopocko. I had already known him before coming to Vilnius, thanks to an interior vision. One day I saw him in our chapel between the altar and the confessional and suddenly heard a voice in my soul say, **This is the visible help for you on earth. He will help you carry out My will on earth.**'²⁵

BŁOGOSŁAWIONY MICHAŁ SOPOCKO – APOSTOŁ BOŻEGO MIŁOSIERDZIA

W historii upowszechnienia się w naszych czasach kultu Miłosierdzia Bożego wyjątkowe miejsce zajmuje i taką też rolę odegrał ks. Michał Sopocko. Wskazany św. Faustynie w objawieniach, stał się jej spowiednikiem i kierownikiem duchowym oraz otworzył się na apostołstwo Miłosierdzia Bożego. Siostra widziała w nim współrealizatora i kontynuatora powierzonej jej misji głoszenia prawdy Miłosierdzia Bożego i szerzenia kultu. Przyczynił się do powstania *Dzienniczka*, doprowadził do namalowania w Wilnie w 1934 r. pierwszego wizerunku Jezusa Miłosiernego. Pierwszy zaczął pisać o Miłosierdziu Bożym i kulcie oraz wydrukował już w 1937 r. tekst *Koronki* i *Nowenny do Miłosierdzia Bożego*. Zabiegał o ustanowienie Święta Miłosierdzia Bożego i zatwierdzenie kultu przez władze

²⁵ *Diary*, 53.

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kościelne. Niestrudzenie nauczał o Miłosierdzu Bożym i wydał szereg prac poświęconych tej prawdzie oraz nabożeństwu do Miłosierdzia Bożego. Jego poświęcenie, znoszone przeciwności, gorliwość apostołska są niewątpliwie istotnym wkładem w apostołstwo Miłosierdzia Bożego w naszych czasach i nie mogą nie mieć znaczenia dla upowszechnienia się kultu Miłosierdzia Bożego w Polsce i świecie.

Słowa kluczowe: miłosierdzie Boże, apostołstwo miłosierdzia Bożego, kult Miłosierdzia Bożego, św. Faustyna Kowalska, bł. Michał Sopoćko.

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Blessed Michael Sopocko: A Zealous Pastor

Bl. Fr. Michael Sopocko is a fascinating figure, particularly because of his zealous involvement in everything that he did, especially in his pastoral ministry. This article discusses Bl. Michael Sopocko's pastoral achievements based on three biographical and chronological stages of his life, pastoral activity, and academic work. The first stage involves his early life in his family home as well as his work at the parish in Taboryszki, where he served until 1918 when he went to study in Warsaw. The second stage took place when he returned to Vilnius after completing his intermittent studies at the University of Warsaw (from 1918 until December 8, 1924) and until he met St. Faustina who introduced him to the mystery of Divine Mercy in 1933-1934. In the third phase of Bl. Michael Sopocko's pastoral and academic ministry, the mystery of Divine Mercy dominated his thoughts and views on both the Church's activities and pastoral ministry.

Key words: family home, parochial vicar, university studies, World War I, military chaplain, spiritual father, professor, Stefan Batory University, confessor, educator, building up the Church, Divine Mercy, Vilnius, Warsaw, Białystok.

Fr. Michael Sopocko's very intense work in the parish where he sought the good of the faithful was characterized by the beautiful traits that he had developed while living with his family. Michael Sopocko grew up in a family home that was permeated by a sense of deep piety. The entire Sopocko family prayed together daily, sang religious songs, and participated with great devotion in the services at their parish church. These practices were their "daily bread." Fr. Michael Sopocko later wrote in his *Memoirs* about who and what influenced his vocation to the priesthood and his religious fervor:

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I began to think about dedicating my life to the service of God as a child growing up in a religious environment. Every day my father led family prayer; we frequently chanted the Liturgy of the Hours; we sang seasonal songs, especially during the winter; we rode in the carriage to the parish church which was located 18 km away [from our home]; we participated in family celebrations (baptisms, funerals, burials) at home and at our neighbors' homes, during which we sang religious songs and talked with neighbors predominantly about religious topics. All of these things influenced me subconsciously as a child and motivated my desire to serve Him, Who I did not know, but Whom I worshiped, asked for forgiveness, and beseeched for grace.¹

Fr. Michael was a very religiously disposed priest. In his *Memoirs* he wrote that his father really wanted to educate his children, but their meager finances made it impossible until 1901-1902 when he sent two of his sons—Michael and his younger brother Peter—to a local grammar school in Zabrzez. Michael wrote the following about his experiences there:

My year-long stay in Zabrzez (1901-1902) was very memorable not only with regard to school where the teacher taught poorly, but also because there was a parish church nearby at which I received my First Holy Communion (1886), served at the Holy Mass, accompanied the organist by singing the *Little Office of Our Lady*, and visited each day. At that time, Fr. Jan Kunicki replaced the good Fr. Sokolowski. Fr. Kunicki was extremely eloquent and had true apostolic zeal; he was very moving and directly changed the faithful's views and habits. His fiery sermons captivated his listeners and influenced me greatly—so much so, that I decided never to drink alcohol or visit an Orthodox church for the rest of my life. His inspired attitude as he stood at the ambo or altar, his fervor in hearing confessions, and his concern for fostering the proper worship of God suggestively influenced my desire to imitate him in the future and to become a priest."²

Michael Sopocko's pastoral activity began in September 1914 after he was ordained a priest and assigned to serve as a vicar in the parish in Taboryski, which was located 40 kilometers from Vilnius. Here he was greatly involved in pastoral ministry for the good of his parishioners. When performing the pastoral duties assigned to him by his pastor Fr. Lacki (celebrating Mass, giving homilies, visiting the sick), Fr. Sopocko discovered that the parishioners had other needs, which he immediately strove to remedy by providing catechesis for children and giving catechetical homilies which, as he noted, were

¹ M. Sopocko, "Wspomnienia z przeszłości," in WKAB 13, no. 2 (1985), pg. 84.

² Ibid, pgs. 84-85.

well attended. Despite his pastor's initial resistance, Fr. Sopocko was able to create a youth choir that sang the Rosary, prayers, pious devotions, and even the Holy Mass by Haller on Christmas. During Lent, Fr. Sopocko heard confessions in order to prepare the parishioners for Easter. Fr. Sopocko quickly noticed that the parishioners were insufficiently prepared to receive the sacrament of Penance, so he invited them to arrive 30 minutes early so that he could prepare them well for Confession.

Parishioners were amazed at Fr. Sopocko's pastoral wisdom and fervor, and they perceived how he sacrificed his time and health in order to serve them in the best way. In May 1915, he began gathering approximately 500 children to teach and prepare them for their First Holy Communion. In addition, many older parishioners attended and listened closely to Fr. Sopocko's catechesis based on Fr. Roch Filochowski's catechism.³

Bl. Michael Sopocko also cared for the spiritual lives and material needs of his parishioners. Since many of the villages were located far away from the parish church in Taboryski, including Miedniki Krolewskie (15 km away) and Onzadowo (17 km away), it was difficult for the inhabitants of those villages to come to their home parish, and it was also difficult for Fr. Sopocko to visit them, particularly the sick. Consequently, Fr. Sopocko saw to it that a barn in Miedniki that was part of his previous parish and had been liquidated by the Russian occupational authorities after the January Uprising was converted into a chapel for the soldiers and the faithful. The makeshift chapel was consecrated on August 17, 1916, and from then on it served as a house of worship where Holy Mass was celebrated every Sunday and the other sacraments were offered. Fr. Sopocko also arranged for a makeshift chapel to be erected in Onzadowo where the inhabitants had attempted to ask for permission to build a church before World War I began. The outbreak of the war, however, made it impossible to fulfill the desires of the inhabitants of Onzadowo and those who lived in the surrounding areas. Therefore, with the help of the faithful, Fr. Sopocko saw to it that a temporary chapel was established in an abandoned granary in the countryside of Tarasowszczyzna. This chapel was consecrated for the benefit of the faithful on October 28, 1917.⁴

In addition to his pastoral work, Fr. Sopocko also strove to increase the level of education for those residing in the places under his pastoral care. For example, he began by organizing grammar and high schools

³ See *Ibid.*, pgs. 99-100.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pg.107.

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by converting old abandoned buildings formerly used for military operations. However, since there were not enough teachers to educate the children and youth in the two-class schools, the number of which had increased to 20 by Easter 1916, Fr. Sopocko and a sympathetic German inspector prepared a two-month long course in methodology in Bialy Dwor for 45 teachers from the County of Vilnius in the summer of 1916.⁵ Fr. Sopocko's efforts to improve the education system were very successful. By the end of 1917, he had organized thirty-six schools in the areas where he served pastorally.⁶

All of Fr. Sopocko's efforts to improve education and provide pastoral care demonstrate his great priestly fervor and desire to lead people to God. His astonishing output reveals how a dedicated priest can effect so much good in the spiritual and intellectual lives of others. Bl. Michael Sopocko's involvement was always pragmatic, and he always took advantage of opportunities to take on certain works. At times, however, his fervor overcame what seemed to be hopeless difficulties, and the fruits of his efforts spoke (and continue to speak) for themselves.

A Military Chaplain and University Student

Fr. Sopocko's great dream was to deepen his own knowledge in order to better serve others. He wrote of this dream in his *Memoirs*:

[...] among other things, my studies were one of the my main callings. However, because of my other duties, I could not dedicate myself solely to it [...] When possible, I took advantage of every opportunity to do continue [my education].

He also recorded that he took important steps to achieve this goal by privately studying English and French and of refreshing his knowledge German, which he had learned in school.⁷

While Fr. Sopocko was serving at the parish in Taboryszki, the German occupiers threatened to imprison him because of his educational efforts during the ongoing war. In order to avoid this at all costs, Fr. Sopocko went to Warsaw in 1918 with the intention to pursue further studies at the university. Fr. Sopocko's desire to study was motivated by a new era that was unfolding in Poland as well as the possibility that Poland would become independent at the end of World War I:

⁵ Ibid, pg. 104.

⁶ Ibid, pg. 109.

⁷ Ibid, pg. 120.

Everything presaged that a new order was being established—an order for which I had to properly prepare myself by making up for my lack of knowledge in certain areas, particularly in pedagogy. With time, the thought of going to Warsaw for further studies developed.⁸

Fr. Sopocko noted in his diary:

... during the first days of October of 1918 [October 6], I was in Warsaw. For the time-being refugees were being quarantined here at Gdański Station. It was Sunday, and I asked the Commander to let me go into the city to celebrate Holy Mass. After hesitating for a moment, the Commander gave me permission to go all the way to Warsaw. I arrived to the church of the Holy Cross, where I stopped at the dormitory next to the Department of Theology of the newly-opened university.⁹

In this way, Fr. Sopocko achieved his great dream and he was able to pursue his academic studies, which he considered one of “the greatest tasks of his life,” as he called it.¹⁰

The war continued, many students enrolled in the military, and lectures at the university were put on hold. On January 29, 1919, Fr. Michael Sopocko was summoned to serve as a military chaplain. The Field Bishop Stanislaw Gall appointed Fr. Sopocko to the Vilnius Rifle Regiment of the Belarusian-Lithuanian Division, which was stationed in Vawkavysk. While visiting the military troops, especially the wounded soldiers, Fr. Sopocko celebrated Mass and heard confessions. Because of his efforts, Fr. Sopocko became weaker; and Field Bishop Stanislaw Gall ordered him to go to Zakopane to rest. After this period of respite, Fr. Sopocko returned not to the Eastern Front, but rather to Warsaw where he was assigned to serve as the chaplain of the Kosciuszko Engineer Training Camp. In addition, on October 16, 1919, Fr. Sopocko also began academic studies at the University of Warsaw, where he specialized in moral theology and attended lectures on law and philosophy. While it was very difficult for Fr. Sopocko to simultaneously study and serve as a military chaplain, he amazingly managed to do both.

While performing his duties as a military chaplain and pastorally ministering to the soldiers, Fr. Sopocko was also involved in social work related to those under his care. He wrote the following in his *Memoirs*:

⁸ Ibid, pg. 111.

⁹ Ibid; *Dziennik*, edited and with an introduction and footnotes by H. Ciereszko, Bialystok 2012, 2nd Edition, pgs. 77-78.

¹⁰ Ibid, pg. 99.

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I lived in housing for the theology students on ul. Tragutta 1. After Mass, I went to lectures. Then I ate lunch and went to the hospital and the departments entrusted to my pastoral care. In addition to leading devotions and talks for the soldiers, I was involved in social work, including: organizing the Fraternal Aid for soldiers [...], being in charge of the inn for the soldiers, and organizing a school for orphans of war. These students learned to play different instruments and then became part of the orchestra.”

In 1924, after Fr. Sopocko had obtained his master’s degree and certification to educate teachers, he returned to Vilnius where he became the Director of Pastoral District, which included the Garrisons in Vilnius, Nowa Wilejka, Podbrodzie, and Berezwech, for a total of 16 regiments.¹¹ Since there were so many soldiers, it was difficult for them to participate in Sunday masses. Fr. Sopocko took this need to heart and began efforts to build a garrison church. Having overcome huge financial and organizational difficulties, he achieved his goal, and the Church of St. Ignatius in Vilnius, which Fr. Sopocko worked so hard to have built, was consecrated on September 26, 1929.¹²

Fr. Sopocko always tried to ensure that the faithful had good and improved access to churches, and his experiences preparing places of worship for the faithful when he was serving as a parochial vicar in Taboryski bore much fruit in his later pastoral ministry. For example, as was mentioned before, Fr. Sopocko renovated St. Ignatius church so that it could serve as a place of worship for the troops and local civilians. Not only did Fr. Sopocko’s concern for places of worship arise out of his desire to ensure the good of the faithful, but also from his keen observation that churches needed to be accessible and, therefore, erected in a good location. In the article *Centrum i peryferia* [The Center and Periphery], which was published in “Wiadomości Archidiecezji Wileńskiej” [The Archdiocese of Vilnius News] in 1933, Fr. Sopocko substantiated the necessity to create new parishes in order to make them more accessible to the faithful. According to Fr. Sopocko, the closer the parishes are to the faithful (and, therefore, the easier they are to access), the easier it is for the faithful to deepen their religious lives. For this reason, Fr. Sopocko argued that it was necessary to adapt a network of parishes to the needs of the faithful.¹³ Fr. Sopocko even specified the ideal distances between peoples’ homes and churches; specifically, he proposed that churches located in the

¹¹ See *ibid*, pg. 109.

¹² *Ibid*, pg. 129.

¹³ M. Sopocko, *Centrum i peryferia*, WAW 7(1933), pg. 182.

countryside should be no more than 6 km away from local inhabitants and that churches located in the city should be no more than 1.5 km away from inhabitants.¹⁴

Fr. Sopocko sought to build new churches in Białystok as well, since the city had been greatly destroyed during the war and because its development and population grew rapidly after the war. Needless to say, at that time people were in great need of places of worship, and Fr. Sopocko observed and desired to address this need. For example, the Missionary Sisters who lived at ul. Poleska 42 had a chapel to which they invited Fr. Sopocko to celebrate Mass. However, around 100 people came to participate in these masses, and they had to stand outside of the chapel because there was not enough space inside. Observing the faithful's interest in participating in the different devotions near their homes, Fr. Sopocko considered and then carried out the expansion of the little chapel after overcoming the difficulties posed by the city authorities.¹⁵ Another example of Fr. Sopocko's concern for the good of the faithful was manifested in his efforts to have a convent and chapel built for the Sisters of the Merciful Jesus, which would be accessible to the faithful who lived in the vicinity that had been pastorally neglected because the parish church, St. Roch's, was located far away. Fr. Sopocko reached an agreement with some individuals who owned a half-hectare of the plaza on ul. Celownicza where he hoped to erect a building that could serve as a convent and chapel. The local authorities, however, absolutely forbid Fr. Sopocko from establishing a house of worship, and ordered that what had been built thus far be demolished.¹⁶ Fr. Sopocko encountered the same situation in Nowe Miasto, which was located in the vicinity of Białystok. From a pastoral point of view, Fr. Sopocko felt that another chapel was necessary for the inhabitants of this town because the nearest churches—St. Stanisław's and the parish church—were located more than 2.5 km away from the faithful. Consequently, Fr. Sopocko made every effort to secure a place in the town square located at ul. Wiejska 41 to build a future church and establish a parish. All of his efforts, however, proved futile because the local authorities created a lot of obstacles and the Church leadership neglected the issue.¹⁷ Although Fr. Sopocko was not always successful in applying for places to erect new churches that the local faithful could access easily and at which they could worship, he will

¹⁴ Ibid, pg. 184.

¹⁵ See M. Sopocko, *Wspomnienia z przeszłości*, WKAB 14(1986) no. 1, pgs. 115-116.

¹⁶ Ibid, pgs. 116-117.

¹⁷ Ibid, pgs. 117-118.

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always be remembered as a priest who was very concerned for the good of the faithful and who had a deep understanding of the needs of the Catholics in the city of Białystok.

Ministry in the Seminary in Vilnius and the Provision of Spiritual Direction to Religious Sisters

Fr. Michael Sopocko took his pastoral ministry very seriously and devoted himself wholeheartedly to whomever he served, whether it be soldiers, priests, or religious sisters. Archbishop Romuald Jalbrzykowski appointed Fr. Michael Sopocko as the spiritual father of the Archdiocesan Seminary of Vilnius on August 8, 1927. In his humility, Fr. Sopocko wrote about his reservations about accepting the appointment:

I valued the role of the spiritual father in the formation of priests too highly to consider myself qualified to fulfill such a role. Therefore, I humbly expressed my gratitude for this opportunity, but clarified that I am neither worthy nor sufficiently prepared for the position, and that I cannot recklessly leave my appointment as pastor of the garrison, etc.¹⁸

The archbishop did not revoke Fr. Sopocko's nomination, however, and, after accepting the position, Fr. Sopocko wrote the following about what he thought it meant to be a spiritual father:

A spiritual father should be a good priest, a man of proven virtue and honesty, a dignified man, one who is endowed with every kind of virtue. [He should also be] capable of encouraging the students in every way to be pious and virtuous through his own words and example, of loving them in God, of respecting and trusting them and, in this way, of gaining their trust.¹⁹

In addition to his classes at the seminary, Fr. Sopocko was still involved in a variety of pastoral areas. From a very young age, Fr. Sopocko saw how alcoholism was a huge threat to faith and religious life. After hearing Fr. Lacki's homilies, he vowed never to drink alcohol. For these reasons, he worked very hard to combat alcoholism, particularly amongst the faithful and clergy. When working with the students at the seminary, Fr. Sopocko organized the Abstainers' Club, to which 60% of his pupils belonged.²⁰ This work led Fr. Sopocko to found the Abstainers' Club for Priests. To this end, he organized a few meetings

¹⁸ M. Sopocko, *Wspomnienia z przeszłości*, WKAB 13(1985) no. 4, pg. 85.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid, pg. 108.

for members each year as well as an annual meetings at which invited speakers from outside of the archdiocese would give speeches.²¹ Three elements dominated Fr. Sopocko's religious and pastoral activities to promote abstinence: prayer, self-study, and outside influences.²²

Fr. Sopocko's important efforts to promote sobriety brought him to Białystok to create sobriety circles among students and priests. Concerned about the sobriety of the Polish nation, he examined the problem of addiction and the affects of drunkenness on schoolchildren and youth during his studies in Warsaw in the spring of 1924. Specifically, Fr. Sopocko conducted a study amongst children in grammar and high school to determine the effects of alcohol on their academic achievement. Fr. Sopocko subsequently wrote a thesis entitled "Alcoholism and School-Aged Children" which was based on his findings. His work was then published that same year in "Przegląd Pedagogiczny" [The Pedagogical Review]. His research and work was so highly esteemed that Fr. Sopocko was often invited to give lectures on the topic of battling alcoholism.²³ Bl. Michael Sopocko continued his fight against alcoholism in the Archdiocese of Białystok within secular society as well.

Fr. Michael Sopocko also worked toward enriching the religious education of the Polish intelligentsia. When the Koło Inteligencji Katolickiej [The Catholic Intelligentsia Circle] was founded at the Catholic University of Lublin, Fr. Sopocko immediately began organizing the same kind of group in Vilnius. Thanks to the help and involvement of Fr. Jozef Czerniawski, PhD, and Professor Wacław Staszewski, the Koło Inteligencji Katolickiej was established as an affiliate of the same group in Lublin. The group had a few departments, including the department responsible for spiritual life, the members of which met at Fr. Sopocko's home. According to Fr. Sopocko, primarily professors from the Stefan Batory University and teachers from the high schools who taught mostly the natural and technical subject belonged to this group.²⁴

The great concern for increasing the laity's religious knowledge and awareness that Fr. Sopocko had already begun to manifest in Vilnius became very evident in Białystok. In 1951, Fr. Sopocko contributed to the creation of courses and lectures for the laity that took place in the so-called "old church" next to the cathedral in Białystok. These

²¹ See T. Żdanuk, *Działalność abstynencka księdza Michała Sopoćki*, WKAB 18 (1990), pgs. 100-113.

²² Ibid, pg. 103.

²³ M. Sopoćko, *Wspomnienia*, WKAB 13(1985) no. 3, pg. 108.

²⁴ Ibid.

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courses corresponded to the programs offered in the Instytuty Wyższej Wiedzy Religijnej [The Institutes of Advanced Religious Learning)]; however, Fr. Sopocko refrained from using this title in order to avoid provoking the communist authorities. These courses began in 1951 and continued for a long time even after Fr. Sopocko retired in 1962. Then, they suddenly ceased. The graduates of these classes took exams in specific areas and, if they passed, received certificates in fields of theology, including: theology, ethics, and the history of the Church.²⁵

Fr. Sopocko also ensured that religious education teachers, meaning catechists, received proper formation. In his *Memoirs* he wrote about the difficulties that the communist leadership in Poland caused the Church as they aggressively strove to secularize Poles. In particular, the new school authorities forbade students to come to observe lessons in religion and conduct mock lessons, which were necessary for catechizing children and youth. By the end of the 1940s, communist authorities removed religion classes from Polish schools altogether. Catechesis, therefore, had to take place at so-called “catechetical locations” outside of school in sometimes fatal conditions. Religious education teachers were necessary to meet the needs of all of the youth and children. Therefore, Fr. Sopocko organized and offered catechetical courses for religious sisters and the laity in order to prepare them to serve as future catechists.²⁶ Fr. Sopocko himself mentioned that he organized a few such courses with the help of professors and priests as well as older catechists, and these courses took place in the old parish church from 1951-1958.²⁷ Bishop Henryk Ciereszko pointed out, however, that the “Calendar of Bl. Michael Sopocko’s life” lists slightly different dates and that Archbishop Romuald Jalbrzykowski assigned Fr. Sopocko to organize a catechetical course for religious and the laity as an ongoing pastoral work that lasted a few years.²⁸ However, the Curia’s Catechetical Archive of the Blessed Michael Sopocko Center for Pastoral and Catechetical Formation located in Białystok contains certificates indicating that several individuals completed the catechetical course on October 5, 1959. These certificates were issued by the Archdiocesan Curia of Białystok and signed by Fr. Sopocko as

²⁵ Ibid, pg. 115; See H. Ciereszko, *Życie i działalność księdza Michała Sopocki (1888-1975. Pełna biografia apostoła Miłosierdzia Bożego*, Cracow 2006, pgs. 383-384.

²⁶ Ibid, pg. 115.

²⁷ See M. Sopocko, *Wspomnienia*, WKAB 14(1986), pgs. 114-115.

²⁸ H. Ciereszko, *Życie i działalność ks. Michała Sopocki*, op. cit., pg. 577; see also Sopocko, *Dziennik*, pg. 34.

the Director of Education and Fr. Adam Sawicki as the Capitular Vicar. Fr. Sopocko and laypersons played a huge role in preparing future catechists. All of Fr. Sopocko's efforts to prepare catechists testify to his sincere desire to deepen the faith of children and youth.

Fr. Sopocko's role duties as a spiritual director for religious was very important to him. After Archbishop Romuald Jalbrzykowski released Fr. Sopocko from his duties as a spiritual father of the Archdiocesan Major Seminary in Vilnius on August 26, 1932 and after the Ordinary Bishop Ordinary Bishop Jozef Gawlina released Fr. Sopocko from his duties as a military chaplain on August 30 of the same year and transferred Fr. Sopocko to the serve as a chaplain in the reserves, Fr. Sopocko did not cease his fervent pastoral work. Rather, he continued to serve in his pastoral role as an ordinary and extraordinary confessor for religious sisters and one order of lay brothers. Among the religious orders he served were: the Sisters of the Immaculate (without a habit), the Sister Servants of the Sacred Heart, the Missionaries of the Holy Family, the Ursulines, the Sons of Our Sorrowful Mother, the Bernardine Sisters, and the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy (who Fr. Sopocko took under his spiritual care after he was released from his work at the seminary).²⁹

For Sopocko began serving as the confessor for the Congregation of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy on January 17, 1933. This role was particularly significant for Fr. Sopocko because it was then that he met Sr. Faustina Kowalska, who wrote the following about Fr. Michael Sopocko in her *Diary*: "The week for confession came and, to my great joy, I saw the priest I had known before coming to Vilnius. [That is to say,] I had known him by seeing him in a vision. At that moment, I heard these words in my soul: **This is My faithful servant; he will help you fulfill My will here on earth.**"³⁰ Fr. Sopocko's encounter with Sr. Faustina initiated his apostolic work of spreading the message of Divine Mercy. He began this work by publishing articles and other longer essays on the topic. His publications on Divine Mercy are pastoral and show the importance of Divine Mercy in the liturgy, in witnessing to it in every day life, and particularly in pastoral work for the salvation of souls. After Fr. Sopocko met Sr. Faustina, publishing articles and essays became a particular feature of Fr. Sopocko's work and activities to promote Divine Mercy, which still requires close and detailed study.

²⁹ M. Sopocko, *Wspomnienia*, WKAB 13(1985) no. 4, pgs. 88-89.

³⁰ S. M. Faustyna Kowalska, *Dzienniczek. Miłosierdzie w duszy mojej*, Warsaw 1993, pg. 109, no. 263.

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Conclusion

Bl. Michael Sopocko's zealous pastoral ministry was characterized by his broad range of interests. After the partition of Poland, he perceived a huge deficiency in pastoral ministry. Through his earnest involvement, he strove to remedy this lack by creating new pastoral institutions; catechizing adults, youth, and children in the truths of the faith by teaching them the Catechism; preparing members of the laity to teach religion; organizing small choirs for children and youth; and striving to connect people more closely to the Church. In his pastoral ministry, Fr. Sopocko also worked very hard to oppose alcohol abuse in every area of Polish society, but particularly among those living under the Russian occupation. He created and promoted movements in the Church such as: the Marian sodalities,³¹ Koła Inteligencji Katolickiej [The Catholic Intelligentsia Circle], and Catholic Action, among others. He did not try to avoid his military chaplaincy during the Polish-Soviet war. Fr. Michael Sopocko unquestionably demonstrated how much one fervent and faithful priest can achieve for the good of the faithful, the Church, and one's homeland.

BŁOGOSŁAWIONY KS. MICHAŁ SOPOĆKO – GORLIWY DUSZPASTERZ

Błogosławiony ks. Michał Sopocko to postać fascynująca swoim zaangażowaniem i gorliwością we wszystkie dzieła, których dokonywał, a zwłaszcza te z dziedziny duszpasterskiej. Gdy zaś mówimy o bł. ks. Michale Sopocko, o jego działalności duszpasterskiej i jego pracy naukowej to można rozróżnić trzy wyraźne okresy biograficzno-czasowe. Pierwszy okres obejmowałby jego życie w domu rodzinnym i praca w parafii Taboryszki aż do roku 1918, kiedy to wyjechał na studia do Warszawy. Drugi okres możemy rozciągnąć od powrotu do Wilna ze studiów, które miały miejsce na Uniwersytecie Warszawskim i trwały z przerwami od 1918 roku do 8 grudnia 1924 roku. Okres ten trwał aż do czasu zapoznania się z tajemnicą Miłosierdzia Bożego poprzez objawienia św. Faustyny w latach 1933-1934. W trzecim okresie działalności duszpasterskiej i naukowej ta tajemnica zdominowała jego poglądy zarówno na działalność Kościoła, jak i w ogóle na duszpasterstwo. Według tego schematu przedstawimy jego dokonania na polu duszpasterskim.

³¹ See S. Strzelecki, *Sodalicyjne promienie Miłosierdzia w Białymstoku*, Białystok 2006.

Słowa kluczowe: dom rodzinny, wikariusz parafialny, studia uniwersyteckie, I wojna światowa, kapelan wojskowy, ojciec duchowny, profesor Uniwersytetu im. Stefana Batorego, spowiednik i wychowawca, budowniczy kościoła, kult Miłosierdzia Bożego, Wilno, Warszawa, Białystok.

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Blessed Michael Sopocko: Pedagogue and Educator

One of the fundamental and important dimensions of Fr. Michael Sopocko's life and work was his pedagogical activity and creativity. Fr. Sopocko taught as a lecturer in the seminary for the majority of his life and at the university for a number of years. He left a rich legacy of research and academic work in the form of popular and journal publications. Up to now, some minor studies have discussed Fr. Sopocko's pedagogical achievements. This study contributes to a growing and important body of work by presenting Fr. Sopocko's academic path, didactic work, and academic and written creativity and achievements as a pedagogue and educator

Key words: Fr. Michael Sopocko, Christian education, pedagogics.

Introduction

Fr. Sopocko is best known for his connection with the apostolate of Divine Mercy. The key to understanding his personality and mission is the fact that he was a servant of mercy and dedicated all of his energy to promoting Divine Mercy. For this reason, his contribution to the development of devotion to Divine Mercy has been studied extensively.¹ In many of their studies, however, scholars have not always remembered that one of the most fundamental and important aspects of Fr. Sopocko's life and work was his pedagogical activity and

¹ See H. Ciereszko, *Droga świętości ks. Michała Sopoćki*, Cracow 2002; H. Ciereszko, *Życie i działalność Księdza Michała Sopoćki (1888-1975). Pełna biografia Apostoła Miłosierdzia Bożego*, Cracow 2006.

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creativity. Fr. Sopocko taught and lectured at the seminary throughout most of his life and at the university for part of his life. Consequently, he left behind a rich academic legacy in the form of publications as well as popular writings and journal publications. Up to now, some minor studies have discussed Fr. Sopocko's pedagogical achievements.² This study, which touches only the surface of this topic, contributes to the growing and important body of work that presents the academic path, didactic work, and academic and written creativity of Fr. Sopocko as a pedagogue and educator.

Pedagogical Preparation and Activity

From a very young age, Fr. Michael Sopocko demonstrated a clear desire to acquire knowledge. Intellectually gifted, he was like a sponge that absorbed knowledge even when his external circumstances often made it difficult for him to have access to it. The further Fr. Sopocko went in his education, the more he saw how valuable and useful learning is in life.

Fr. Sopocko received his initial education in difficult circumstances. In his *Memoirs*, he pointed out that “scientific learning was, among other things, one of the main tasks of my life. However, because of my duties, I could not devote myself solely to [education] [...] whenever I could, I took advantage of every occasion to continue studying.”³ Fr. Sopocko went on to say that he took preliminary steps in his education—namely, he studied English and French privately and also refreshed his knowledge of German, which he had learned in school.

Fr. Sopocko began acquiring educational skills very early in life. When he was barely 19 years old, he began teaching at school because the circumstances of his life forced him to do so. After graduating from the municipal school in Oszmiana in 1906, Michael was had to cease

² See S. Strzelecki, *Wkład księdza Michała Sopocki w formację duchowieństwa*, Białystok 1983; D. Steć, *Wychowawca, abypociągał, musi być autentyczny*, “Czas Miłosierdzia”, 162(2003) no. 10, pg. 9; A. Skreczko, *Wychowanie chrześcijańskie w ujęciu Ks. Michała Sopocki*, “Rocznik Teologii Katolickiej” 2005, vol. IV, pgs. 59-98; H. Ciereszko, *Ksiądz Michał Sopocko profesor, wychowawca i ojciec duchowy uczniów i kapłanów*, Białystok 2008; H. Ciereszko, *Działalność naukowa i dydaktyczna Księdza Michała Sopocki*, “Studia Teologiczne. Białystok – Drohiczyń – Łomża” 26(2008), pgs. 7-56; E. Młyńska, *Ksiądz Michał Sopocko jako wychowawca*, “Katecheta” 2008, no. 11, pgs. 67-71; M. Olszewski, *Ksiądz Michał Sopocko jako profesor wykładowca w Wilnie i w Białymstoku*, “Rocznik Teologii Katolickiej”, 2016, vol. XV/1, pgs. 181-200.

³ M. Sopocko, *Wspomnienia*, “Wiadomości Kościelne Archidiecezji w Białymstoku” (hereafter abbreviated as WKAB) 13(1985) no. 3, pg. 120.

further studies because his parents' financial and material situation had deteriorated. In February 1907, he was offered a teaching position at a newly established Polish school associated with the local parish in Zabrzez.⁴ Michael Sopocko's work at the school suited him very well. In this way, from the beginning, Fr. Sopocko was interested in teaching, which spurred him to acquire the methodological skills necessary to properly guide and educate others.

While teaching, Michael sought to improve his knowledge of proper Polish by reading classical Polish literature, particularly the works of Adam Mickiewicz. During this time, he discovered the beauty and richness of Polish culture, which had been immortalized in the country's national literature. Fr. Sopocko's reading undoubtedly shaped his personality, taught him about patriotism, and convinced him to work on developing his religious and moral values.

The further Michael went in his education, the more he saw how useful knowledge was in life. For this reason, he continued his education after he graduated from the seminary in Vilnius in 1914 and entered into pastoral ministry. More specifically, at the end of September 1918 Fr. Sopocko went to Warsaw where he pursued higher theological studies in moral theology at the University of Warsaw's Faculty of Theology and attended lectures on law and philosophy. In 1923, he obtained his Master's degree in Theology.⁵

After obtaining his Master's in Theology, Fr. Sopocko decided to continue his studies in the University of Warsaw's Department of Moral Theology and prepare his doctoral thesis under the direction of Professor Franciszek Jehliczka. On March 1, 1926, Fr. Sopocko successfully defended his thesis on the ethics of the family and civil legislation.⁶ In his thesis, Fr. Sopocko demonstrated the extent to which Polish civil legislation was consistent with the principles of Christian morality, and he pointed out the need to create civil laws that were in accordance with the natural law revealed in matters pertaining to family ethics.⁷

In addition to studying theology, Fr. Sopocko spent two years (1922-1924) studying pedagogy at the State Pedagogical Institute. At the end of his studies, he successfully passed his exam before the State Examination Commission and received a good score. In addition, as

⁴ M. Sopocko, *Wspomnienia z przeszłości (Życiorys napisany własnymi słowami)*, WKAB 13(1985) no. 2, pg. 104.

⁵ See M. Sopocko, *Dziennik*, Białystok 2012, Edition 2, pgs. 77-78.

⁶ *Curriculum vitae of Fr. Michael Sopocko, Vilnius, May 20, 1928* (duplicate), Archive of the Archdiocese of Białystok (hereafter abbreviated as: AAB), IV 14.

⁷ M. Sopocko, *Rodzina w prawodawstwie na Ziemiach Polskich*, Vilnius 1926.

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part of the requirements to obtain his diploma, he submitted a paper entitled *Alcoholism Among School-Aged Youth*, which received very high marks. Fr. Sopocko's thesis was the result of the research that he had carried out among youth in primary and secondary schools where, as the title of his thesis suggests, he studied the problem of the influence of alcohol on adolescent development. The results of his study showed alcohol's destructive effects on young people and made others aware of the risks and actual harm that alcohol has on the young. The reviewers of Fr. Sopocko's work appreciated its quality and relevance, and efforts were made to publish it.⁸ Once he completed his pedagogical studies, Fr. Sopocko obtained his master's degree in pedagogy and was qualified to teach pedagogical subjects in high schools that provide general education and at teaching seminars.⁹

Michael Sopocko expanded his knowledge on issues related to pedagogy by engaging in didactic work among teachers. In fact, the Board of Trustees for the School District of Vilnius hired him for many years to give lectures in psychology, pedagogy, teaching methodology, and especially religion to teachers.¹⁰ With a sense of understanding and responsibility, Fr. Sopocko entered into these educational activities that were indispensable in Polish society at the time. The National Polish Association of Christian Teachers also invited Fr. Sopocko to provide similar lectures to public school teachers through the Higher Level Course in Philosophy and Mathematics during the 1925-26 and 1926-27 school years.¹¹

Fr. Sopocko engaged in didactic activities even during his pastoral ministry in the army. At that time, he provided soldiers and officers with religious and ethical training, during which he aroused in them a spirit of patriotism and helped to awaken in and transmit to them civic attitudes. His talks, which were published in 1922 under the title "Duties to One's Homeland," serve as a model for this type of education and reveal Fr. Sopocko's great concern for the soldiers' morale as well as for their religious, moral, and patriotic education. Fr. Sopocko himself also exemplified the values that he taught.¹²

⁸ M. Sopocko, *Wspomnienia...*, Chapter III, pg. 44.

⁹ Copy of Fr. Sopocko's Diploma, AAB, XI 12.

¹⁰ Letter from the Vilnius School District: Entrusting Teaching to the State. Higher Course for Teachers in Vilnius 1926/27, date September 15, 1926, N.I-20691/26, duplicate, AAB, XII 5.

¹¹ Letter from the Vilnius District Branch of the National Association of Christian Teachers written in Poland on June 3, 1928 (duplicate), AAB, XI 1.

¹² Por. H. Ciereszko, *Droga świętości ks. Michała Sopocki*, Cracow 2002, pg. 32.

From 1928 onward, Fr. Sopocko worked at the Seminary in Vilnius where the professors' primary task was teaching. Fr. Sopocko taught various subjects both in Vilnius and in Białystok (after the war), including: pastoral theology, catechetics, pedagogy, Latin, and even Russian.¹³

After he was released from his role as spiritual father of the Seminary in 1932, Fr. Sopocko lived next to the convent of the Visitation sisters for two years while he collected and compiled materials and wrote his dissertation entitled *The Aim, Subject, and Object of Spiritual Education According to Mikolaj Leczycki*. In order to complete his habilitation, he was obliged to work as a lecturer at the Seminary and at the University of Warsaw's Faculty of Theology—a position that he held from 1927 onward. Initially, he was employed as a lecturer in the history of philosophy, but in 1928, he was appointed Assistant Professor in the Department of Pastoral Theology.

Fr. Sopocko received his habilitation from the University of Warsaw and was granted the title of Senior Lecturer of Pastoral Theology in 1934. Fr. Sopocko continued further studies on the Leczycki's scientific legacy and compiled all of Leczycki's research on educating children into a four-volume work entitled *Mikolaj Leczycki on Spiritual Education*, which was published in Vilnius in 1935. This work gave Fr. Sopocko sufficient grounds to apply for the title of Full Professor and Chair of the Department of Theology in the University of Warsaw's Faculty of Theology. Unfortunately, although Fr. Sopocko was widely thought to be the most competent candidate, he was not promoted to the position of professor due most likely to the fact that the department lacked the necessary financial means.

In addition to his scientific work, Fr. Sopocko was continually responsible for lecturing once he became involved at the university. In addition to the lectures he gave on the history of philosophy, he also taught pastoral theology, which was the main area he had studied and in which he was interested. In this field, he gave lectures and led seminars on homiletics, catechetics, and pedagogy. He taught these classes until the university and seminary closed during World War II.

In his teaching, Fr. Sopocko greatly strove to provide students with practical preparation they would need for their future pastoral work.¹⁴

¹³ Por. S. Strzelecki, *Książd Michał Sopocko jakiego znałem i pamiętam*, Warsaw 2004.

¹⁴ Archbishop Edward Ozorowski said the following about Fr. Sopocko as his educator: "I also remember the practical advice that Fr. Sopocko gave to us. For example, he told us to walk upright, speak slowly and clearly, wash your body with cold water to the waist every morning, read literature to increase your vocabulary [...] He taught us prayers in Russian and required us to memorize

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His teaching aimed at synthesizing knowledge and practical skills. When teaching homiletics to students, for example, he would provide exercises on diction, how to elaborate properly on a given topic, and how to give homilies. He prepared and taught catechesis in schools with the same solicitude with which he prepared his academic work. He required that his students take catechesis classes taught only by qualified catechists so that they would learn the proper way to teach classes.

When giving lectures on pedagogy, Fr. Sopocko always prepared a script, just as he did when lecturing on other subjects.¹⁵ The script was then duplicated on the copy machine in the Research Assistance Department of the Circle of Theologians at the Stefan Batory University. Because suitable textbooks were not available at that time, and the scripts that Fr. Sopocko prepared for the subjects that he taught made it easier for the students to acquire and retain knowledge, these scripts were one of Fr. Sopocko's achievements that expressed his great concern for his students.

In addition to teaching, Fr. Sopocko collaborated with Fr. Jozef Wojtukiewicz to publish the Vilnius monthly "Toward the Summit," which was dedicated to issues on pedagogy and education.

Keeping in mind Fr. Sopocko's competent preparation of priests through his work as a pedagogue and his theoretical and practical involvement in this area, the following section will analyze his pedagogical creativity.

Pedagogical Creativity and Views¹⁶

In his pedagogical work and views, Fr. Michael Sopocko studied, explored, and discussed the problem of education in light of dogmatic,

Krylova's fairytales. He explained that we should move to the East and proclaim the Gospel [to the people] there." H. Ciereszko, *Ksiądz Michał Sopocko profesor, wychowawca i ojciec duchowy alumnów i kapłanów*, Białystok 2008, pg. 13.

¹⁵ His script contained a clear and concise lecture on theology as well as knowledge on pedagogy that the seminarians particularly needed. He discussed introductory concepts (pedagogical ideas, sources, types, and the aims of education), general elements of education, and elements of education that are implemented consciously, types of education, a short review of the history of education in schools, education in the east, Greece, Rome, Middle Ages, the Enlightenment, and the 19th and 20th centuries), contemporary trends in education, and the means of (physical, intellectual, and moral) education.

¹⁶ The following studies contain more detailed overviews of Fr. Sopocko's teachings on Christian education: H. Ciereszko, *Działalność naukowa i dydaktyczna Księdza Michała Sopockiego*, "Studia Teologiczne. Białystok – Drohiczyn – Łomża"

liturgical, pastoral, and ascetic aspects. He provided a traditional education that was based on the Holy Bible. He liked the concept of education that Pope Pius XI presented in his encyclical *Divini Illius Magistri*. Fr. Sopocko discussed some issues more precisely and in depth.

As mentioned above, in his postdoctoral thesis, Fr. Sopocko examined the concept of spiritual education as understood by Mikolaj Leczycki (1574-1653), a Polish Jesuit, theologian, and educator. Fr. Sopocko's personal interest in pedagogy as well as his practical need to have in-depth knowledge of pedagogy in his work with priests and educators inclined him to pursue this topic. In addition, he thought that gathering and sharing Leczycki's views and teaching on education would provide new and useful inspiration for contemporary educational activities in general and on the spiritual level in particular.

Fr. Sopocko's academic work on Leczycki's concept of education touched upon theology and pedagogy. Among his works, however, there are those that are strictly pedagogical. For example, Fr. Sopocko wrote an article based on a lecture on education that he had given at the Catholic Studium in Vilnius in 1936. In this article, he specifically discussed Polish and Catholic ideas and education systems.¹⁷ Notably, Fr. Sopocko published another article on pedagogy that was based on a lecture that he had given at the 8th Convention for the Association of Theological Institutes in Czestochowa in 1937. This article discussed the relationship between nature and the supernatural, the will and grace, and natural and supernatural means in the education.¹⁸ Another one of Fr. Sopocko's important pedagogical studies is entitled "Religious Learning and Education in School."¹⁹

Fr. Michael Sopocko believed that scholars and educators had to sufficiently present and explain the concept, purpose, means, and methods of Christian education.²⁰ He thought that this concept depends on one's view of the world and especially on human nature.

26(2008), pgs. 7-56; A. Skreczko, *Wychowanie chrześcijańskie w ujęciu Ks. Michała Sopoćki*, "Rocznik Teologii Katolickiej" 2005, vol. IV, pgs. 59-98.

¹⁷ See M. Sopoćko, *Polskie i katolickie ideały i systemy wychowawcze*, Poznan 1936.

¹⁸ Fr. Sopocko largely refers to the results of M. Leczycki's research on pedagogical ideas and how they relate to contemporary educational issues. Fr. Sopocko pointed out that, if the naturalistic trend in education becomes stronger, then religion will be removed from education in schools and religious practices will be removed from raising children.

¹⁹ Vilnius 1939.

²⁰ See M. Sopoćko, *Miłosierdzie Boga w dziełach Jego*, Paris 1967, Vol. 4, pg. 95.

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The basis of Fr. Sopocko's education system are the truths revealed by God. Needless to say, some of these truths are only loosely or incidentally associated with education. Like Pope Pius XI, Fr. Sopocko based his concept of education on three dogmas: creation, redemption, and sanctification. In addition, Fr. Sopocko further based his concept of Christian education on the dogma of human creation, while the dogma of redemption served as the basis for his reflection on the topic of education, and the truth about sanctification through grace is the basis of his search for the purpose of Christian education.

According to Fr. Sopocko, "among the many issues concerning Christian education, the most pressing is the question of the relationship between nature and the supernatural, the will and grace, as well as natural and supernatural means."²¹ Fr. Sopocko, therefore, rejected all pedagogical trends that do not follow the assumptions of Catholic teaching. According to Fr. Sopocko, these trends depended on how one views human nature, and he narrowed these views to the following three categories: extreme individualism, sociologism, and materialism.²² Among the most extreme pedagogical approaches, the Catholic approach can be found somewhere in the middle. In his reflections, Fr. Sopocko constantly returned to what is important in Christian educational thought—namely, the relationship between man and God, meaning religion.

Fr. Sopocko was perfectly aware of the fact that the foundations of Christian education are permanent, unchanging, and linked to the essence and aim of all of education. Fr. Sopocko thought that the framework of pedagogical science built on this foundation should take into account social and economic changes. The Fathers of the Second Vatican Council were of the same belief, which they expressed in the Declaration on Christian Education: *Gravissimum Educationis* as well as The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World: *Gaudium et Spes*.

Fr. Sopocko believed that the Church's teaching on original sin and its consequences on human nature were very important in both theory and practice. For this reason, when explaining the concept of education, he took into account this view of human nature: "Christian teaching tells us that nature is not evil, as sociologists would have us believe, and that it also is not wholly good, as the proponents of

²¹ M. Sopoćko, *Przyrodzone i nadprzyrodzone czynniki wychowania*, Cracow 1937, pg. 1.

²² M. Sopoćko, *Miłosierdzie Boże...*, pg. 95.

individual naturalism maintain. Rather [nature] is contaminated by original sin.”²³

According to Fr. Sopocko, the main aim of education is the perfection of the human person according to the measure of God himself. Christ himself commanded this: “Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Mt 5:48). Following Pope Pius XI’s concept of education, Fr. Sopocko stated: “The main distant goal [of education] is connected with the goal of life in general, and the main immediate goal [of education] is associated with the purpose of human life.”²⁴ Fr. Sopocko believed that the person who does not have a clear idea of the purpose of human life cannot have a clear understanding of the primary purpose of education.

Fr. Sopocko knew that, in the education process, the educator must first answer the question: “What is man’s purpose?” The purpose of education will spontaneously be made manifest once one has determined the purpose of life, which Catholicism clearly defines. The main distant purpose of education corresponds to the ultimate goal of man, which is eternal happiness that comes through full participation in the life of the Holy Trinity.

The educational process requires constant cooperation on the part of the educator and the one being educated. Fr. Sopocko believed that the educator’s attitude during the education process is both active-passive, while the attitude of the one being educated is passive-active. This results not only from the aim of education, but above all else from self-education. The one being educated should first accept the educator’s (passive party) instructions, and then follow these instructions in his own life through a concrete action (active party).²⁵ Since man is a complex material and spiritual being, and since supernatural life depends on nature, both factors play an equal role in education.

In man’s earthly life, opposing forces constantly clash with each other. Education and, strictly speaking, internal harmony, which is the aim of Christian education, counterbalance these oppositions. Fr. Sopocko accepted these opposites as the foundation of Christian education.

Fr. Sopocko did not precisely specify the attitude of a “true Christian,” but what he understood as this attitude can be deduced based

²³ M. Sopocko, *Pedagogika*, Vilnius 1933, typescript, pg. 5.

²⁴ M. Sopocko, *Miłosierdzie Boże...*, pg. 101. See M. Sopocko, *Cel, podmiot i przedmiot wychowania*, Vilnius 1933, pg. 6.

²⁵ See Ibid, pg. 123.

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on his teachings on Christian education.²⁶ A true Christian who has a supernatural character is not hostile toward social and civic life and is a good citizen.²⁷ This is why Fr. Sopoćko discussed a Christian's duties as a good citizen²⁸ and believed that learning and fulfilling these duties shapes man's character.

According to Fr. Sopoćko, only God is an educator in the strict sense of the word, because only He can form an excellent personality²⁹ and only He calls man into existence. Analogously, parents are the primary educators of their children "because they provide their children with the foundation upon which the creative power of the Most High God [can build]."³⁰ The family, therefore, has the greatest natural right to educate children.

The family, which was called into being by God from nature for its own purpose, meaning to bring forth children and raise them, has the primacy in educating children. "In the hearth of family life—in its unwritten and clear legislation—the developing person is formed socially, individually, and morally."³¹ The Church complements and assists the family in educating individuals on the supernatural level. On the natural and temporal level, the state complements the family in the education process.³²

Education is a well thought-out and organized human activity. Fr. Sopoćko makes a distinction between the subject and the object and demonstrates that both are important elements in education (as in every human activity). Fr. Sopoćko's concept was nothing new; rather, it was a continuation of Mikolaj Leczycki's pedagogical thought on

²⁶ "Christian education focuses on the central idea of an absolute Good of all values and it upholds the Person of the Most Merciful Redeemer as the primary model. Because Christ's life is the most perfect model and idea of virtues and holiness, the more our life resembles His life and the more we imitate Him, then the more [we] will become perfect." M. Sopoćko, *Miłosierdzie Boże...*, pg. 126.

²⁷ Fr. Sopoćko discusses these issues in particular in *Obowiązki względem Ojczyzny*, Warsaw 1922 and *O obowiązkach społecznych*, Vilnius 1931.

²⁸ *O obowiązkach społecznych*, pg. III-IV.

²⁹ Fr. Sopoćko took this thought from St. Thomas Aquinas who claimed that God is the only educator in the strict sense of the word. See St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*. I. q. CXVII, s. 1.; *Quest. disp.* q. XI, a. 1.

³⁰ M. Sopoćko, *Miłosierdzie Boże...*, pg. 109; see Ibid, *Autorytet w rodzinie a wolność dziecka*, "Ku szczytom," Vilnius 1939, pg. 128.

³¹ M. Sopoćko, *Pedagogika...*, pgs. 31-32.

³² "God gives the state the right to educate not based on fatherhood, which is present in a family and the Church, but based on the authority it has to promote the communal temporal good." M. Sopoćko, *Pedagogika...*, pg. 37.

and Pope Pius XI's understanding of education.³³ Fr. Sopocko believed that education should result from the cooperation between the subject and the pedagogical object, such that it should gradually become self-education that lasts a lifetime.³⁴

In his writings, Fr. Sopocko points out that the qualities of a good educator are purely natural. Such qualities as piety and mortification, among others, are, in a sense, the superstructure of the educator's natural qualities. A good educator is above all a good person whose exemplary fulfillment of his professional, social, and religious duties serves as a daily example to youth.

A good educator should have an individual approach to the person he is teaching and adjust his attitude depending on his pupil's age and level of development.³⁵ Education should also involve the whole person.

Fr. Sopocko contrasted his teaching, which emphasizes that rational and free man is the subject of a Christian education and that man is an integral whole made up of body and soul, with erroneous pedagogical directives that belittle or considers the object of education in a manner that is too one-sided.³⁶

Rejecting erroneous pedagogical trends, Fr. Sopocko indicated that the only solution is to situate Christian pedagogy between these extreme trends. According to Fr. Sopocko, the Catholic approach to pedagogy, on the one hand, combines individualist and social naturalism

³³ Mikołaj Leczycki was born in 1574. He was a member of the Society of Jesus. As a Catholic theologian, he followed the general teachings of the Catholic Church and the great theologians, particularly St. Thomas Aquinas, in his views on education. At the same time, however, Leczycki expressed his own rather bold and innovative thoughts on education, of which his superiors did not always approve. Fr. Sopocko drew from many of Leczycki's valuable ideas regarding education. He knew Leczycki's work very well, since he wrote his habilitation dissertation on this topic. See M. Sopocko, *Mikołaj Łeczycki o wychowaniu duchowym*, Vilnius 1935, pg. 1-25.

³⁴ "In Christian education, the educator must gradually help the student to become independent—to instill him the ability to self-educate not only by giving him instructions, but also by preparing in his soul the foundation to independently resist wrong incentive and to follow the ideal." M. Sopocko, *Miłosierdzie Boże...*, pg. 123.

³⁵ Ibid, pg. 113.

³⁶ Fr. Sopocko rejected naturalism as well as pedagogical liberalism, which advocates complete human autonomy as the essence of a natural good that is not subject to any form of restraint. See Sopocko, *Miłosierdzie Boże...*, pg. 95.

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and, on the other hand, falls somewhere in between extreme naturalism and Protestant supernaturalism.³⁷

Like any other human activity, education takes place through the use of the appropriate means that lead to its goal. Based on a particular view of human nature, Christian education's resources are divided into the natural and supernatural.³⁸ Fr. Sopocko ranks the environment in which pupils live first among the many means of education. He included in the environment those people and things that surround and unconsciously and consciously affect the pupil.³⁹ Not only the environments that are strictly and consciously educative (i.e., the pedagogical environment) influence human development, so too do the physical, biological, cultural, and social environments in which one lives. Fr. Sopocko included the family, the Church, and the state among the environments that are strictly pedagogical.

Fr. Sopocko asserted that some supernatural means evoke grace thanks to man's efforts, while other supernatural means cause it directly.⁴⁰ For Sopocko specified that these supernatural means are connected with natural means because they require active human involvement such as prayer, ejaculatory prayers, and retreats.⁴¹ Although the means of education that Fr. Sopocko pointed out have been known for a long time, Fr. Sopocko's insightfully related these means with the immediate and distant goals of Christian education. In addition, he greatly emphasized the personal effort involved in education and cooperation with grace, which is the basis of self-education. While he felt that the natural means of education were very important, he also emphasized that man's education is possible only with the help and influence of grace, which supernatural means participate in and increase.

Fr. Sopocko included the liturgy (as well as the liturgical year), Holy Mass, the sacraments, sacramentals, and other acts of public worship prescribed by the Church as official methods of Christian education.

³⁷ See M. Sopocko, *Przyrodzone i nadprzyrodzone czynniki...*, pg. 4. According to supernaturalists, human nature was essentially contaminated by original sin to such a degree that only a contaminated intellect and perverse will remain. In this way, everything that is in the will is evil, and everything that is in the human intellect is erroneous.

³⁸ Ibid, pg. 6.

³⁹ M. Sopocko, *Miłosierdzie Boże...*, pg. 127.

⁴⁰ Ibid, pg. 138.

⁴¹ Ibid, pgs. 138-139: "Prayer involves and harmonizes all interior human powers and complements all means of education [...] it raises the soul to heaven, unites it with the Creator, and by means of this leads to the main aim of education."

He believed, therefore, that every Christian should respect liturgical prescriptions and consider them one of the most important methods of Christian education.⁴²

Fr. Sopocko's teaching accords with the teaching of the Second Vatican Council with regard to the object of education and its purpose. Fr. Sopocko defined the subject of education very broadly: "All people, regardless of their race, state [in life], and age have dignity and, therefore, have the inviolable right to an education."⁴³ He expanded the subject of education not only to include the whole person, but also all people from every time.

When summarizing everything that has been said about Fr. Michael Sopocko as a pedagogue and his views on education, it is important to note that his teaching is remarkably humanistic. As a worldview, humanism is manifested in pedagogy according to three approaches: sociological, evolutionary, and Christian. The latter preaches the liberation of man from his own passions, meaning man's need to achieve inner harmony. The dogma of redemption is the source of Christian humanism. However, because Fr. Sopocko broadened the object of education to include the whole person, the dogmas of creation and sanctification are also the basis of his considerations. Starting from the premise that human nature was not violated by sin in its very essence, Fr. Sopocko defined Christian education as a way to strive for an interior harmonization of the lower and higher faculties. Fr. Sopocko presents Jesus Christ, the Way, the Truth, and the Life (John 14:6) as the model for all educators and students.

Conclusion

This article briefly presents Fr. Sopocko's pedagogical activity and creativity. Pedagogy was an important field in Fr. Sopocko's life and an area of research for which he had a particular passion that began in his youth and lasted for years. Fr. Sopocko took his first steps as an educator before he entered the seminary when he began teaching at the parish school in Zabrzez. His studies at the Institute of Pedagogy provided him with expert training, which he made use of when teaching in Vilnius and later at the university and in the seminary where

⁴² Ibid, pg. 164: "In addition to official methods, there are also private methods, some of which the Church approves and others of which She tolerates. Official methods arise from private methods."

⁴³ Ibid, pg. 111.

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he taught pedagogy. Fr. Sopocko's work, understanding attitude, and respect for others, made him a good educator.

Fr. Sopocko's work on M. Leczycki's concept of education takes into consideration both theology and pedagogy. Although Fr. Sopocko did not write very much on pedagogy alone, that which remains of his writings on the practical and theological aspects of Christian education distinguish him among well-known Polish pedagogues. In a certain way, his views on pedagogy are a precursor to the thoughts on education expressed in the documents of the Second Vatican Council. While upholding the value of traditional learning, Fr. Sopocko's ideas were innovative and ahead of his time. He realized that the main assumptions of Catholic pedagogical thought are permanent and unchanging, even if it is necessary to take into account the living conditions and spirit of the times when creating an educational system.

BŁOGOSŁAWIONY MICHAŁ SOPOCKO: PEDAGOG I WYCHOWAWCA

Jednym z podstawowych i ważnych wymiarów życia i pracy ks. Michała Sopoćki była jego działalność i twórczość pedagogiczna. Przez większość swego życia prowadził dydaktykę, jako wykładowca w seminarium duchownym i przez szereg lat także na uniwersytecie. Pozostawił bogatą spuściznę naukową w postaci publikacji, a także dorobek pisarski o charakterze popularyzatorskim i publicystycznym. Dotychczas pojawiły się pomniejsze opracowania ukazujące jego dorobek w dziedzinie pedagogicznej. Niniejsze opracowanie przedstawia naukową drogę, pracę dydaktyczną oraz twórczość naukową i piśmienniczą ks. Sopoćki, jako pedagoga i wychowawcy. Jest to zaledwie przyczynek w tym ważnym temacie.

Słowa kluczowe: ks. Michał Sopoćko, wychowanie chrześcijańskie, pedagogika.

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Blessed Michael Sopocko: A Closer Look at the Mystery of Divine Mercy

Divine Mercy is that which ensures human happiness. In the 20th century, Bl. Fr. Michael Sopocko was a special apostle of Divine Mercy who proclaimed its message to the world. This article presents the person and activities of Fr. Michael Sopocko by focusing on: 1) the source and the validity of worshiping Divine Mercy; 2) Fr. Sopocko's biblical and theological explanations of Divine Mercy; and 3) the image of the Merciful Jesus as the "manifestation" of Divine Mercy.

Key words: Divine Mercy, Bl. Michael Sopocko; worship of Divine Mercy; Divine Mercy image; devotions to Divine Mercy.

Aware that he cannot make himself happy, man turns to God and asks for His Divine Mercy, which ensures man's eternal happiness. This is how man honors God and loves himself, since the essence of love is "every kind of seeking after the good and happiness, which is understood as 'eternal possession of the good,' or seeking after immortality."¹ In the 20th century, Fr. Michael Sopocko was a priest and theologian especially involved in substantiating and spreading the cult of Divine Mercy.² His religious involvement and academic research as well as the involvement of many other people in interpreting and substantiating worship of Divine Mercy is an expression of faith in this Truth as well as an expression of the needs of the times—*sensus fidelium*.

¹ W. Stróżewski, *Istnienie i wartość*, Cracow 1981, pg. 163.

² See H. Ciereszko, *Ksiądz Michał Sopocko Apostoł Miłosierdzia Bożego*, Wyd. WAM, Cracow 2004; *Ibid*, *Życie i działalność Księdza Michała Sopocki (1888-1975). Pełna biografia Apostoła Miłosierdzia Bożego*, Wyd. WAM, Cracow 2006.

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These needs made the actual development of Divine Mercy possible by spurring individuals to determine how Divine Mercy is religiously relevant and how it can be applied morally to the lives of the faithful. By drawing on sources such as the publications of Bl. Fr. Michael Sopocko, bibliographic texts, and St. Faustina Kowalska's writings, this article sheds light on the person of Bl. Fr. Michael Sopocko, who played such a key role in the history and development of the cult of Divine Mercy in the 20th century.

The Origin and Timeliness of Divine Mercy

The new impetus to spread devotion to Divine Mercy in the early 20th century is clearly evident in the private revelations of St. (Helena) Maria Faustina Kowalska—a Polish nun from the Congregation of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy to whom Jesus appeared and spoke.³ In St. Faustina's private revelations, Christ commanded her to do three things: 1) have an image of Divine Mercy (the Most Merciful Savior) painted; 2) write down the Divine Mercy prayers that He dictated to her; and 3) establish the Feast of Divine Mercy on the first Sunday after Easter.

Fr. Sopocko was a professor in the Theology Department at the Stefan Batory University as well as the Metropolitan Major Seminary in Vilnius. Later, in 1947, he became a professor at the Archdiocesan Major Seminary in Białystok.⁴ While St. Faustina lived in Vilnius, Bl.

³ Helena Kowalska, otherwise known as Sr. Faustina in religious life, was born on August 25, 1905 in Głogowiec. She died in the opinion of holiness on October 5, 1928 in the convent of St. Joseph in Łagiewniki, near Cracow. From a very early age, Helena was very pious and prudent. When she was 20 years old, she entered the Congregation of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy. On April 30, 1933, Sr. Faustina made her perpetual profession of vows and served in convents in Warsaw, Płock, Walendow, Vilnius, and Łagiewniki. Sr. Faustina was prudent, had good common sense, and was endowed with a mature imagination. She experienced private revelations of Jesus, which she recorded in a diary after she was told to do so by her spiritual director, Fr. Michael Sopocko who resided in Vilnius. This diary was published under the title *The Diary of Sister Faustina Kowalska from the Congregation of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy and published by the Pallottinian Priests*, in Dolina Miłosierdzia Bożego, Ośrodek Naukowo-Badawczy, Częstochowa 1965.

⁴ Michael Sopocko was born on November 1, 1888 on a farmstead in Juszeyszczyna in the district of Oszmiana (now located in Belarus). Initially, he studied at the parish school in Valozhyn and then at the public school in Zabrzez. In 1906, Michael graduated from the Municipal School in Ashmyany. For three years, he worked as a teacher, and then in 1910, he entered the seminary in Vilnius. After he completed his seminary studies, he was ordained on June 15, 1914. As a priest, he was appointed parochial vicar of the parish in Taboryszki,

Fr. Michael Sopocko served as her spiritual director. It was to him that she confided her revelations, Jesus' demands, and everything that she experienced. St. Faustina's revelations spurred Fr. Sopocko to become more deeply interested in devotion to Divine Mercy. Consequently, he sought to justify the existence and theology of the devotion by looking at Scripture, the teachings of the Church Fathers, and the writings of well-known theologians such as St. Thomas Aquinas. Fr. Sopocko found that worship of Divine Mercy was expressed the liturgy of the Church. While conducting his own research, Fr. Michael Sopocko began to spread devotion to Divine Mercy. Thanks to Fr. Sopocko's efforts and to the financial help that he received, the artist Eugeniusz Kazimierowski painted the first image of the Most Merciful Redeemer according to Sr. Faustina's instructions in Vilnius in 1934. Fr. Michael Sopocko also compiled and distributed the prayers to Divine Mercy—the Most Merciful Redeemer⁵—on the First Sunday after Easter.

where he served until the end of the World War I. In November 1918, he enrolled in the Faculty of Theology at the University of Warsaw. However, the university had to close due to the war, and Fr. Sopocko suspended his studies. He was then appointed chaplain in the Polish Army. In this role, he organized field hospitals and ministered pastorally among the soldiers. During this time, he also resumed his studies at the Department of Theology and at the Major State Institute of Pedagogy. At the Bishop of Vilnius' request, Fr. Sopocko was transferred to Vilnius and appointed a garrison parish priest for the Polish Army. Fulfilling this role, Fr. Sopocko also led the Catholic Youth Union. In 1926, Fr. Sopocko obtained his doctorate in moral theology; in 1934, he received his habilitation. During this time, he also served as the spiritual father in the Metropolitan Seminary in Vilnius as well as a professor of pastoral theology in the Department of Theology of Stefan Batory University in Vilnius. In addition to his work in the seminary and at the university, he served as a spiritual director for the Congregation of the Sisters of Our Lady of Divine Mercy. As Sr. Faustina Kowalska's confessor, he was involved in spreading the message of and devotion to Divine Mercy. During World War II, Fr. Sopocko was sought out by the occupying forces and, therefore, had to go into hiding in Rudnik Forest. After the war, Archbishop R. Jalbrzykowski appointed Fr. Sopocko to work in the Seminary in Białystok in 1947. Fr. Sopocko constantly worked to spread devotion to Divine Mercy by studying the theological background and foundations of the devotion. In 1964, he retired due to his health. Nevertheless, he continued his academic and pastoral work and spread devotion to Divine Mercy until the very end of his life. He died in the opinion of holiness on February 15, 1975 in Białystok, where he was buried in the parish cemetery. He was declared Blessed at the Sanctuary of Divine Mercy in Białystok on September 28, 2008. See H. Ciereszko, *Życie i działalność Księdza Michała Sopocki (1888-1975). Pełna biografia Apostoła Miłosierdzia Bożego*, Wyd. WAM, Cracow 2006; Ibid, *Ksiądz Michał Sopocko. Apostoł Miłosierdzia Bożego*, Wyd. WAM, Cracow 2004.

⁵ From the moment that Pope Pius XI's encyclical *Miserentissimus Redemptor* (05.08.1928), Fr. Sopocko identified Divine Mercy with the Person of Jesus

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Since Fr. Sopocko propagated devotion to Divine Mercy in three ways: through the image of the Merciful Jesus, through the Feast of Divine Mercy, and through prayers to Divine Mercy, each of which was in accordance with Sr. Faustina's revelations, the message of Divine Mercy spread very quickly throughout the entire world.⁶

Although devotion to Divine Mercy became more and more popular among the faithful, both theologians and Church authorities were initially opposed to the devotion. Because the devotion arose from Sr. Faustina's private revelations, the Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office prohibited spreading this devotion in the three ways mentioned above in 1958. Fr. Sopocko strove to respond to the difficulties he encountered regarding the Divine Mercy devotion by studying the topic intensely and substantiating the devotion through theological and patristic texts. He continually published new documents on this topic, including articles in theological journals as well as separate dogmatic and liturgical treatises.⁷ Fr. Michael Sopocko was the forerunner and apostle of devotion to Divine Mercy in our times. He also inspired other theologians to reflect on and study this topic. Fr. Sopocko's reflections and opinions in this regard continue to inspire others to become interested in this subject today.

Christ—the Most Merciful Redeemer. It is for this reason that “Divine Mercy” is written using capital letters and the terms are used interchangeably. It was on the basis of Pope Pius XI's encyclical that Fr. Sopocko petitioned to have the Feast of Divine Mercy established.

⁶ The occupation of Poland that occurred during World War II contributed to the popularization of this devotion outside of Poland. Soldiers and refugees of war willingly turned to Divine Mercy and shared with each other the prayers and images of the Merciful Redeemer. Fr. Józef Jarzebowski was a Marian priest who escaped from Vilnius (which the Russian forces occupied) to the United States in 1941, bring with him the Latin treatise *De Misericordia Dei deque Eiusdem festo instituendo* that Fr. Sopocko had written and entrusted to him. In the United States and with the help of the Marians, Fr. J. Jarzebowski printed this treatise and began to spread devotion to Divine Mercy by distributing the Divine Mercy images and prayers. Fr. Jarzebowski's memoirs from his escape from Vilnius through Japan to the United States are published in Fr. J. Chrościechowski's work. See J. Chrościechowski, *Miłosierdzie Boże nadzieją ludzkości* (mimeogram), issue by the Congregation of the Marians, Fawley Court Henley-on-Thames, Oxon 1971, pgs. 81-95; *Historia nabożeństwa do Miłosierdzia Bożego w naszych czasach*, Rome 1973, pgs. 9-28.

⁷ Fr. Michael Sopocko wrote around 50 publications (books, articles, and papers) on Divine Mercy. In 1958, the Holy See decided to compile all of these publications into a 4-volume work entitled *The Mercy of God in His Works*, in which Fr. Sopocko did not refer to Sr. Faustina's visions.

Devotion to Divine Mercy, which began during the first half of the 20th century, has continued to develop and is a more recent form of religious devotion in the Catholic Church today. St. Faustina Kowalska's private revelations confirmed the modern world's need for Divine Mercy, and Bl. Michael Sopocko was the one who presented this devotion to the world. The situation in which modern man finds himself and Sr. Faustina's private revelations reveal that Divine Mercy is the fundamental—and indeed the only—plane on which man encounters God during his earthly pilgrimage. For in eternity, meaning “the eschatological fulfillment[,] mercy will be revealed as love, while in temporality, meaning in human history, which is at the same time the history of sin and death, love must be revealed above all as mercy and must also be actualized as mercy.”⁸ Awareness of the power of Divine Mercy as well as man's absolute dependence on the Merciful Father make it such that “at no time and in no historical period—especially at a moment as critical as our own—can the Church forget the prayer that is a cry for the mercy of God amid the many forms of evil which weigh upon and threaten humanity.”⁹

People are generally aware of the forms that evil has been taking on in the world today. To point out and acknowledge these evils is not, however, an attempt to demonize the reality of the modern world, but rather a careful attempt to look critically and responsibly at reality.

Modern man often anxiously wonders about the solution to the terrible tensions which have built up in the world and which entangle humanity. And if at times he lacks the courage to utter the word ‘mercy,’ or if in his conscience empty of religious content he does not find the equivalent, so much greater is the need for the Church to utter this word, not only in her own name but also in the name of all the men and women of our time.¹⁰

The Church is entrusted with the task to speak of God's mercy especially to those who believe that turning to Divine Mercy is an “insult” to their dignity. For, such individuals have been beguiled by false ideas of “absolute humanism,” which perceives the human person as an absolute and self-sufficient being. According to absolute humanists, God is only an “idea” created by weak people who have given up their ability to think. Humanists assert that “one cannot be a true person

⁸ John Paul II, *Dives in Misericordia*, 8.

⁹ *Ibid*, 15.

¹⁰ *Ibid*.

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if one kneels before any other individual.”¹¹ In reality, the opposite is true, as the Polish poet Cyprian Norwid states in the well-known expression: “Humanity deprived of divinity betrays itself.” Many modern individuals who ignore or disrespect God “betray themselves.” Appealing to Divine Mercy is the Church’s

fundamental [...] right and duty towards God and towards humanity. The more the human conscience succumbs to secularization, loses its sense of the very meaning of the word ‘mercy,’ moves away from God and distances itself from the mystery of mercy, the more the Church has the right and the duty to appeal to the God of mercy ‘with loud cries.’¹²

Fr. Sopocko’s Biblical and Theological Substantiations for Devotion to Divine Mercy

Bl. Michael Sopocko indicated that devotion to Divine Mercy is based on Revelation and has dogmatic foundations:

Devotion to Divine Mercy or the Most Merciful Christ is not at all new because its dogmatic basis essentially points to Revelation, where the Savior says: ‘just as your Father is merciful’ (Lk 6:36); in the expression ‘So let us confidently approach the throne of grace to receive mercy’ (Hebrews 4:16); and also in this often repeated appeal in the Psalms: ‘Give thanks to the Lord, who is good, whose mercy endures forever’ (Ps 105:1, 106: 1; 135, etc).¹³

Devotion to Divine Mercy is rooted in the truths of the faith regarding the Incarnation of the Son of God, Redemption, and the Sanctification of God’s people toward “whom God’s merciful love is the greatest.”¹⁴

According to Bl. Michael Sopocko, the mercies that flow from the Incarnation are judged according to: a) the sublimity of the gift, b) the way in which the gift is given, and c) the effects that flow from it.¹⁵ Following the Church’s teaching, Bl. Michael Sopocko asserted:

¹¹ J. Mirewicz, *Spotkania i dialogi*, London 1980, pg. 21.

¹² John Paul II, *Dives im Misericordia*, 15. See. J. Zabielski, *Miłosierdzie chrześcijańskie współcześnie odczytane*, “Studia Teologiczne,” 9(1991), pgs. 97-119.

¹³ M. Sopocko, *O święto Najmiłosierniejszego Zbawiciela*, Poznan 1947, pgs. 30.

¹⁴ W. Granat, *Podstawy teologiczne kultu Miłosierdzia Bożego*, in “Powołanie człowieka,” vol. 2, Poznan 1972, pgs. 120-129.

¹⁵ See M. Sopocko, *Miłosierdzie Boga w dziełach Jego*, vol. 1, Rome – Paris – London 1962, pg. 37. Abbreviated hereafter as MB 1.

In Christ there are two natures with all of their qualities: the divine nature and the human nature, which come together in the one Divine Person and constitute both God and Man. Everything that belongs to the Divine Son as God also belongs to Him as Man, and that which belongs to him as Man, He imparts to Himself as God.¹⁶

According to Bl. Michael Sopocko, the effects that flow from the Incarnation, “which last and will continue to last forever,” are the special basis for the preferential and the merciful benefits of the Incarnation.¹⁷ In Fr. Sopocko’s opinion, Mary’s close relationship with the Trinity through the Incarnation is the basis for all graces and privileges that she received as well as the power with which she can now assist us. “Mary becomes our mother in a supernatural sense through Jesus because, since she gave birth to Jesus, she also gives birth to us into supernatural life through Him.”¹⁸ According to Bl. Michael Sopocko, after Mary the Mother of Mercy, all people receive the merciful effects of the Incarnation because “the human race is elevated to an inexpressible dignity through the Incarnation.”¹⁹ Fr. Michael extends the merciful effects of the Incarnation not only to the entire human race, but also to all of creation; for, “[the Incarnation] is the completion, fulfillment, and perfection of the entire universe.”²⁰

The effects of Redemption also manifest the fact and source of Divine Mercy. “Christ has reconciled us to God in his blood,” explained Bl. Michael Sopocko, “[...] By this same holy passion and death on the cross, Christ justified us, meaning He obtained for us a share in this infinite treasure through His own suffering.”²¹ Fr. Michael Sopocko explained that Christ as the Redeemer of the human race is the King, High Priest, and Teacher. Since the purpose of Christ’s coming was to establish the Kingdom of God, then the Lord Jesus Christ as King ransomed us,

which had to have been obtained first, since the king of darkness reigned supreme. The Savior struggled with him during His own time in the desert; He conquered him, drove him out of those whom he possessed. [The Lord] fell under the weight of the cross, rose from the dead,

¹⁶ MB 1, pgs. 39-40. Por. M. Sopocko, *De Misericordia Dei, deque Eiusdem festo instituendo*, op. cit., pg. 42.

¹⁷ MB 1, pg. 46.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid, pgs. 48-49.

²⁰ Ibid, pg. 49.

²¹ M. Sopocko, *Miłosierdzie Boga w dziełach Jego*, vol. 2, Rome – Paris – London 1962, pg. 7. Abbreviated hereafter as MB 2. Por. Pius XII, *Haurietis aquas*.

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and sits at the right hand of the Father. The prince of this world was cast out at the moment that Christ was lifted up on the Cross. Jesus' passion, then, is His ascension to the throne.²²

Mary participated in the work of Redemption, and this participation is expressed in Her twofold motherhood as the Mother of Christ and our Mother. For these two reasons, Mary deserves to be called Mother of Mercy.²³ Christ's testament from the cross, through which God's particular mercy is shown, arises from the mutual love that existed between Mother and Son as well as the love that Christ has for all people:

Every Christian who looks upon the cross hears the words of Jesus crucified, 'Behold your Mother,' and knows that Mary really treats him as her son; She watches over her children and drives away the temptations of Satan, who 'is prowling around like a roaring lion looking for [someone] to devour' (1 Peter 5:8).²⁴

Evidence for Divine Mercy in the salvific works of the Incarnation and Redemption has not been exhausted. For, God continues to show His mercy in the Church. In this regard, "All of the graces of the holy sacraments and sacramentals, indulgences and charisms, and the gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit are unceasing streams of Mercy that flow out in the Church onto the faithful."²⁵ Since "Christ came to earth for all people throughout the ages, Christ founded the Church out of his Mercy [...] The Church is the mystical Christ. Because of this, no one approaches the Father except through Christ, and no one comes to Christ except through the Church."²⁶ Bl. Michael Sopoćko asserted that the Church participates in two different kinds of merciful activity: the sacramental-mystical and the ethical-ascetical. He explained this assertion in the following way: "In the Church, it is impossible to be holy without the sacraments, and one cannot approach the sacraments without striving for perfection."²⁷ The Christian remains a sinner. In His mercy, God reaches out to sinners by establishing the sacrament

²² MB 1, pgs. 220-221.

²³ See M. Sopoćko, *Matka Miłosierdzia*, "Homo Dei," 25(1957), pgs. 900-901. Por. A. L. Krupa, *Rola Maryi jako Matki Miłosierdzia w planach Miłosierdzia Bożego*, in "Powołanie człowieka," vol. 2, Poznań 1972, pgs. 217-237.

²⁴ MB 2, pg. 171. Por. M. Sopoćko, *Matka Miłosierdzia*, art. cit., pg. 901.

²⁵ M. Sopoćko, *Miłosierdzie Boga w dziełach Jego*, vol 3, Rome – Paris – London 1962, pg. 5. Hereafter abbreviated as MB 3.

²⁶ MB 3, pg. 213.

²⁷ Ibid, pg. 215.

of Penance, which Fr. Sopocko calls “The Sacrament of Divine Mercy,” or “toilsome baptism.”²⁸ “In addition to the sacrament of Baptism, the sacrament of Penance reveals God’s infinite mercy that lasts for all ages until the end of time.”²⁹

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Man, whose sins are forgiven, is gifted still more with God’s Mercy in the Eucharist—the Sacrament of the Altar. “If all of the holy sacraments are the actualization of Divine mercy, then the Most Holy Sacrament is the highest expression [of mercy]. In the Eucharist the Redeemer imparts not only His grace, but also gives His very self.”³⁰ The Sacrament of the Eucharist

is closely connected with the sacrament of the Priesthood, which was instituted at the same time as the Holy Eucharist on Holy Thursday. Infinite Divine Mercy is revealed in the sacrament of the Priesthood, too, to all people and primarily to all priests who [Christ] has chosen not because of their merits, but only because of His mercy.”

Three priestly functions—sacrifice, prayer, and conferring the sacraments and teaching—are the sources “from which Divine Mercy flows out onto all people.”³¹

In the Sacrament of Marriage, God’s merciful love flows out onto both of the spouses and the entire human community. Sacramental marriage is also a manifestation of God’s mercy on society, the state, and all mankind because the entire human community is based on the family.³² The sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick, the effects of which often determine the salvation or condemnation of man, is the final sacramental source of Divine Mercy. In this regard, Fr. Sopocko wrote: “The moment of death is the most important to me. For this reason, to me the sacrament of the Last Rites is one of the greatest works of Divine Mercy.”³³

²⁸ See Ibid, pg. 221. Por. M. Sopocko, *Miłosierdzie Boże*, Vilnius 1936, pgs. 14-15.

²⁹ MB 3, pg. 223.

³⁰ Ibid, pg. 229. The Second Vatican Council also defined the Eucharist as the “sacrament of mercy.” See The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy: *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 47.

³¹ Ibid.

³² See MB 3, pgs. 239-240.

³³ Ibid, pg. 244. Por. J. Zabielski, *Miłosierdzie – „wielkie wołanie” człowieka i świata*, “Czas Miłosierdzia,” 8(2001), no. 1(129), pg. 15.

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The Image of the Most Merciful Savior as a “Manifestation” of Divine Mercy

The Church’s external religious devotion takes on different forms through which the faithful worship God.³⁴ Bl. Michael Sopocko set forth three forms of Divine Mercy devotion: the image of the Most Merciful Redeemer (Divine Mercy), a separate Feast of Divine Mercy, and prayers to Divine Mercy. These three forms of devotion can be found in the revelations of St. Faustina Kowalska who “the Lord chose to be His apostle of Mercy and to whom He gave two concrete tasks: to have an image of the Most Merciful Redeemer painted and to establish the Feast of Divine Mercy on the first Sunday after Easter.”³⁵ Jesus also bid her to write down the prayers to Divine Mercy, which the He Himself dictated to her.³⁶

As Divine Mercy devotion evolved, devotion to the image of the Most Merciful Redeemer (commonly called the image of Divine Mercy) assumed a central place. This image played a decisive role in shaping and developing devotion to Divine Mercy. The origin of the image of the Most Merciful Savior can be found in Sr. Faustina’s revelations concerning Divine Mercy.³⁷ Sr. Faustina received the first revelation concerning the image on February 22, 1931 while she was staying in a convent in Plock. During this revelation, Jesus ordered that an image of Him as the Most Merciful Redeemer be painted:

In the evening, when I was in my cell, I saw the Lord Jesus clothed in a white garment. One hand [was] raised in the gesture of blessing, the other was touching the garment at the breast. From beneath the garment, slightly drawn aside at the breast, there were emanating two large rays, one red, the other pale. In silence I kept my gaze fixed on the Lord; my soul was struck with awe, but also with great joy. After a while, Jesus said to me, **Paint an image according to the pattern you see, with the signature: Jesus, I trust in You. I desire that this image be venerated, first in your chapel, and [then] throughout the world. I promise that the soul that will venerate this image will not perish. I also promise victory over [its] enemies already here on**

³⁴ See Pius XII, *Mediator Dei*.

³⁵ M. Sopocko, *Miłosierdzie Boże nadzieją ludzkości*, Wrocław 1948, pg. 19.

³⁶ Sr. Faustina’s revelations inspired Bl. Fr. Michael Sopocko to spend much time reflecting on and studying Divine Mercy, the fruits of which were his numerous works and activities dedicated to spreading devotion to Divine Mercy. See the Archdiocese of Białystok’s Archives, S-4, -34. Hereafter abbreviated as AAB.

³⁷ See M. Sopocko, *Miłosierdzie Boże nadzieją ludzkości*, op. cit., pg. 19-21; AAB, S-34.

earth, especially at the hour of death. I Myself will defend it as My own glory [...] I desire that priests proclaim this great mercy of Mine towards souls of sinners.³⁸

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These apparitions occurred several times both at the convent in Plock, later in Warsaw, and then in Vilnius on October 26, 1934. Sr. Faustina took Jesus' order literally and tried to paint the image herself. Her attempts, however, were futile. When she returned to Vilnius in 1933, Sr. Faustina confided this to her confessor, Fr. Sopoćko, who

after investigating her condition and psychological health, and with the permission and advice of her superiors, asked the artist and painter E. Kazimierowski to paint the image according to Sr. Faustina's indications. He was more curious about what the image would look like than filled with faith in the truth of the apparitions.³⁹

At Fr. Sopoćko's request, the artist Eugeniusz Kazimierowski began painting the image of Divine Mercy. Sr. Faustina personally instructed him regarding what the image should look like. After working on the image for six months, Eugeniusz Kazimierowski finished the painting in July 1934. However, when Sr. Faustina complained that the image of Christ was not as beautiful as what she had seen in her vision, Jesus responded to her, saying that

'Not in the beauty of the color, nor of the brush lies the greatness of this image, but in My grace.'⁴⁰ He also said: **"My gaze from this image is like My gaze from the cross"**⁴¹ and that **"I am offering people a vessel with which they are to keep coming for graces to the fountain of mercy. That vessel is the image with the signature: 'Jesus, I trust in You.'**^{42,43}

The image that E. Kazimierowski painted according to Sr. Faustina's indications

presents Christ coming forward against a dark background and wearing a white robe and girded with a belt. His right hand is raised in a gesture of blessing, while his left hand is opening his robe near his Heart (which

³⁸ Quoted in: M. Sopoćko, *Miłosierdzie Boże nadzieją ludzkości*, op. cit., pgs. 19-20. S. M. Faustina Kowalska, *Diary: Divine Mercy in My Soul*, 47-50.

³⁹ M. Sopoćko, *Miłosierdzie Boże nadzieją ludzkości*, op. cit., pg. 21. See AAB-S-6, -34.

⁴⁰ Diary, 313.

⁴¹ Diary, 326.

⁴² M. Sopoćko, *Miłosierdzie Boże nadzieją ludzkości*, op. cit., pg. 21.

⁴³ Diary, 327.

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is not shown), from which two rays of light emanate (the one on the right is white, and the one on the left is red) in opposite directions.⁴⁴

For a long time, the image painted by E. Kazimierowski remained unknown to many people. Without revealing the origin of the image, Fr. Sopocko placed it in the corridor of convent of the Bernardine Sisters located next to St. Michael's church in Vilnius where Fr. Sopocko was the rector. After some time, Sr. Faustina began to insist that the image be placed in a public location because Jesus Himself was demanding that of her. In April 1935, at Sr. Faustina's request and with the permission of the pastor of the Parish of Ostra Brama [the Bright Gate] in Vilnius, Fr. Sopocko placed the painting in the window of Ostra Brama as a decoration for the Easter Triduum, which was to take place in that location on the occasion of the end of the Jubilee Year of the Redemption.⁴⁵ It was not until March 1937 that Fr. Sopocko decided to ask the Archbishop of Vilnius, Romuald Jalbrzykowski, to evaluate the image and give his permission to have the image hung in St. Michael's church. The Archdiocesan Commission approved the image and the first Sunday after Easter—April 4, 1937—was proposed as the day on which the Feast of Divine Mercy was to be celebrated. With the Archbishop's blessing, Fr. Michael Sopocko hung the image in St. Michael's church next to the main altar, but he never told anyone from where it came. From the very beginning, the image was very popular among the faithful: "When the lighting was good, the image had an influence on those who prayed before it; they requested several times that it be placed in the altar for the Corpus Christi procession."⁴⁶

During the occupation, devotion to Divine Mercy spread considerably. The occupiers were hostile to this devotion, and when they found out who was spreading it, they wanted to arrest Fr. Sopocko. He, however, hid, first from the Soviet Army in Lithuania, and then from the Germans in the forest near Jaszun where he stayed from March 2, 1942 until July 15, 1944 with the help of the Grey Ursuline Sisters. At that time, devotion to Divine Mercy became even more intense, even though the devotion had become distorted in some places where the

⁴⁴ M. Sopoćko, *Sprawa poprawności obrazu Miłosierdzia Bożego*, (typescript), AAB-S-34.

⁴⁵ The image hung there for three days, from April 26-28, 1935 (Friday, Saturday, and the First Sunday after Easter, which was designated as the day on which the Feast of Divine Mercy should be celebrated). The image was then transferred to its former place in the convent of Bernardine nuns. See AAB-S-4.

⁴⁶ AAB-S-4. On April 15, 1938, Fr. Sopocko presented a copy of this painting to Archbishop R. Jalbrzykowski, who was leaving for Rome, with the request that help in the matter of establishing the Feast of Divine Mercy. AAB-S-6.

image was treated as a kind of fetish.⁴⁷ In 1941, a special appointed commission of art historians assessed the painting. After carefully inspecting it, the commission ruled: “The image is artistically rendered and is a valuable achievement in contemporary religious art.”⁴⁸

After World War II, Poland’s borders had changed. As a result, the Seminary and the Archdiocesan Curia were transferred from Vilnius to Bialystok. In addition, Archbishop Jalbrzykowski summoned Fr. Sopocko to Bialystok to be a lecturer at the Seminary in 1947. He wrote: “I did not take the image with me and, after some time, it was found in a church in Nowa Ruda near Grodno.”⁴⁹ This is where the history of the image of the Most Merciful Savior painted by E. Kazimierowski according to Sr. Faustina’s indications is interrupted.

After Sr. Faustina’s death on October 5, 1938, and particularly after the war, devotion to Divine Mercy began to spread. Because E. Kazimierowski’s painting was unavailable, a new image was painted. The order to which Sr. Faustina belonged, the Congregation of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy, and especially those sisters who lived in Lagiewniki where Sr. Faustina was buried, became particularly interested in the devotion. These sisters and Fr. Andrasz instructed Mr. Hyla to paint the image of the Most Merciful Savior using, as Fr. Sopocko writes,

a very poor reproduction of the image painted by Lucja Balzukiewiczówna for a brochure with prayers [...]. Desiring to fix the poor and incorrect reproduction, those who requested the image gave the artist indications, but not knowing the details of this image, they themselves were unable to provide Mr. Hyla with the correct indications. [As a result, Hyla] painted Christ against a background of flowers with his right hand raised high above him in an arch as he looked wistfully (or rather piercingly) at the viewer.⁵⁰

According to Fr. Michael Sopocko, the image of the Most Merciful Redeemer fits precisely into the liturgy of the entire liturgical year. However, it corresponds most fittingly to the liturgy that falls on the Second Sunday of Easter, which Jesus designated as the Feast of Divine Mercy. A characteristic feature of this image is its inscription: “Jesus, I trust in You.” Fr. Sopocko saw that trust should be our response to Christ’s call: “[Take] courage, I have conquered the world”

⁴⁷ See Ibid.

⁴⁸ AAB-S-4.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ AAB-S-34.

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(John 16:33).⁵¹ The image of the Most Merciful Redeemer follows the norms prescribed by the Church. The Main Commission of the Conference of Polish Bishops approved the image for public veneration. In his efforts to share devotion to Divine Mercy, Fr. Michael Sopoćko believed that the painting was very important and considered it one of the primary forms of devotion. For this reason, he provided deep theological substantiations for the existence of the image, and he demonstrated both the need for and the effectiveness of devotion to it.⁵² Religious devotion to the image of the Most Merciful Savior has continued to spread throughout the world not due to special propaganda, but rather because of modern man's spiritual needs. Needless to say, the image has had an extraordinary effect on many people, including the conversion of sinners and the granting of many other graces. This image can be found in many churches where the faithful pray before it and light votive candles, entrusting to Christ the Most Merciful Savior all of their concerns and needs.

BŁOGOSŁAWIONY MICHAŁ SOPOĆKO : PRZYBLIŻAJĄCY TAJEMNICĘ BOŻEGO MIŁOSIERDZIA

Gwarantem ludzkiej szczęśliwości jest Boże Miłosierdzie. W ostatnim stuleciu szczególnym Apostołem Bożego Miłosierdzia i osobą zaangażowaną w Jego przybliżenie światu był bł. ks. Michał Sopoćko. Ukazując jego postać i aktywność w tym względzie w niniejszych analizach skupiono się na następujących zagadnieniach: 1. Geneza i aktualność kultu Bożego Miłosierdzia; 2. Biblijno-teologiczne uzasadnienie kultu Bożego Miłosierdzia w ujęciu ks. Michała Sopoćki; 3. Obraz Najmiłosierniejszego Zbawiciela jako „objawienie” Bożego Miłosierdzia.

Słowa kluczowe: Boże Miłosierdzie, bł. ks. Michał Sopoćko, kult Bożego Miłosierdzia, obraz Najmiłosierniejszego Zbawiciela, formy kultu Bożego Miłosierdzia.

⁵¹ See M. Sopoćko, J. Chróściechowski, *Domine miserere nobis*, op. cit., pg. 45.

⁵² According to St. Faustina's revelations, Jesus made two promises regarding this image: **“I promise that the soul that will venerate this image will not perish. I also promise victory over its enemies already here on earth, especially at the hour of death. I myself will defend it as My own glory [...] I desire that priests proclaim this great mercy of Mine toward the souls of sinners. Let no sinner be afraid to approach Me”** (*Diary* 48, 50). M. Sopoćko, *Miłosierdzie Boże nadzieję ludzkości*, Wrocław 1948, pg. 20.

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Numbers 748 and 749 of The French and Polish Version of *Catechism of the Catholic Church* from the Translational Perspective; an Example of the Theological Effects of Translation

This article considers the art of translation through a comparative analysis of the translations of two selected theological texts taken from the French and Polish version of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC). Specifically, this study examines the Polish and French versions of CCC 748, which speaks about the relationship between the Church and Christ. As CCC 749 reveals, this relationship, pertains not only to the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, but also to the Third Person, meaning the Holy Spirit. Like the number that precedes it, CCC 749 is translated differently in both the Polish and French versions. Essentially, this article highlights the difficulty of translating and demonstrates how difficult it is to translate and how responsible the translator is for his translations of theological texts that pertain to faith.

Key words: Christ, Holy Spirit, Catholic Church, ecclesiology, translation, Catechism of the Catholic Church, theological language, art of translation.

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC),¹ which John Paul II promulgated to the entire Church in 1992, is the fruit of the work of

¹ This article refers to the following editions of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*: *Catéchisme de l'Eglise Catholique*, Mame Librairie Editrice Vaticane, Paris 1992 (hereafter abbreviated as CCCF); *Katechizm Kościoła Katolickiego*, Poznań 1994 (hereafter abbreviated as CCCP); *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, London 1994 (hereafter abbreviated as CCCE); *Catechismo Della Chiesa Cattolica*,

many people who spent several years working together to systematically present the Catholic Church's teachings on faith and morals. The CCC is a compendium that was compiled and adapted based on the needs and mentality of modern man. This systematic exposition of the faith, which was published more than 25 years ago, could not omit teachings on the Church. The ecclesiology presented in the CCC provides modern man with a true image of the Church, which is organically connected with the Holy Spirit. The CCC may be particularly useful for those who understand the Church only in an external way as a sacred building, a hierarchical institution, or a social and financial institution that is linked to politics. Those who ascribe to such a view of the Church often begin to feel dislike, disgust, hostility, and even rebelliousness against what they perceive to be the Church's conservatism and "flaws," which leads them to pit the Church against Christ by saying: "Christ—yes, the Church—no."² Such "contraposition arises in some way due to the complexity of our act of faith, which bids us to say 'Credo [...] Ecclesiam.'³ It is for this particular reason, therefore, that the CCC also includes a reflection on ecclesiology under this same title.

Before providing a basic lesson on the Church in CCC 748, 749, and 750 and as part of their introduction to ecclesiology, however, the authors of the CCC attempt to explain to the reader the basic truths contained in the article of faith on the Church, and how this article depends on the articles of faith concerning the Son and the Holy Spirit. The analysis of the aforementioned passages from the CCC that follows will demonstrate that the explanations in the French version of the text differ from the explanations provided in the Polish version. The analytical and comparative reflections of these passages in the Polish and French versions, which will also refer to the Latin topical edition as well as the English, Italian, and Russian editions of the CCC, will demonstrate that "in order to translate well and correctly, every translator must meet certain conditions—namely, sufficient knowledge of the original language, thorough knowledge of the language into which a work is to be translated, and knowledge of the subject matter. These conditions also apply to those who translate doctrinal texts. The correctness of the translation does not depend solely on the

Roma 1993 (hereafter abbreviated as CCCI); *Катехизис Католической Церкви*, Moskwa 1996 (hereafter abbreviated as CCCR); and *Catechismus Catholicae Ecclesiae*, Roma 1997 (hereafter abbreviated as CCCL).

² C. M. Martini, *Kościół – jak lepiej go rozumieć*, Warsaw 1997, pg. 12.

³ John Paul II, *Wierzę w Kościół jeden, święty, powszechny i apostołski*, Vatican City 1996, pg. 22.

translator, however. Rather, the secret of a good translation, meaning the translated text's compatibility with the original, also lies in the languages themselves."⁴

The context of CCC 748 and 749, which provide a somewhat general introduction to ecclesiology, serve as a source of reflection on the art of translation of doctrinal texts and not as an attempt to systematically discuss the Church's teaching on the Church itself, since the Catechism already does this. This article is divided into two parts, which discuss the relationship between Christ and the Church as well as the Holy Spirit and the Church, respectively. Although points 748, 749, and 750 serve as a kind of introduction to the section of the CCC dedicated to the topic of ecclesiology and should be analyzed together, this analysis will not consider CCC 750 because its content is very rich and the translation issues pertaining to what is meant by the Latin expression "*Credo... Ecclesiam*" presented in the passage are complex and deserve to be examined in a separate study.

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Christ and the Church

In CCC 748, where the authors speak about the doctrine on the Church, they point out to the reader the interdependence that exists between the article of faith on the Church and the articles that pertain directly to Jesus Christ.⁵ In the very first sentence of CCC 748, however, which states, "Chrystus jest światłem narodów; obecny Święty Sobór, zgromadzony w Duchu Świętym, gorąco pragnie oświecić wszystkich ludzi Jego jasnością promieniającą na obliczu Kościoła, głosząc Ewangelię wszelkiemu stworzeniu," ["Christ is the light of humanity; and it is, accordingly, the heart-felt desire of this sacred Council, being gathered together in the Holy Spirit, that, by proclaiming his

⁴ L. M. Jakoniuk, *The French and Polish Versions of the Catechism of the Catholic Church: An Examination of Certain Passages of the Catechism's teaching on the "Mysterium Ecclesiae" from a Philological and Translational Perspective*, RTK XVI/3 (2017), pg. 320.

⁵ "Christ is the light of humanity; and it is, accordingly, the heart-felt desire of this sacred Council, being gathered together in the Holy Spirit, that, by proclaiming his Gospel to every creature, it may bring to all men that light of Christ which shines out visibly from the Church.' These words open the Second Vatican Council's *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church in the Modern World: Lumen Gentium*. By choosing this starting point, the Council demonstrates that the article of faith about the Church depends entirely on the articles concerning Christ Jesus. The Church has no other light than Christ's; according to a favorite image of the Church Fathers, the Church is like the moon, all its light is reflected from the sun" (CCCE 748).

Gospel to every creature, it may bring to all men that light of Christ which shines out visibly from the Church”],⁶ there is a certain methodological inconsistency. Although the editors of the CCC enclosed the words taken from the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church in quotation marks, which would suggest that they are quoting directly (*ad litteram*) from what is contained in the *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church in the Modern World: Lumen Gentium*,⁷ they do not provide any references in the text itself or in the footnotes, which they do include in both versions of the text (Polish and French) in other points of this section.⁸ Moreover, even if this was not a direct quotation, but rather a paraphrase of what is contained in the *Lumen Gentium*, the authors of the CCC should have pointed this out in a footnote just as they did with other paraphrased biblical texts, citing from where the given thought comes.⁹ Not only the Polish and French versions of the CCC, but also the Russian and Italian versions do not directly reference the conciliar documents in CCC 748.¹⁰ The English and Latin versions of

⁶ “Le Christ est la lumière des peuples: réuni dans l’Esprit Saint, le saint Concile souhaite donc ardemment, en annonçant à toutes créatures la bonne nouvelle de l’Evangile, répandre sur tous les hommes la clarté du Christ qui resplendit sur le visage de l’Eglise” (CCCF 748); “Lumen gentium cum sit Christus, haec sacrosancta Synodus, in Spiritu Sancto congregata, omnes homines claritate Eius, super faciem Ecclesiae resplendente, illuminare vehementer exoptat, omni creaturae Evangelium annuntiando” (CCCL 748).

⁷ The Polish, French, and Latin versions of the CCC quote the text word for word: “[...] Tymi słowami rozpoczyna się Konstytucja Dogmatyczna o Kościele Soboru Watykańskiego II” (CCCP 748); “[...] C’est sur ces paroles que s’ouvre la «constitution dogmatique sur l’Eglise» du deuxième Concile du Vatican [...]” (CCCF 748); “[...] His verbis aperitur «Constitutio dogmatica de Ecclesia» Concilii Vaticani II [...]” (CCCL 748).

⁸ See, for example: CCCP 894; CCCP 947; and CCCP 949, as well as CCCF 773; CCCF 871; and CCCF 884.

⁹ In point 19 of the prologue of the CCC, the authors state that the texts of the Sacred Scripture are not quoted word for word and are merely indicated in the footnotes. Because of this, the reader can always refer back to the biblical texts, which will help him or her to understand a given passage better. In addition, in this same point, the authors remark that “Such biblical references are a valuable working-tool in catechesis.” Por. CCCP 19; see, for example, the footnotes for CCCP 139-147, pg. 191.

¹⁰ The absence of a reference in these translations could indicate that the authors of the aforementioned versions followed the French translation of the CCC too closely and reproduced the same error. See CCCR 748 and CCCI 748.

the CCC are more methodologically precise, however, and do include references to the Council document in point 748.¹¹

Moreover, the Polish version of the conciliar document, which is quoted here in the CCC is of interest because there are doubts regarding its source. The passage from *Lumen Gentium* contained in CCC 748 of the Polish version is not an exact quotation from the version of conciliar documents published in Polish,¹² to which the authors of the CCC refer in the first few pages of the Catechism.¹³ In addition, the translation of the passage from the *Lumen Gentium* contained in CCC 748 is also an inaccurate translation of the French version of the same passage. Both instances primarily point out the apparent differences between the Polish passage of this conciliar document and how it is presented in the Polish version of the CCC,¹⁴ as well as some of the differences between the Polish and the French versions of this

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¹¹ Here, the CCCE went further than the CCCL by providing additional information—namely, the translators of the CCCE included the citation from the Holy Bible (i.e., Mk 16:15), which points out to the reader of the CCCE the specific sources of the ideas and thoughts contained in these sentences. Thus, when compared to other translations of the CCC, the CCCE translates number 748 better than the other translations by providing additional information. See footnote 120 in CCCL (p. 209) and footnote 135 in CCCE (p. 172).

¹² This also is not a quotation taken directly from the Latin-Polish text of the Council documents, which were published in Paris in 1967. See: Second Vatican Council: *Dokumenty, Dekrety, Deklaracje*. Tekst łacińsko-polski., Paris 1967, pgs. 78-79.

¹³ “Cytaty z dokumentów soborowych wzięto z: Sobór Watykański II: *Konstytucje, Dekrety, Deklaracje*, Pallottinum 1968, wydanie I” CCCP, pg. 4. Quotations from conciliar documents appear not only in this point of the CCC, but also in other places of this same part of the CCC, which does not indicate that the authors of the Polish version of the CCC quoted these passages directly from their sources (see, for example, the citations contained in: CCCP 757 and the *Lumen Gentium* 6; CCCP 759 and *Lumen Gentium* 2; CCCP 764 and *Lumen Gentium* 5). This does not mean, however, that quotations in this entire section of the CCC come from the published Polish translations of the conciliar documents. Apart from the examples quoted above, there are points in the CCC’s section on ecclesiology that contain quotations that differ in no way and are reproduced exactly from the official Polish translations of the conciliar texts published in 1968 (see, for example: CCCP 918 and *Perfectae Caritatis* 1; CCCP 937 and *Christus Dominus* 2; CCCP 873 and *Apostolicam Actuositatem* 2).

¹⁴ When the passage of interest from *Lumen Gentium* is quoted in the CCC, several versions shift the word order in different expressions. For example, “Sobór Święty” is changed to “Święty Sobór;” “w Duchu Świętym zgromadzony” is changed to “zgromadzony w Duchu Świętym;” “pragnie gorąco” is reversed as “gorąco pragnie.” Moreover, in the cited text the translators left the conjunction “ponieważ,” and they replaced the noun “blask” with “jasność” as well as the adjective “jaśniejący” with the feminine adjective “promieniająca.” These

text.¹⁵ Based on the Polish version of the *Lumen Gentium* and what is contained in the original French version, the quotation contained in CCC 748 of the Polish version appears to be comprised of a compilation of both sources. During the translation process, the Polish translators probably benefited from the French translation to a greater or lesser degree, which undoubtedly aided them in the translation of this particular excerpt.¹⁶

Although the text from the *Lumen Gentium* was not cited in the Polish and French versions of the CCC, and although the Polish version of the quote is not a direct quotation from the Polish edition of the conciliar documents, it does contain one verbal difference—namely, the fact that the French word “*resplendir*”¹⁷ is translated into Polish using the adjectival form of the Polish verb “*promieniować*” (to radiate). There is a difference between these two words that becomes clearer when one considers how Christ is compared to the sun and the Church is compared to the moon in this passage of the CCC. The French verb “*resplendir*” works very well in this analogy. It indicates that the Church (moon) is unable to emit its own light; instead, its splendor is due to Christ (sun), who light is reflected in the “face” of

changes reveal how the French version of the CCC influenced the Polish translation. See *Lumen Gentium* 1; CCCP 748.

¹⁵ Unlike the Polish version, the French version lacks the adjective “present,” which, in the Polish text, was used in relation to the Council. In addition, the French expression “la bonne nouvelle de l’Evangile” was translated into Polish using the noun “Ewangelia [Gospel],” which is a shorter expression. These differences suggest that, in this instance, the translators could have based the Polish text on the Council documents. See CCCF 748; CCCP 748; *Lumen Gentium* 1.

¹⁶ Unlike the Polish edition of the CCC, the typical edition faithfully quoted the original text, which was edited by the conciliar fathers, in point 748. See CCCL 748, *Sobór Watykański II: Dokumenty, Dekrety, Deklaracje. Tekst łacińsko-polski*, Paris 1967, pg. 78.

¹⁷ As the dictionaries state, this verb appears in the sense “briller avec un grand éclat.” In Polish, the verbs “błyszczeć, lśnić, odbijać blask” can be used. In Latin, the French equivalent of this word is the verb “resplendere” (to reflect, to shine), which was also used in the Latin passage from *Lumen Gentium* included in point 748 of the typical edition of the CCC (“super faciem Ecclesiae resplendente”). Por. CCCL 748; *Dictionnaire des noms communs, des noms propres, précis de grammaire*, Paris Larousse 1993, “resplendir,” pg. 575; *Dictionnaire du français*, Hachette 1987, “resplendir,” pg. 1374; *Dictionnaire du poche français-polonais et polonais-français*, ed. B. Hamel, Warsaw n.d., “resplendir,” pg. 154; *Podręczny słownik francusko-polski*, ed. K. Kupisz and B. Kielski, Warsaw 1993⁹, “resplendir,” pg. 750; *Słownik łacińsko-polski*, ed. M. Plezia, vol. 4, Warsaw, PWN, 1974, “resplendere,” pg. 538.

the Church (moon).¹⁸ In this context, the literal meaning of the Polish verb “promieniować” [radiate]¹⁹ does not really correspond with the comparison made in CCC 748,²⁰ since it is usually used in Polish in a different way.²¹ Therefore, when a Polish reader sees the verb “promieniować,” he may not have a clear understanding of the metaphor relating Christ and the Church as a French reader who sees the verb “resplendir.” In this instance, the Latin, Russian, English, and Italian versions²² of the CCC used verbs that are closer in meaning

¹⁸ As S. Gądecki states “The metaphor of light [...] may have appeared because of the observation of the simple succession from day to night.” The theme of light appears rather often in the Holy Scriptures. Among its many meanings (truth, life), it serves primarily as a symbol for God’s presence. Light serves as His “robe” when He appears to people (Exod 24:17; Ps 97:3n; Ps 104:2; Ez 43:2; Mt 17:2; Acts 9:3). Luke 2:32 uses the phrase from Isaiah “a light to the nations” (49:6) to refer directly to Christ, and John 8:12 states the following about Christ Himself: “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows Me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.” See K. H. Schelkle, *Teologia Nowego Testamentu. Bóg był w Chrystusie*, vol. 2, Cracow 1984, pgs. 298-303; S. Gądecki, *Wstęp do Pism Janowych*, Gniezno 1996², pg. 52.

¹⁹ Strictly speaking, the Polish verb “promieniować” means the phenomenon of emittance of radiant, thermal, light, or electromagnetic energy, which in French is conveyed using verbs other than “resplendir” (e.g., rayonner, irradier), depending on the meaning. *Słownik języka polskiego*, ed. M. Szymczak, vol. 2, Warsaw 1992⁷, “promieniować,” pg. 936; *Słownik poprawnej polszczyzny*, ed. W. Doroszewski, Warsaw 1980, “promieniować,” pg. 572; *Podręczny słownik polsko-francuski*, K. Kupisz, B. Kielski, Warsaw 1993⁹, “promieniować,” pg. 561.

²⁰ As C. Bartnik states, as early as the beginning of the 3rd century, ideas in the Church such as “a holy gathering” or “convention” changed to images taken from daily life. These new images included likening the Church to a Woman, a Mother-Virgin who gives new life; nourishes the faithful through the revealed word, faith, and the sacraments; and protects and prepares the faithful for eternity (Hermas, St. Cyprian, St Irenaeus). According to Origen, the Church is like the moon (mysterium lunae), and Christ is like the sun. Por. C. S. Bartnik, *Kościół Jezusa Chrystusa*, Wrocław 1982, pg. 31.

²¹ The French verb “resplendir” literally means the action of reflecting light, while the Polish word “promieniować” basically means the phenomenon of secreting (emitting) energy from oneself through some kind of object. The authors of the *Słownika poprawnej polszczyzny* [Dictionary of Proper Polish] listed some instances in which it is possible to use this word: for example, “rad promieniuje [radium emits],” “piec promieniował ciepłem [the stove radiated heat].” *Słownik poprawnej polszczyzny*, ed. W. Doroszewski, Warsaw 1980, “promieniować,” pg. 572.

²² In the Russian text, this verb is translated using the adjective “сияющий,” which in Polish is translated as “błyszczący, lśniący” (сияние - blask, połysk, jasność, światło) and “сиять,” which in Polish means “świecić, błyszczyć, połyskiwać, jaśnieć, lśnić.” The English version of the CCC uses the word “shine” in this instance, while the Italian edition uses the verb “riflettere.” *Podręczny słownik rosyjsko-polski*, ed.

than the Polish to the French verb “*resplendir*.” If the Polish translators used the Polish verb “*jaśnieć*,”²³ for example, where the French used “*resplendir*,” then this choice certainly would have been closer in meaning to the French and would have better conveyed the essence of the image contained in CCC 748—one that is “a favorite image of the Church Fathers.”²⁴ The differences in the translations of CCC 748 do not end here, however.

Later in CCC 748, it is clear how the Polish translation departs from the original French version of the CCC. For example, the Polish translators reversed the word order of the last two words of the following passage: “Sobór wskazuje w ten sposób, że artykuł wiary o Kościele całkowicie zależy od artykułów dotyczących Jezusa Chrystusa” [the Council demonstrates that the article of faith about the Church depends entirely on the articles concerning Jesus Christ].²⁵ Here, the last two words “*Jezusa Chrystusa*” [Jesus Christ] are in the reverse order of the French version “*le Christ Jésus*.”²⁶ The Italian editors of the CCC translated the final two words of this sentence in the exact same way as the Polish translators.²⁷ This slightly different rendering in Polish was most likely due to the fact that the expression “*Jesus Christ*” use to be used much more frequently in the past.²⁸ This, therefore, is most

J. H. Dworecki, Warsaw 1986, “сияние,” pg. 711; *Langenscheidt’s pocket english dictionary english-polish polish-english*, ed. T. Grzebieniowski; *Mały słownik włosko-polski i polsko-włoski*, ed. S. Soja, C. Zawadzka, Z. Zawadzki, Warsaw 1977, “riflettere,” pg. 279.

²³ The Polish translators of the conciliar documents used this word as a rendering of the Latin verb “resplendere,” which occurs at the beginning of *Lumen Gentium*. The equivalent of the word “jaśnieć” in Polish-French dictionary is, among other things, the verb “resplendir.” *Podręczny słownik polsko-francuski*, K. Kupisz, B. Kielski, Warsaw 1993⁹, pg. 208. The fact that this word was translated as “promieniować” in the Polish version of CCC 748 suggests once again that the translators of the Polish edition did not use an exact quotation from the Polish edition of the conciliar documents in this instance. See *Lumen Gentium* 1. *Podręczny słownik polsko-francuski*, K. Kupisz, B. Kielski, Warsaw 1993⁹, pg. 208.

²⁴ CCCP 748.

²⁵ CCCP 748.

²⁶ “Par là, le Concile montre que l’article de foi sur l’Eglise dépend entièrement des articles concernant le Christ Jésus [...]” (CCCF 748).

²⁷ “Con cio il Concilio indica che l’articolo di fede sulla Chiesa dipende interamente dagli articoli concernenti Gesu Cristo [...]” (CCCI 748).

²⁸ “[...] najczęstszy na Wschodzie i upowszechniony na Zachodzie porządek to «Jezus Chrystus».” *Historia dogmatów. Bóg zbawienia*, ed B. Sesboué and J. Woliński, vol.1, Cracow 1999, pg. 100.

likely the reason why the Polish editors chose not to pay attention to the French version and, instead, translate the expression in the reverse order. The reversal of the word order still had implications for the French version of the text. For, there was a discrepancy in the meaning of the word “Christ” in both versions of the text.²⁹ In French, the expression “*le Christ Jésus*” is used as a title for Christ, which is evident in the use of the definite article “*le*”³⁰ as well as the placement of “*le Christ*” before the word “*Jésus*”³¹ In the Polish text, the meaning

²⁹ The word “Christ” (in Greek “Χριστός,” which refers to the Aramaic “Mesziha” and the Hebrew “Masziah,” meaning “anointed”) in contrast to “Jesus” (in Greek “Ἰησους” and in Hebrew “Yeshua” or “Yehoshua,” meaning “God saves”) is not a personal name, but rather a title that denotes a mission, or the description of an office. As J. Sesboué states, it is “the title of the Lord’s Anointed One or the Messiah, Shepherd, and eschatological Savior.” In the Sacred Scripture, the word often appears in connection with the personal name Jesus. Although he also used the expression “Jesus Christ” (Rom 7:24), Paul was very fond of the expression “Christ Jesus.” This expression seems archaic and, therefore, is rarely used. E. Dąbrowski, “Jezus Chrystus,” in *Podręczna encyklopedia Biblijna*, ed. E. Dąbrowski, vol. 1, Poznań 1959, pg. 549; *Słownik Nowego Testamentu*, ed. X. L. Dufour, Poznań 1981, “Jezus Chrystus,” pgs. 312-318; *Słownik teologii biblijnej*, ed. X. L. Dufour, Poznań-Warsaw 1982, “Jezus Chrystus,” pgs. 347-357; *Historia dogmatów. Bóg zbawienia*, eds. B. Sesboué and J. Woliński, vol. 1, Cracow 1999, pg. 100.

³⁰ If the French editors of the CCC considered the word “Christ” a second name for Jesus, then they would not have included the word “le” before “Christ” because, according to French grammar, an article is not used before a name (P. Wrzosek, *Język francuski od A do Z*. Repetytorium, Warsaw 1995, pg. 22). Therefore, in this case, the article explicitly indicates the function of the expression in the text; the article determines the meaning word “Christ.” As B. Kielski points out, in French the article is used as “a means to analytically determine the meaning of words. French language can use different kinds of articles to determine every noun (or concept) to varying degrees according to the analysis of the thought. [...] in French, the article is a very flexible determinant that is lacking in Polish. In order to properly determine a noun or concept [in Polish], it is necessary to either use more weighted expression or simply (and most often) default to the closer determination.” The same phenomenon occurs in the Greek text of the New Testament when the disciples saw Jesus as the promised Messiah and called him “the Christ” (see Mt 16:16; Jn 20:31[NTG] as well as [LBF]). In these instances, the Greek and French texts use the article. When the article is not present, then it means that the word “Christ” is being used as Jesus’ second name. B. Kielski, *Struktura języków francuskiego i polskiego w świetle analizy porównawczej*, vol. 1, Łódź 1957, pg. 60; C. Focant, “Christ,” in *Słownik Biblijny*, Brepolis 1987, pg. 268; J. T. Nelis i A. Lacocque, “Messie,” in *Słownik Biblijny*, Brepolis 1987, pgs. 820-821.

³¹ In Sacred Scripture, both the expression “Jesus Christ,” the second word of which is first used in the earliest writings of the New Testament as the second name of Jesus, and “Christ Jesus” appear. The latter is also used in some of St. Paul’s letters (1Thess 2:14 «ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ»; 1Thess 5:18 «ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ»; Rom

of this expression is not as clear as in the French version of the CCC. In the Polish version, the word “*Chrystus*” appears to serve simply as the second part of Jesus’ name. In addition, the second word “*Chrystus*” is absorbed by the first word “*Jezus*” in such a way that, as the authors of the *Dictionary of Biblical Theology* state, “unjustly maims the Gospel.”³² Apart from the Italian version, the editors of the other language versions of the CCC exercised more caution and faithfully followed the French version,³³ thereby conveying the proper meaning of the expression “*le Christ*.” When comparing the French and Polish versions of CCC 748, unlike the Polish readers, French readers immediately realize (due to the analytical character of the French language³⁴) that the expression concerns not the name of Jesus Christ, but rather “Jesus called the Messiah” as the subject of faith.³⁵

The Holy Spirit and the Church

As mentioned above, the authors of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* point out the ongoing relationship between the article on the Church and the articles on Jesus Christ. CCC 749 focuses on the latter. In the first sentence of CCC 749, the editors of the French and Polish versions of the CCC both emphasize the complete interdependence between CCC 749 and CCC 748, which covers the topic of the Holy Spirit.³⁶ The interdependence that the CCC points out is not a new teaching in the doctrine on the Church. The *Roman Catechism* points out the relationship between the Holy Spirit and the Church in its commentary on this article on the Church. The authors of the current Catechism

6:23 «ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ»; Rom 8:39 «ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ»; Rom 9:5 [NTG]). Most likely Paul used this expression to emphasize that “Christ” acts more as a title than a name. J. A. Fitzmyer, “Mesjasz,” in *Encyklopedia Biblijna*, ed. P. J. Achtemeier, Warsaw 1999, pgs. 739-741.

³² *Słownik teologii biblijnej*, ed. X. L. Dufour, Poznan-Warsaw 1982², “Jezus Chrystus,” pg. 347.

³³ The arrangement “Christ Jesus” was used in the Russian, English, and Latin versions of the CCC. See CCC 748; CCCE 748; and CCCL 748.

³⁴ In this case, this analytical feature is evident primarily in the wording: “*le Christ Jésus*.”

³⁵ Por. Mt 1:16 (Ἰησοῦς ὁ λεγόμενος Χριστός [NTG])

³⁶ This thought is reflected in old confessions of the faith that speak about the Church in connection with the Holy Spirit. The Apostolic Symbol also speaks of the Church as the first work of the Holy Spirit that comes before the “communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting.”

used this passage of the document and cited it in the second sentence of CCC 749: “Indeed, having shown that the Spirit is the source and giver of all holiness, we now confess that it is he who has endowed the Church with holiness.’ The Church is, in a phrase used by the Fathers, the place ‘where the Spirit flourishes.’”³⁷ The passage quoted in both the Polish and French versions of the CCC demonstrates how both the Polish and French versions do not correspond with each other in this instance.³⁸ More specifically, although both language versions refer to the same passage from the *Roman Catechism*,³⁹ which is evident in the footnote contained in both translations,⁴⁰ the Polish translation of CCC 749 differs from both the French and Latin translations.

In particular, there is a difference between the Polish adjective “*absolutny*” [absolute] and the French word “*donateur*.” The former appears only in the Polish version of the CCC, while the latter appears only in the French version of the CCC. The adjective “*absolutny*,” which does not appear in the French version of the text, was used by the Polish translators with regard to the Holy Spirit who “*ukazuje się jako absolutne źródło wszelkiej świętości*” [appears as the absolute source of all holiness] (CCC 749). Clearly, the Polish editors used the adjective “*absolutny*” to modify the noun “*źródło*” [source], which generally has several meanings.^{41,42} Within the context of CCC 749,

³⁷ CCCP 749.

³⁸ “En effet, après avoir montré que l’Esprit Saint est la source et le donateur de toute sainteté, nous confessons maintenant que c’est Lui qui a doté l’Eglise de sainteté” (CCCC 749).

³⁹ The original text contained in the *Roman Catechism*, which is included in both versions of the CCC, reads: “Pendent autem hic articulus a superiori, quia cum iam demonstratum sit, Spiritum Sanctum omnis sanctitatis fontem et largitorem esse, nunc ab eodem Ecclesiam sanctitate donatam confitemur.” *Catechismus Romanus ex decreto Concilii Tridentini ad Parochos*, Bielefeld 1859, pg. 79.

⁴⁰ See footnote 98 in the CCCP (pg. 187), as well as footnote 1 in the CCCF (pg.165).

⁴¹ Usually, in both Polish and French the noun “*źródło*” [source] has three meanings. First, both languages define it as the location where a natural outflow of underground water comes to the surface of the earth; the beginning of a river or a stream. Second, the word means “where something originates, begins; that which is the beginning of something.” Third, this word usually means “materials that serve as a means of knowledge in some area, which is the foundation for further research, studies, etc.” *Słownik języka polskiego*, ed. M. Szymczak, vol. 3, Warsaw 1992⁷, “*źródło*,” pg. 936; Por. *Larousse de poche. Dictionnaire des noms communs, des noms propres, précis de grammaire*, Paris 1993, “source,” pg. 625; *Dictionnaire du français*, Hachette 1987, “source,” pg. 1491.

⁴² As the Polish dictionaries convey, the noun “*absolut*” [absolute] comes from Latin (*absolutus*-zupełny, bezwzględny). The word, therefore, indicates something

the word “*absolutny*” can mean several things depending on how the reader interprets it. Some readers might interpret the word to have a philosophical meaning and, therefore, conclude that the authors of Polish version of the CCC wanted to emphasize the divine and perfect nature of the source—that is, that the Holy Spirit in Himself is the source that “is completely holy by His very divine nature.”⁴³ Still other readers might interpret “*absolutny*” to have a colloquial meaning and understand it as a synonym for “*wyłączny*” [exclusive], “*zupełny*” [total], “*całkowity*” [complete], or “*jedyny*” [only], which are used more often on a daily basis than the adjective “*absolutny*.” This is likely what the Polish authors had in mind when they were editing CCC 749. The Italian version of the CCC also reflects the same kind of interpretation on the part of its authors who translated this passage in a way similar to the Polish version.⁴⁴ Rather than using the Italian word “*assoluto*,”⁴⁵ as was used in the Polish text, however, the Italian translators used the word “*totale*” [total],⁴⁶ which is colloquial and does not sound as academic as the adjective “absolute.” In this passage, the Polish version of the CCC is decidedly closer to the Italian version in its choice of wording than the French version. This similarity suggests that the Polish editors relied exclusively on the Italian version of the CCC in this

that is total, complete, utter, without exception, without reservation. In science it is possible to encounter this word in different expressions: for example, absolute zero, absolute temperature, absolute geometry, absolute hearing, etc. See *Słownik języka polskiego*, ed. M. Szymczak, vol. 1, Warsaw 1992⁷, “*absolutny*,” pg. 3. In philosophy, the word “absolute” is used to describe a being that is independent of all other beings, without a cause, unlimited, perfect, and generally understood as unchanging, eternal, and the only and necessary basis of reality on which everything else depends. Por. *Słownik wyrazów obcych*, Warsaw 1978, “*absolut-absolutny*,” pg. 2-3.

⁴³ Por. Y. De Andia, “Święty, Pan, Dawca życia,” in *Communio* 8(1988) no. 1, pgs. 36-39.

⁴⁴ “L’articolo sulla Chiesa dipende anche interamente da quello sullo Spirito Santo, che lo precede. « In quello, infatti, lo Spirito Santo ci appare come la fonte totale di ogni santità; in questo, il divino Spirito ci appare come la sorgente della santità della Chiesa » (CCCI 749).

⁴⁵ As the *Słownik Włosko-Polski* [The Polish-Italian Dictionary] points out, this word can first be translated in Polish as “*absolutny*” and then as “*bezwzględny*,” “*samowładny*,” and “*zupełny*.” As examples of how the word “absolutely” applies in Italian, the authors include: “*vuoto assoluto*” [próżnia absolutna], “*zero assoluto*” [bezwzględne zero]. Clearly, these are purely academic expressions. See *Mały słownik włosko-polski i polsko włoski*, eds. S. Soja, C. Zawadzka, Z. Zawadzki, Warsaw 1977, (assoluto), pg. 31.

⁴⁶ In Polish, the words “*ogólny*,” “*zupełny*,” and “*całkowity*” are equivalents of the Italian adjective “*totale*.” See *ibid*, “*totale*,” pg. 350.

instance, and not on the French version. This is highly likely because the Italian version of the CCC was published earlier than the Polish version,⁴⁷ and, therefore, was accessible to the Polish translators.

The French noun “*donateur*” appears both in the French version of the CCC as well as the typical version.⁴⁸ The best equivalent of this in Polish is the word “*dawca*” [giver]. Both in French and in Polish, the semantic field of these expressions is similar.⁴⁹ In French and Polish, this word can indicate both a person and the action of giving, bestowing, or selflessly imparting something to another person out of love.⁵⁰ In the French version of the CCC, the authors use the word “*donateur*” [giver] as a name for the Holy Spirit, just as the Polish editors used the word “*źródło*” [source] as a name for the Holy Spirit. Just as the concept “*źródło*” points to the cause of holiness, the expression “*dawca*” shows the manner in which this holiness is conveyed. When used in reference to the Holy Spirit, both terms “*źródło*” and “*dawca*” complement each other. After all, the Spirit of God cannot sanctify if He were not holy Himself.⁵¹ Calling the Holy Spirit a giver is rather suggestive. This expression is continued later in this same sentence in French through the use of the verb “*doter*” [endow], which in Polish means “*wyposażyć*” [equip], “*obdarzać*” [bestow].⁵² Both French words, “*donateur*” and “*doter*,” which are used in CCC 749 correspond to the Holy Spirit very well, since He is, after all, the “Giver of gifts” as the

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⁴⁷ Ten language versions of the CCC were published in its first year of publication, including the Italian version. M. Napieralski, *O nowym Katechizmie. Wprowadzenie w lekturę Katechizmu Kościoła Katolickiego*, Poznań 1994, pgs. 40-41.

⁴⁸ In addition to the aforementioned versions of the CCC, the English and Russian versions contain words equivalent to the French expression “*donateur*”: “[...] the Spirit is the source and giver of all holiness” (CCCE 749) and “[...] Дух Святой есть источник и даритель всякой святости (CCCR 749).

⁴⁹ See *Słownik języka polskiego*, ed. M. Szymczak, vol. 1, Warsaw 1992⁷, “*dawca*,” pg. 362; *Larousse de poche. Dictionnaire des noms communs, des noms propres, précis de grammaire*, Paris 1993, “*donateur*,” pg. 206; *Dictionnaire du français*, Hachette 1987, “*donateur*,” pg. 492.

⁵⁰ “Now, the reason of donation being gratuitous is love; since therefore do we give something to anyone gratuitously forasmuch as we wish him well” (Summa Theologiae, I, q. 38, a. 2). Quoted in: John Paul II, *Wierzę w Ducha Świętego Pana i Ożywiciela*, Vatican City 1992, pg. 283.

⁵¹ Por. J. Szymusiak, *Duch Święty w Kościele według Ojców Kościoła trzech pierwszych wieków*, AK, 65 (1973) 1, pg. 56.

⁵² See K. Kupisz, B. Kielski, *Podręczny słownik francusko-polski z suplementem*, Warsaw 1993⁹, “*doter*,” pg. 241.

liturgical sequence sung on Pentecost states.⁵³ Moreover, when the word “*dawca*” is used to indicate the Holy Spirit’s personal involvement in the process of sanctifying man, it also implies the freedom that accompanies this involvement. He who is the Giver—the Holy Spirit—and is the source of man’s sanctity approaches man to offer him a gift; the Holy Spirit never “enslaves” man. There is freedom wherever the Spirit of the Lord is.⁵⁴ As a result, this holiness becomes “a dialogic reality that is similar to love or friendship”⁵⁵ between the giver and recipient.

The aforementioned differences indicate that it is unlikely that the Polish translators of the CCC relied on the French version or a direct source such as the *Roman Catechism* when working on CCC 749. Rather, in this instance, the Polish version of the CCC resembles the Italian version. The presence of the adjectives “*absolutny*” and “*totale*” in relation to the word “*źródło*” in the Polish and Italian versions of the CCC, respectively, confirms this fact. In addition, the fact that both Polish and Italian versions of the CCC do not use the French noun “*donateur*” speaks to the fact that the Polish text relied on the Italian version in this instance. Because the Polish authors omitted the word “*dawca*” in the Polish version, they failed to convey the full meaning of CCC 749. By speaking of the Holy Spirit only as the source, the Polish version of this passage does not convey to Polish readers the fullness of the image of the Holy Spirit that the French version conveys. In this instance, likening the Holy Spirit to a source and giver has a richer and important meaning. The Third Person of the Most Holy Trinity is not a typical or ordinary source; He is the Spirit-Giver “from which derives as from its source (*fons vivus*) all giving of gifts vis-a-vis creatures (created gift).”⁵⁶ In addition to the fact that the Polish version did not include the word “*dawca*” [giver] in CCC 749, the entire sentence structure and the use of such expressions as “*absolutne źródło*” [absolute source] or “*bijące źródło świętości Kościoła*” [the beating source of the Church’s holiness], leave much to be desired. Unlike the formulations used in other versions of the CCC, those used in the Polish version do not help the reader to better understand the meaning CCC 749. In this regard, the French version of CCC 749 is translated

⁵³ Por. *Dominum et Vivificantem* 67; John Paul II, *Wierzę w Ducha Świętego Pana i Ożywiciela*, Vatican City 1992, pg. 267.

⁵⁴ Por. 2 Cor 3:17.

⁵⁵ E. Ozorowski, *Wierzę w Ducha Świętego*, Białystok 1998, pg. 13.

⁵⁶ *Dominum et Vivificantem* 10. The symbol of the “living water,” which refers directly to the Holy Spirit, appears in John 7:38-39.

much better because it is much simpler in its form and diction and, consequently, closer to the Latin version of the CCC. In order to help Polish readers understand the meaning of CCC 749 as it was written in French and translated into the typical version, the Polish should have read as follows: “Artykuł o Kościele całkowicie zależy także od artykułu o Duchu Świętym, który go poprzedza. «W rzeczywistości, po ukazaniu, że Duch Święty jest źródłem i dawcą wszelkiej świętości teraz wyznajemy, że to On obdarzył Kościół świętością» [...]” [“The article concerning the Church also depends entirely on the article about the Holy Spirit, which immediately precedes it. ‘Indeed, having shown that the Spirit is the source and giver of all holiness, we now confess that it is he who has endowed the Church with holiness.’”].⁵⁷ If CCC 749 sounded this way, then it certainly would have helped Polish readers to better understand the relationship between the article of faith on the Holy Spirit and the article on the Church.

Conclusion

Lawrence Venuti's⁵⁸ contemporary theories on translation distinguish two models of translation: the instrumental and the hermeneutic. The former concerns what in Polish is most often expressed by the verb “*przekładać*” (transfer, translate, shift). To translate the text from one language to another as an ongoing process is considered an imitative act wherein the role of the translator is to overcome the language barrier, meaning to express in the second language what is understood in the first (original) language. The latter model is that which is understood in Polish in the word “*tłumaczyć*” (translate), which results in an interpretation of the original text. In this way, according to the hermeneutic model, the translator subjectively assumes, interprets, and clarifies the meaning of the original text. Unlike the instrumental model, the hermeneutic model assumes that new translations of texts are always necessary because the context in which the reader receives and understands the original text is constantly changing⁵⁹. The French and Polish passages analyzed above serve as an example of how the

⁵⁷ “Articulus de Ecclesia etiam plene ab illo de Spiritu Sancto dependet qui eum praecedit. «Quia cum iam demonstratum sit Spiritum Sanctum omnis sanctitatis fontem et largitorem esse, nunc ab Eodem Ecclesiam sanctitate donatam confitemur»” (CCCL 749).

⁵⁸ For more on the contemporary concepts of translation see: P. Bukowski, M. Heydel, *Współczesne teorie przekładu. Antologia*, ed., Cracow 2009.

⁵⁹ See: M. Črnivec, *Theology of translation. An introductory inquiry* http://www.academia.edu/1779339/Theology_of_Translation (21.08.2018)

work of translation is difficult on its own when one does not even consider the fact that translating from Polish to French, which both have different etymologies (the former is a Slavic language, while the latter is a Romance language) and vice versa entails its own problems.⁶⁰ At certain moments, the translator's presence is very discrete and even imperceptible, so much so that the reader can perceive the translator's presence only when imperfections in the translation occur. At other times, the translator comes to the fore and assumes a "central" place in the translation of the text when the translator interprets and explains the text in his own way by using a particular vocabulary or syntax. As, Fr. Prof. Lucjan Balter, SAC points out, the problem with preparing the Polish version of the CCC arises from the fact that,

by having the French version of the *Jerusalem Bible* as well as the French renderings of the writings of the Fathers of the Church (Sources Chr.) at their disposal, the editors of the CCC drew from them large amounts of text [...] which was not possible to do in any other translation [of the CCC] into another language.⁶¹

Moreover, after the CCC was published, Cardinal Ratzinger announced that the Latin version would serve as the "typical" edition. For this reason, translators of the Polish version, on the one hand, "occasionally" treated the French version as the guiding and authoritative text and, on the other hand, strove to convey what was contained in the French version. In some ways, this explains why both the instrumental and hermeneutic approaches to translation can be found in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

FRANCUSKA I POLSKA WERSJA PUNKTÓW 748 I 749 KATECHIZMU KOŚCIOŁA KATOLICKIEGO Z PERSPEKTYWY TRANSLATORSKIEJ. TEOLOGICZNE NASTĘPSTWA TŁUMACZEŃ

Niniejszy artykuł jest próbą analizy porównawczej z perspektywy sztuki translatorskiej dwóch wybranych teologicznych tekstów z wersji francuskiej i polskiej *Katechizmu Kościoła Katolickiego*. Zauważone uwagi, co do wersji polskiej i francuskiej *Katechizmu*, zgrupowane zostały wokół 748 punktu KKK,

⁶⁰ Por. M. Kaczyński, *Tłumaczenie różnych form rzeczowników polskich na język francuski*, Lublin 2000, pg. 11.

⁶¹ L. Balter, Letter written to Leszek Jakoniuk on November 19, 1998 (private archive).

który w swej treści wskazuje czytelnikowi na relację, jaka zachodzi między Kościołem i Chrystusem. Jednak należy zauważyć, że powyższa zależność nie ogranicza się wyłącznie do artykułów wiary dotyczących Drugiej Osoby Trójcy Świętej, lecz także dotyka Trzeciej Osoby Boskiej, jaką jest Duch Święty. O tym mówi *Katechizm* w punkcie 749, który podobnie jak poprzedni punkt nie uchronił się przed różnicami, jakie zaszły między jego wersją francuską a polską. Artykuł pokazuje jak trudna i odpowiedzialna jest praca tłumacza zwłaszcza, kiedy problem przekładu dotyka tekstów teologicznych związanych z wiarą.

Słowa kluczowe: Chrystus, Duch Święty, Kościół, eklezjologia, tłumaczenie, *Katechizm Kościoła Katolickiego*, język teologii, sztuka przekładu.

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The Religious Education of Polish Youth in the Face of Changes in Religiosity¹

In recent years, there has been a significant change in the religiosity of Poles, especially among the youth. Religious education for the youth, however, has remained basically unchanged. Therefore, there is an urgent need to determine the causes of this change in religiosity and respond properly to it. This article first presents the results of sociological research on the religiosity of Polish youth conducted in the last few years, particularly 2013-2016. These results prove that Polish young people believe increasingly less in God, participate increasingly less frequently in the liturgy, and increasingly contest the moral teachings of the Church. The article then proceeds to explain the reasons for these changes, among which is what is broadly understood as a contemporary culture in which rationalism, pluralism, and tolerance dominate. The final part of the article presents ideas to enrich religious education with elements that will address the challenges of the present and make it possible to reach Polish youth.

Key words: youth, religiosity, religious education, catechesis.

Introduction

Poland is widely considered a Catholic country. This attribute stems not only from history, but also from current statistics. The statistical yearbook “The Catholic Church in Poland: 1991-2011” proves that,

¹ This article was written using data obtained from research financed by the National Science Center in Poland. The project registration number is: 2016/21/B/HS1/00834.

among all respondents who took part in the National Census conducted in 2011, up to 95.95% claimed affiliation with the Roman Catholic Church of the Latin rite.² The data obtained during this census are undoubtedly the most reliable, but they primarily concern individuals' formal initiation into the Church, which occurs through reception of the sacrament of Baptism. However, many surveys concerning the religiosity of Poles carried out, for example, by Poland's Centrum Badania Opinii Społecznej [Center for Public Opinion Research; hereafter abbreviated as CPOR] show that Catholics who completely follow and practice the faith and moral principles of the Church make up less than half of Poles.³ These statistics point to the privatization or individualization of religion with regard to the professed truths of faith or moral principles.⁴ Particularly dynamic changes in religiosity took place in Poland in 2005, after the death of John Paul II.⁵ These changes in religiosity in Poland have continued to progress as evidenced, for example, by the percentage of Poles who participate in the Eucharist every Sunday, which has increased from 7.8% in 1980 to 16.3% in 2013. This suggests, therefore, that Catholicism is becoming a religion that Poles freely choose, rather than a religion that they simply inherit.

The greatest change in religiosity in Poland concerns Polish youth. This article will examine the changes in religiosity of youth that have been observed in recent years. Data for this study have been obtained primarily from two reports prepared by the CPOR entitled "Youth 2013"⁶ and "Youth 2016,"⁷ respectively.

² Instytut Statystyki Kościoła Katolickiego SAC, *Główny Urząd Statystyczny, Kościół katolicki w Polsce 1991-2011. Rocznik statystyczny*, Warsaw 2014, pg. 82.

³ Centrum Badania Opinii Społecznej, *Zmiany w zakresie podstawowych wskaźników religijności Polaków po śmierci Jana Pawła II. Komunikat z badań. Nr 26/2015*, Warsaw, February 2015. http://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2015/K_026_15.PDF.

⁴ M. Grabowska, *Dekada zmian, dekada nieobecności*, in *Religijność i Kościół 10 lat po śmierci Jana Pawła II*, ed. M. Grabowska, Warsaw 2015, pg. 9.

⁵ P. Mąkosa, *Zwischen orthodoxem Katholizismus und Individualisierung der religiösen Überzeugungen der Polen*, „Religionen Unterwegs” 23:2017 nr 3 s. 18.

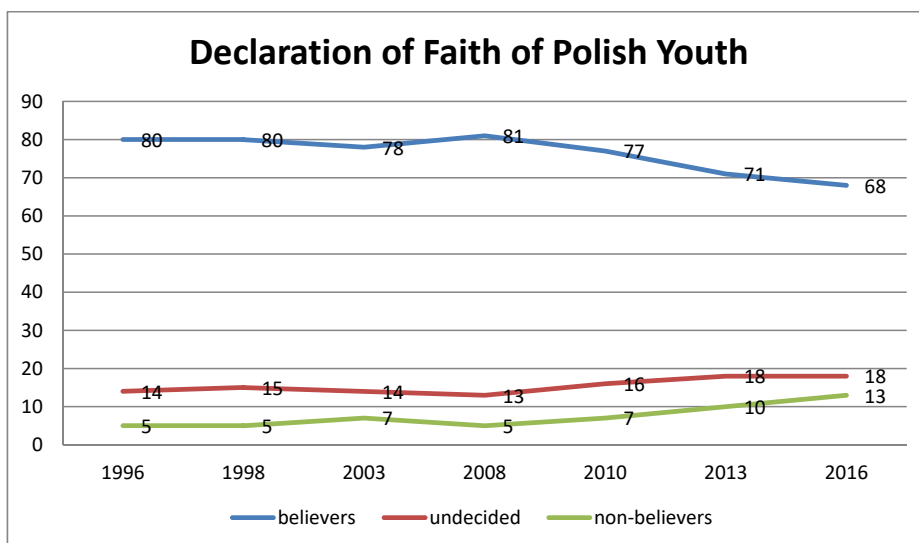
⁶ Centrum Badania Opinii Społecznej, Krajowe Biuro ds. Przeciwdziałania Narkomanii, *Młódzież 2013*, Warsaw 2014.

⁷ Centrum Badania Opinii Społecznej, Krajowe Biuro ds. Przeciwdziałania Narkomanii, *Młódzież 2016*, Warszawa 2016. For this topic, see: P. J. Chmura, *Dynamika religijności współczesnej młodzieży polskiej jako wyzwanie duszpasterskie*, Cracow 2008.

The Dynamics of Religiosity Among Polish Youth from 2013-2016

The so-called “global attitude of faith” is the basic parameter of religiosity—that is, the self-declaration of the level of one’s own religious faith. This parameter is very general, but it provides insight into what percentage of a surveyed population is made up of believers, agnostics, or non-believers. In research conducted by Poland’s CPOR and, since 2003, the National Bureau for Drug Prevention (NBDP), the following results were obtained.⁸

Catechetics



The results presented above (in orange) clearly demonstrate that dynamic changes in religiosity have taken place within the last decade, and the graph below (in grey) depicts those who categorize themselves as believers and deeply faithful in order to show these changes more clearly. The greatest indicator of change is the fact that, within the last decade, the number of youth who describe themselves as non-believers has doubled, averaging 13%, and in cities with more than half a million inhabitants, the percentage of youth who describe themselves as non-believers has reached 20%.⁹ The percentage of those who believe fell

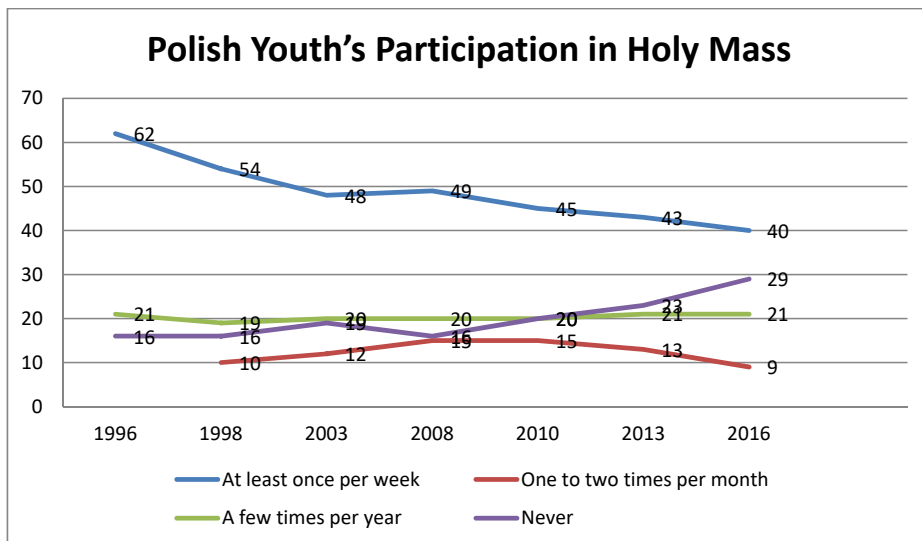
⁸ These charts are the author’s own and are based on the data contained in the following report: A. Głowacki, *Religijność młodzieży*, in Centrum Badania Opinii Społecznej, Krajowe Biuro ds. Przeciwdziałania Narkomanii, *Młodzież 2016*, Warsaw 2016, pgs. 130; 133.

⁹ A. Głowacki, *Religijność młodzieży*, pg. 136.

to an average of 68%, while in the largest cities in Poland the number fell to 60%, which is below the so-called “threshold of cultural obviousness.” It is important to note that the assertions of the youth surveyed do not pertain to their acceptance of Christianity or even to the image of God presented in Catholicism, but rather to a very general faith in the transcendent. A decade ago, those who believed in the transcendent constituted 80% of Polish citizens, a statistic that other studies have confirmed.¹⁰

In addition to the obvious decline in those claiming to be believers, the number of young people in Poland who claim to be deeply religious is slowly growing. In 2013, this number reached 6%, and in 2016 it increased to 8%.¹¹ This situation proves that religious faith is increasingly becoming a matter of personal choice rather than something that individuals inherit or follow because of tradition.

Another indication of religiosity is participation in the liturgy of one's own religious community. The Catholic Church obliges the faithful to participate in the Holy Mass every Sunday and on holy days of obligation. Changes in Polish youth's commitment to this obligation are presented in the graph below.



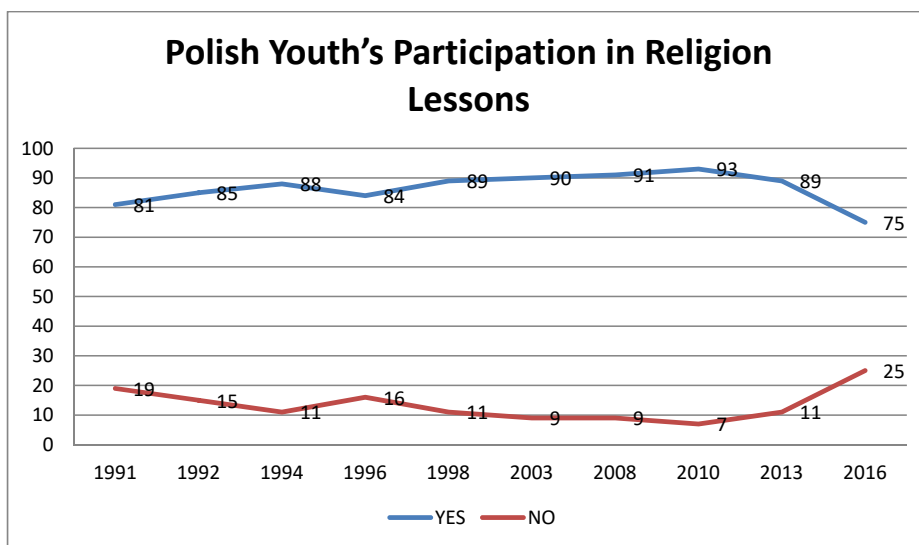
¹⁰ J. Mariański, *Emigracja z Kościoła. Religijność młodzieży polskiej w warunkach zmian społecznych*, Lublin 2008, pg. 86; S. H. Zaręba, *W kierunku jakiej religijności? Studia nad katolicyzmem polskiej młodzieży*, Warsaw 2008, pg. 112.

¹¹ A. Głowacki, *Religijność młodzieży*, pg. 130.

A crisis in Polish youth's level of religious practice has undoubtedly already begun, as can be seen by the fact that the number of Polish youth who never participate in church services has doubled in the past decade, reaching 29% in urban and rural areas and even 37% in cities. Within the largest cities in Poland, the percentage of those who attend Holy Mass at least once a week is only 23%.¹²

In recent years (2013-2016), the percentage of young people who participate in religious practices several times per week has increased slightly from 6%¹³ to 8%.¹⁴ This testifies to the fact that those who consciously and voluntarily choose to belong to religious communities are very involved in them.

Recently, a significant decrease has also occurred in Polish youth's attendance of religion class at school.¹⁵



One of the most significant changes that has occurred is clearly the attitude of young Poles toward religion class at school. A decline has taken place in this area in the last few years. Since religious education was reintroduced in Polish schools in 1990, lessons in religion

¹² Ibid, pg. 138.

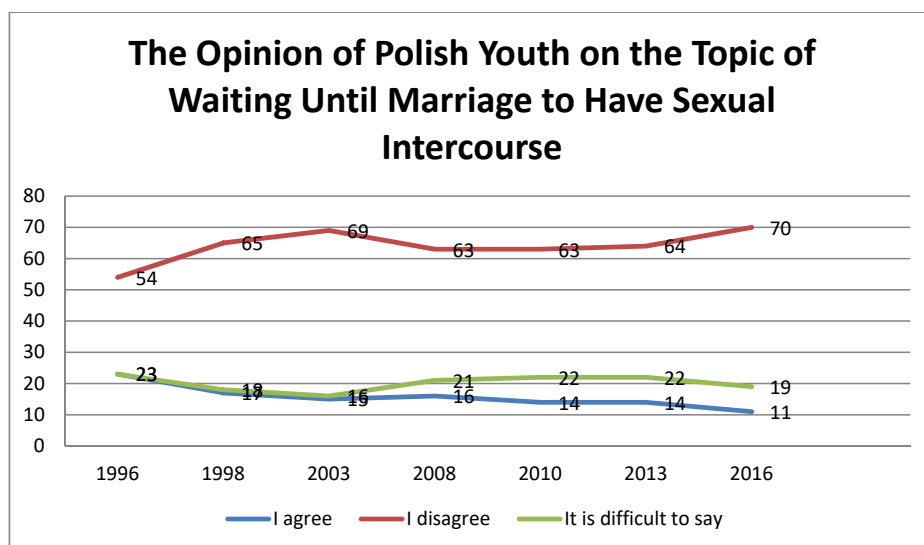
¹³ R. Boguszewski, M. Feliksiak, M. Gwiazda, J. Kalka, *Młodzież o sobie: wartości, obyczajowość, grupy odniesienia*, pg. 112.

¹⁴ A. Głowacki, *Religijność młodzieży*, pg. 133.

¹⁵ M. Gwiazda, *Religia w szkole – uczestnictwo i ocena*, w: Centrum Badania Opinii Społecznej, Krajowe Biuro ds. Przeciwdziałania Narkomanii, *Młodzież 2016*, Warsaw 2016, pg. 141.

have consistently been popular and class attendance has fluctuated at around 90%. A rapid decline in attendance, however, has occurred in the last few years, and as early as 2013, 89% of Polish youth claimed to participate in religion classes,¹⁶ while in 2016 this number reached an average of 75%, with an average of barely 49% in the largest cities in Poland.¹⁷

Another indicator of religiosity is the acceptance of moral principles. One of the biggest problems is the area of sexuality and pre-marital sex—issues toward which the attitude of young Poles has changed. The following graph presents the range of opinions of young Poles on the issue of premarital sex.¹⁸



Moral issues always score lowest on surveys on religion. This is due in part to the fact that it is always easier for people to claim religious affiliation or even participate in religious practices than to follow the moral teachings of the Catholic Church. Human sexuality is a especially sensitive area that poses particular challenges to young people. Research conducted by the CPOR has confirmed this fact by

¹⁶ R. Boguszewski, M. Feliksiak, M. Gwiazda, J. Kalka, *Młodzież o sobie: wartości, obyczajowość, grupy odniesienia*, pg. 117.

¹⁷ M. Gwiazda, *Religia w szkole - uczestnictwo i ocena*, in Centrum Badania Opinii Społecznej, Krajowe Biuro ds. Przeciwdziałania Narkomanii, *Młodzież 2016*, Warsaw 2016 pgs. 141, 143.

¹⁸ M. Gwiazda, *Młodzież i seks*, in Centrum Badania Opinii Społecznej, Krajowe Biuro ds. Przeciwdziałania Narkomanii, *Młodzież 2016*, Warsaw 2016, pg. 154.

demonstrating that in 1996 only 23% of Polish youth believed that sex should take place only after marriage, whereas currently this percentage has decreased to 11%. Studies have shown that other dynamic changes in religiosity have taken place over the past few years.¹⁹ However, the results obtained from these surveys do not reflect whether people accept the Church's teachings because the respondents are not asked about what they believe regarding the Sacrament of Marriage and civil marriage. In practice, the percentage of youth who agree with the Church's teaching that sexual relations should take place only within the context of marriage is less. Studies from 2005, during which respondents were asked directly about what they believed about the Catholic Church's teaching on marriage as a condition for sexual intercourse revealed that only 9.2% of young people agreed with the Church's teaching on this issue.²⁰

In summarizing the results of studies on the religiosity of Polish youth, it is clear that religiosity has been declining for many years, while the more dynamic changes that have taken place have become apparent only in the last few years. These changes are characterized by an increasing radicalism. On the one hand, more and more young Poles are leaving the Church, do not participate in religious practices, and contest the Church's moral teaching. On the other hand, those who do choose to belong to the Catholic Church strive to be very involved in the life and activities of their parish communities. These changes confirm observations that religion has become an issue of personal choice and not one of social influence.

The Causes for Changes in Religiosity

It is important to consider the causes of the changes that have occurred in the religiosity of Polish youth. Undoubtedly today's culture is the main reason for many of these particular issues. Contemporary culture is increasingly more rationalistic and materialistic; it values rational knowledge and material goods most, while it relegates matters of religion to the margins of life. In his exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, Pope Paul VI states that, although it began in the Middle Ages and became more dynamic during the French Revolution, the

¹⁹ Ibid, pg. 154.

²⁰ S.H. Zareba, *W kierunku jakiej religijności? Studia nad katolicyzmem polskiej młodzieży*, pg. 287; Por. P. Mąkosa, *The Catholic Identity of Polish Youth at the Beginning of the 21st Century*, in *A Glance in the Mirror: Dutch and Polish Religious Cultures*. Eds. M. Kalsky, P. Nissen, LIT Verlag Münster – Berlin – Vienna – London 2012, pgs. 85-86.

secularization of culture is occurring more rapidly and becoming more widespread (55). According to Paul VI, this secularization is primarily the consequence of the development of knowledge, which makes it possible to explain many phenomena through science, which subsequently leads to the rejection of God.²¹ In turn, this leads to ideologies that promote life without God²² and try to provide answers to all (even eschatological) questions.²³

In addition, contemporary culture is becoming more postmodern²⁴ and guided by the principles of pluralism and unbridled tolerance. Modern postmodern pluralism consists not only in the acceptance of diversity, but also in encouraging it. As a result, people assume that the more diversity there is, the better. Consequently, very different and often contradictory realities coexist on equal terms in various spheres of life: economic, industrial, political, ideological, and moral.²⁵ At the same time, the absolute tolerance that is characteristic of the postmodern age does not allow anyone to criticize the views, behaviors, or attitude of others. As a result, no one has the right to judge anyone or anything.²⁶ Such a culture, which is mediated by the powerful influence of the media, leads to individualism and the privatization of every area of life, including—and perhaps above all—religion.²⁷

In a rationalistic, materialistic, extremely pluralistic, tolerant, and individualistic culture it is difficult to find every religion, but particularly one that presents a consistent system of beliefs and moral values that it obliges its followers to accept and practice. While respecting other religions, Christianity is a religion that claims that it is the best way to salvation²⁸ and sets high moral standards. The Catholic

²¹ Por. J. Mariański, *Sekularyzacja i desekularyzacja w nowoczesnym świecie*, Lublin 2006, pg. 25.

²² Por. P. Neuner, *Psychospołeczne i polityczne uwarunkowania chrześcijaństwa dziś*, in *Chrześcijaństwo jutra. Materiały II Międzynarodowego Kongresu Teologii Fundamentalnej*, Eds. M. Rusecki, K. Kaucha, Z. Krzyszowski, I.S. Ledwoń, J. Mastej, Lublin 2001 pg. 237.

²³ Ibid, pg. 239.

²⁴ See S. Kowalczyk, *Idee filozoficzne postmodernizmu*, Radom 2004, pgs. 105–110.

²⁵ See J. Mizińska, *Ponowoczesność a prawo do metafory w refleksji nad kulturą*, "Ethos" 9:1996 no 1–2, pgs. 184–189.

²⁶ See Z. Sareło, *Postmodernizm w pigułce*, Poznań 1998, pg. 10.

²⁷ S.H. Zaręba, *W kierunku jakiej religijności? Studia nad katolicyzmem polskiej młodzieży*, Warsaw 2008, pgs. 504–505.

²⁸ Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Dominus Iesus: Declaration on the Unicity and Salvific Universality of Jesus Christ and the Church*, Vatican City 2000, 17.

Church professes and teaches that Jesus Christ is the only Savior of mankind and that, although salvation can be attained through other religions, the fullness of the means of salvation exist only in the Catholic Church.²⁹

The results of the surveys on religiosity presented above confirm how contemporary culture strongly influences Polish youth. The decline in the number of youth who claim to believe, which is a measure of a person's sensitivity to the transcendent, reveals that rationalism and materialism are exerting a strong influence on them. Individualism is evident above all in the youth's selective approach to the tenets of faith and moral norms and in their rejection of the Church as an intermediary between God and man.³⁰ In contemporary culture, Christianity has become one among many options from which to choose, and, even if individuals choose it, they often manipulate the religion to suit their own preferences. In addition, people also choose what they wish to practice from a variety of religions, mixing the beliefs, convictions, ethical and moral principles,³¹ and even contradictory elements of different traditions and cultures.³² Today's "believers" create "their own God, their own heaven, their own salvation, and their own little *credo*."³³ In this sense, P. Neuner states that "The concoction that resembles religion in postmodern times is made up of a small amount of love for one's neighbor, a large quantity of love of animals, a little dose of wandering souls, a large portion of psychology and parapsychology, along with a touch of esotericism, complemented with a Christmas idyll and a large amount of criticism of the [Catholic] Church. It does not matter whether all of these goes together."³⁴

The current concept of catechesis as well as teaching religion in schools assume that those who participate in the classes are believers in, practice, and want to deepen their faith. However, as the analyses above demonstrate, the majority of youth contest the Catholic Church's moral principles. Research and daily observation prove that

Catechetics

²⁹ Catechism of the Catholic Church, 824.

³⁰ Por. J. Mariański, *Charakterystyka religijno-moralna współczesnej młodzieży*, in *Katecheza młodzieży*, ed. S. Kulpaczyński, Lublin 2003, pgs. 15-70.

³¹ Por. P. Neuner, *Psychospołeczne i polityczne uwarunkowania chrześcijaństwa dziś*, pgs. 259-261.

³² Por. T. Luckmann, *Transformations of Religion and Morality in Modern Europe*, "Social Compass" 50:2003 no 3, pgs. 275-285.

³³ J. Mariański, *Sekularyzacja i desekularyzacja w nowoczesnym świecie*, pg. 87.

³⁴ P. Neuner, *Psychospołeczne i polityczne uwarunkowania chrześcijaństwa dziś*, pg. 261.

an increasing part of the population rejects religious arguments on many issues, including, for example, the creation of the world or *in vitro* fertilization. As a result, the discrepancy between the doctrine of the Church and real life is increasing even among those who consider themselves to be believers.

Seeking a New Vision for Religious Education

In light of the problems mentioned above, one questions how to best orient religious education for youth to meet the present challenges. Given the widespread rationalism and empirical mentality that permeates postmodern culture, it is important to emphasize that the Catholic Church has recognized for centuries that, based on the observation of the cosmos and man, it is possible to come to a rational understanding of God and his basic attributes. In this regard, the First Vatican Council Constitution *Dei Filius* states: “God, the beginning and end of all things, can be known with certitude by the natural light of human reason from created things [...]”.³⁵ The Second Vatican Council took up the same position in other documents, including the *Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation* 6, *Gaudium et Spes* 19–22, and *Ad Gentes* 7. Therefore, it is worthwhile to discuss selected arguments that have been developed through a philosophy of God that upholds that observing the world and (from the world) interior human experiences that prove that these phenomena cannot explain themselves or their own existence. In this context, arguments based on entropy and the expansion of the universe support the existence of God.³⁶ Another argument that may encourage young people to reflect on and search for God is their own deep desire for happiness and their experience of the fact that true and lasting happiness is very difficult to find.³⁷ Moreover, students can be encouraged to either accept the reality that we find fulfillment in God, or recognize that human existence does not make sense—that it is simply a mistake in itself.

Paradoxically, in religious education for youth, it is also important for educators to draw the attention of youth to phenomena that cannot

³⁵ Second Vatican Council, *Dei Filius*, Vatican City, 1870. <http://inters.org/Vatican-Council-I-Dei-Filius> (05.15.2018).

³⁶ Por. M. Heller, *Teologia a nauki przyrodnicze*, in M. Heller, J. Życiński, *Drogi myślących*, Cracow 1985, pg. 11.

³⁷ See K. Tarnowski, *Człowiek i transcendencja*, Cracow 1995, pg. 34.

be explained, particularly recognized miracles.³⁸ In this way, youth can come to understand that empirical science does not fully explain all of reality and that there is an entire sphere of life that is outside of cognition and the world experienced through the senses. While youth believe, on the one hand, that everything can be explained through empirical methods, they also understand, on the other hand, that facts cannot be negated.

Due to the pluralism and relativism that characterize postmodern culture, it is also necessary to set forth arguments that defend the Catholic Church's credibility as the Church that was founded by Christ and leads to salvation. "You should be certain that the way that Christianity and the Catholic Church propose is not some kind of illusion, one of many theories devised by people, but rather an objective truth that they can trust completely."³⁹ Educators, therefore, must present facts that prove the historical existence of Christ and his resurrection. The historicity of Jesus frees Christianity from claims that it is fictitious, while the resurrection authenticates the truth about Christ's divinity and demonstrates that he is not just a special man and great teacher who lived long ago.⁴⁰ In addition to demonstrating the credibility of Christianity, educators must also show the supernatural origin and continuity of the Catholic Church as the Church that Christ himself founded. This will serve as a fundamental argument for the preservation of tradition and apostolic succession.⁴¹

In order for religious education to be effective and interesting to young people, educators must include existential issues in education. Often young people treat Christianity as a theory that is detached from the present and their own problems. In this way, the youth do not see Christianity "as something new and attractive that carries the fresh breath of the spirit," but rather as "something that is already well-known, happened a long time ago, outdated, and not worth believing in."⁴² Consequently, educators should devote a lot of time to addressing

³⁸ See K. Berger, *Czy wolno wierzyć w cuda?* Poznań 2006; B. McKenna, *Cuda się zdarzają*, Warsaw 2000.

³⁹ P. Mąkosa, *Katecheza młodzieży gimnazjalnej w Polsce. Stan aktualny i perspektywy rozwoju*, Lublin 2009, pg. 436.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ J. Morawa, *Znaki prawdziwości Kościoła*, in *Teologia fundamentalna*, vol. 4, *Kościół Chrystusowy*, ed. T. Dzidek, Ł. Kamykowski, A. Kubiś et al., Cracow 2003, pg. 170.

⁴² S. Dyk, *Duch – Słowo – Kościół. Biblijny model ewangelizacji*, Lublin 2007, pg. 169.

the problems of youth (i.e., love, friendship, loneliness, and suffering) in order to show that God and faith in him are helpful in order to find answers to the questions that trouble them and serve as a real source of help in their lives.

Not only must religious education present good content to students, it is also necessary for educators to establish good relationships with their students. Given the prevailing individualism of our age, it is necessary to establish personal bonds that are lacking; for, through such relationships, teachers can give their own personal testimonies, which play a major role in helping youth see the relevance of faith in their lives.

The proposals presented above only begin to address the needs of the religious education of youth, but they are a starting point to renew education and meet the needs of contemporary culture.

Conclusion

This article presents the results of surveys on the religiosity of Polish youth throughout the past few years. These studies prove that Polish youth are becoming less and less religious. In turn, the article attempts to determine the causes of these observed changes, arguing that they are due primarily to contemporary culture, which is dominated by rationalism, unrestricted pluralism, and extreme tolerance. The last part of this article proposes to enrich religious education by including in it issues that address the contemporary challenges discussed above.

EDUKACJA RELIGIJNA POLSKIEJ MŁODZIEŻY WOBEC PRZEMIAN RELIGIJNOŚCI

W ostatnich latach zauważalna jest duża dynamika przemian religijności Polaków, zwłaszcza młodego pokolenia. Edukacja religijna przeznaczona dla tej grupy zasadniczo pozostaje jednak bez zmian. Istnieje zatem pilna konieczność określenia przyczyn współczesnych przemian i udzielenia na nie odpowiedzi. W tym artykule przedstawiono najpierw wyniki badań socjologicznych dotyczących religijności polskiej młodzieży z ostatnich kilku lat, a zwłaszcza z lat 2013-2016. Dowodzą one tego, że polska młodzież coraz mniej wierzy w Boga, coraz rzadziej bierze udział w liturgii i kontestuje moralne nauczanie Kościoła. Następnie podjęto próbę wskazania przyczyn tych przemian. Wśród nich na pierwszym miejscu wymieniono szeroko rozumianą dzisiejszą kulturę, w której

dominują racjonalizm, pluralizm i tolerancja. W ostatniej części artykułu przedstawiono propozycje wzbogacenia edukacji o takie elementy, które podejmują wyzwania współczesności i dają szansę na dotarcie do młodych ludzi.

Słowa kluczowe: religijność młodzieży, edukacja religijna, katecheza, młodzież.

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Educational Possibilities in Contemporary Schools

This article aims to show how a school's educational potential has an effect on the formation of students who will be able to function well in the different areas of a knowledge-based society and maintain good relationships with other people. To this end, this article demonstrates how a school that uses its human and organizational capital should provide students with educational experiences that will prepare them for the most urgent challenges of adult life in a knowledge-based society. This article concludes by showing how teaching religion can benefit education and discussing how schools can utilize their spiritual potential.

Key words: education, upbringing, school, religious education.

A post-industrial society based on knowledge is predicted to be the next stage of social development in the new social order and vision of the future. After the long phase of industrial and post-industrial society has passed, the process of forming a knowledge-based civil society will occur.¹ Currently, one can observe that rapid changes and transformations are taking place in this area.² The question arises, therefore, whether this process will be spontaneous, or whether it will necessitate the creation of an educational strategy that will be able to

¹ M. Nowak, *Czy szkoła ma przekazywać wiedzę, czy też wychowywać?* "Paedagogia Christiana" 29(2012), no 1, pg. 105.

² G. Mazurkiewicz, *Edukacja i przywództwo. Modele mentalne jako bariery rozwoju*, Cracow 2012 pg. 44.

address the need to educate people to live in the digital age.³ In this context, the role of education in a situation where discontinuities in social life are increasing and where the future of individuals or groups is uncertain is called into question.⁴ As the world strives to create knowledge-based societies, no one questions the educational role of schools. At the same time, however, very few people are satisfied with the way that contemporary schools currently fulfill their roles in the current social situation. This is due to the fact that there are no easy solutions to the problem that are occurring in this area right now. This does not exempt schools, however, from their obligation to search for solutions to these problems.⁵

The Aims of Education and Upbringing

Upbringing and education within the school system should meet the requirements of modernity.⁶ The fundamental constitutional principles of the state determine the most important features of education. The current political system in Poland is a pluralistic democracy, and the economic system is a free market wherein people are free to choose their own professional and ideological priorities.⁷ New legal regulations require that Polish schools provide students with the circumstances necessary for their development, and prepare students to fulfill their family and civic duties based on the principles of solidarity, democracy, justice, and freedom.⁸ As for the goals of education, it is clear that it is necessary to teach students the importance of: proactivity, being prosocial, social cooperation, tolerance, integrity,

³ See L. Bakiera, B. Harwas-Napierała, *Wzory osobowe w rozwoju człowieka*, Poznań 2017, pg. 9.

⁴ A. Koźmiński, *Zarządzanie w warunkach niepewności. Podręcznik dla zaawansowanych*, Warsaw 2004, pg. 7.

⁵ See J. Biernat, *Wymogi globalizacji – społeczeństwo wiedzy*, in *Regionalizacja i globalizacja w gospodarce światowej*, ed. J. Rymarczyk, vol. 1, Wrocław 2003, pg. 78.

⁶ W. Bokajło, *Edukacja w Polsce wobec wyzwań konkurencyjności Unii Europejskiej – kilka uwag wprowadzających*, in *Edukacja w Polsce wobec wyzwań konkurencyjności Unii Europejskiej*, ed. W. Bokajło, A. Wiktorska-Święcicka, Wrocław 2008, pg. 7n.

⁷ See B. Milerski, *Odnowienie umysłu, czyli o refleksyjnym charakterze kształcenia religijnego*, in *Świat idei edukacyjnych*, ed. W. Szulakiewicz, Toruń 2008, pg. 179.

⁸ *Act of December 14, 2016. Educational Law* (Dz. U. z 2017 r. poz. 59, 949 i 2203).

responsibility, proper relationships with others, and forming one's own religious worldview.⁹

Contemporary schools are obliged to develop educational programs that respond to the needs of the environment in which these programs are implemented. In practice, this means that many programs can exist. However, since no one has yet to find a resolution to the problem of education, one must assume that the only way to deal with this issue is to allow for diversity and to seek out solutions to particular problems as they arise in specific communities.

Existing educational systems propose either strategies to achieve certain goals and values, or they uphold certain personal examples for students to follow. Both approaches have their proponents and opponents.¹⁰ Since the individual who makes rational and independent decisions is the object of education, schools as educational institutions must create the conditions necessary for individuals to develop, form a worldview, and learn a system of values. In addition, schools must teach students that being independent means being responsible for one's decisions.¹¹ In order to make this possible, however, it is necessary for schools to create the appropriate educational system that will implement this assumption. It is impossible to separate upbringing from education, which is effective only when the schools foster an educational environment that is pro-development. In order for this to happen, it is necessary to: formulate the aim of education and upbringing, define the methods for achieving these aims, establish adequate institutions within schools that can implement these methods, and involve all members of the school community in the implementation process. True educational work requires the help, support, and involvement of many entities.¹² Procedures that must be applied within the realm of a school are described below.

Methods for Schools to Realize Their Educational Aims

In realizing its ambitious educational aims, a school must become a place where independent entities are constantly involved in

⁹ Ibid., Article 1, point 1.

¹⁰ See E. Fromm, *Escape from Freedom*, Holt Publisher, 1969.

¹¹ M. Nowak, *Współczesna koncepcja wychowania w szkole*, in *Wychowanie w szkole od bezradności ku możliwościom*, eds. R. Chałupniak, T. Michalewski, E. Smak, Opole 2014, pg. 58.

¹² J. Ratzinger, *God and the World*, trans. Henry Taylor, Ignatius Press, 2013.

education and where each person has clear rights and duties.¹³ Those who participate in the educational process at school must fulfill two conditions: 1) they must have mutual respect for the autonomy of others, and 2) awareness of the purpose and aims of their collaboration. The collective group cannot dominate the individual because then it will be impossible to carry out a particular activity.¹⁴

The students, teachers, management, and parents are the ones who actively create a school's educational environment. In some school arrangements, school staff (who are not teachers) also help create the school's educational environment on a daily basis.¹⁵ Among those involved, three kinds of relationships exist among students and teachers: an authoritarian relationship, a partnership, and an intermediary relationship.¹⁶

An authoritarian relationship between teachers and students exists in so-called traditional school structures. In such a relationship, the student is subordinate to the teacher.¹⁷ According to this model, students and teachers have different rights. The teacher knows what is good for the student because the system makes the teacher an authority to whom the student should be completely submissive.¹⁸ When a conflict arises, the teacher defers to his own point of view,¹⁹ and the student must be obedient to the teacher, follow instructions, and refrain from showing any emotions. As an immature individual, the student's only right is to learn. Experience demonstrates that the authoritarian relationship creates a rift between teachers and students. Rather than instilling respect in students, it breeds disrespect and the

¹³ See M. Szymański, *Socjologia edukacji. Zarys problematyki*, Cracow 2013 pg. 65.

¹⁴ K. Konarzewski, *O wychowaniu w szkole*, in *Sztuka nauczania. Czynności nauczyciela*, ed. K. Kruszewski, Warsaw 207, pg. 284n.

¹⁵ Por. G. Mazurkiewicz, *Edukacja i przywództwo. Modele mentalne jako bariery rozwoju*, Cracow 2012 pg. 44.

¹⁶ Por. H. Kopiec, *Szkoła wobec zagrożenia załamania się ładu moralnego*, in *Edukacja w procesie przemian cywilizacyjnych i kulturowych*. Part 3, eds. E. Holona, E. Nycz, Opole 1995, pgs. 35-45.

¹⁷ A. Sobala-Zbroszczyk, *Szkoła jako środowisko wychowawcze*, "Nowa szkoła" 5(1999), pg. 5n.

¹⁸ B. Śliwerski, *Wychowanie. Pojęcie – znaczenia – dylematy*, in *Wychowanie. Pojęcia – procesy – konteksty. Interdyscyplinarne ujęcie*, vol. 1, eds. M. Dudzikowa, M. Czerepaniak-Walczak, Gdansk 2007, pg. 38.

¹⁹ See Z. Struzik, *Program wychowawczy oparty na wartościach*, Warsaw 2007, pg. 9.

façade of obedience.²⁰ In such an environment, the school becomes a place of struggle, where two separate worlds function side-by-side. This makes both education and upbringing a farce.²¹

In partnership, students and teachers work together. As different entities, they have heterogeneous duties and a different scope of responsibility.²² Nevertheless, both students and teachers are entitled to equal rights, which allows them to communicate with each other in a transparent manner by clearly articulating their opinions, needs, and expectations. In this environment, teachers and students do not seek to gain an advantage over each other; instead, they complement each other. The teacher interacts with the students in a friendly way and, rather than trying to impose anything on them, seeks instead to persuade them.²³ In this relationship, the students are aware of their influence on what their education will look like, and this is why they communicate their needs and listen to others easily.

While it might seem that the partnership model meets current demands, it does entail certain dangers when it is implemented in the school setting. In this relationship, the teachers' role is to educate and form students, and the teachers' credentials and competence justify their dominant role in the classroom.²⁴ In turn, it is the students' role to develop, shape their worldview, and acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to live as adults.²⁵ Therefore, according to this model, students and teachers cannot be equal partners in the full sense of the word. When implemented in a realistic school setting, however, the beautiful, idealistic, and utopian concept of partnership turns against those who support it because teachers encounter difficulties if fulfilling their own obligations, and the students do not work toward obtaining the knowledge and skills that they need because they do

²⁰ Por. A. Krajewska, *Kryzys autorytetów w wychowaniu*, in *Autorytet w wychowaniu i edukacji*, ed. D. Łażewska, Józefów 2013 pg. 112n (112-124).

²¹ E. Lemańska-Lewandowska, *Nauczyciele a dyscyplina w klasie szkolnej*, Bydgoszcz 2013, pg. 22.

²² R. MacKenzie, *Kiedy pozwolić? Kiedy zabronić?*, trans. O. Waśkiewicz, Gdansk 2003, pgs. 147-155.

²³ Por. A.B. Kwiatkowski, *Wzorce osobowe działaczy społeczno-politycznych*, Pultusk 2013, pg. 56.

²⁴ Por. L. Bakiera, B. Harwas-Napierała, *Wzory osobowe w rozwoju człowieka*, pg. 91.

²⁵ E. Lemańska-Lewandowska, *Nauczyciele a dyscyplina w klasie szkolnej*, pg. 22.

not feel compelled to do so. In this way, development becomes an educational fiction.²⁶

The only way out of this impasse is to create a relationship model that is advantageous to both teachers and students, but also avoids the disadvantages of the models mentioned above. The transitional relationship model achieves both. According to this model, teachers clearly set the limits of the behavior that they will tolerate; they always try to present their point of view in a rational manner; and they justify the boundaries that they have set. Such teachers are consistent, they react decisively in situations where students cross the boundaries, and they do not hide their emotions.²⁷ In this model, students know the aims and values that the established rules are created to achieve. Students are aware that, by breaking or rejecting these rules, they can no longer be members of the school community.²⁸

The relationships mentioned above are insufficient to enable effective education. Rather, an entire pedagogical team made up of individuals who work together is necessary to create and maintain a flexible system to meet the demands of today. Therefore, it is necessary to establish in schools educational institutions that help implement the intermediary model described above.²⁹

School Educational Institutions

Organizational groups on school campuses are very important to maintain the stability of an educational system. Educational institutions should help mediate how people react in difficult situations. They should also serve as a resource to which every member of the school community who finds himself in crisis can appeal.³⁰ Such a body is necessary because the effectiveness of a school's educational system is determined by the way in which conflicts that arise on campus are resolved.

The most important institution in an educational system should be a social contract into which the teachers and students enter. This contract does not pertain to the teacher's essential work. This social contract should enable both parties to know how to formulate their

²⁶ Por. A. Sobala-Zbroszczyk, *Szkoła jako środowisko wychowawcze*, pg. 9.

²⁷ T. Szkudlarek, *Pedagogika krytyczna*, in *Pedagogika. Podręcznik akademicki, Vol. 1*, eds. Z. Kwieciński, B. Śliwerski, Warsaw 2004, pg. 367

²⁸ See A. B. Kwiatkowski, *Wzorce osobowe działaczy społeczno-politycznych*, pg. 15.

²⁹ Z. Struzik, *Program wychowawczy oparty na wartościach*, Warsaw 2007, pg. 10.

³⁰ *Act of December 14, 2016. Educational Law* (Dz. U. z 2017 r. poz. 59, 949 i 2203).

needs and express the real intentions behind their needs.³¹ In an educational system, contracts demonstrate the most effective yet simplest ways to resolve conflicts.³² The purpose of contracts is that they make it possible for individuals to come to a rational compromise that will satisfy both parties and strengthen their subjectivity. In an educational sense, a contract serves to make both parties aware of their rights and responsibilities.³³ At the beginning of each academic year, every teacher should create an agreement with the class that defines the rules of working together in a community.³⁴ In this way, there is something to appeal to in case a conflict occurs.

Social agreements are real and effective educational tools. Because of these agreements, students learn responsibility and respect for others as well as good problem-solving methods. By implementing social agreements, schools show their students that they must abide by certain social rules. Contracts also specify the boundaries and the consequences that result when these boundaries are crossed.³⁵ However, even when an agreement has been established, it cannot foresee or anticipate every situation. For example, there are situations wherein one party wants to achieve its goal but, in order to do so, it is necessary to obtain the consent of the other party, which does not wish to give its consent. In this situation, it is impossible to enter into an agreement because a contract is supposed to ensure that both parties benefit. In addition, another situation can occur in which one party has legitimate concerns that its interests are not being sufficiently met. Hence the existence of an educational institution that is oriented toward working in a sustainable manner, meaning via a contract.

A contract is an agreement that is proposed by one party, most often in a situation where there is a conflict of interest, and formulated to define mutual obligations and ensure both parties with a sense of security. A contract is also a one-sided agreement to which another party must give its consent if it wishes to resolve a current problem. To this end, a contract should be written or typed and signed by both parties.

³¹ A Olczak, *Umowa społeczna z dzieckiem jako strategia pracy otwierającej na społeczeństwo*, <http://www.ipp.uz.zgora.pl/~aolczak/teksty/21.pdf> (01.22.2018).

³² Por. A. Sobala-Zbroszczyk, *Szkoła jako środowisko wychowawcze*, pg. 11.

³³ M. Łuszczynska, *Umowa społeczna jako fundament życia zbiorowego*, "Studia Iuridica Lublinensia" 12(2014), pg. 43 (43-54).

³⁴ For more on this topic, please see: E. Góralczyk, *Umowa z klasą*, Warsaw 2009.

³⁵ Por. L. Dziewięcka-Bokun, *Polska szkoła wyższa wobec szans i wyzwań europejskiej przestrzeni edukacyjnej*, in *Edukacja w Polsce wobec wyzwań konkurencyjności Unii Europejskiej*, pg. 57 (51-62).

It is should also state what the consequences are when the contract is broken. It is possible to enter into a contract with a single student, a group, or an entire class.³⁶ The educational aim of this institution is to show individuals who engage in social life that they have their rights and can defend them. The refusal to follow a particular law always entails certain consequences that an individual must suffer in order to maintain the possibility of further cooperation.

In schools, conflicts that the parties are unable to resolve can occur. In this case, it is necessary to seek resolution through the help of someone else, such as a negotiator or mediator. This individual should be a member of the school community and, therefore, familiar with the school's rules; able to remain impartial; and considered an authority by both parties involved in the conflict.³⁷ Most often, only the school principal can fulfill this role.

Within a school environment, there are hundreds of other minor and troublesome conflicts that need to be resolved. Therefore, so-called "quick response" educational institutions are necessary to enable all teachers to follow a consistent educational policy on a daily basis.³⁸ Restrictions also have their place in the educational system, but they should be used only as a last resort. Only multiple and diverse educational tools make it possible for educators to teach responsibility and effectively solve school conflicts.

Subjects of the Educational Process

The roles of individual entities are apparent in the activities of the educational institutions described above. A school is dynamic environment that includes everyone who participates in it. For this reason, all of the entities that operate within a school influence the educational process.³⁹ So, what role do other entities play in the educational process in order to ensure that education is consistent and achieves the desired end(s)?

Teachers have the most contact with students, so their role in education is the most important.⁴⁰ For this reason, teachers must be

³⁶ B. Brzozowska, *Zawieranie kontraktów z uczniami*, <http://edurada.pl/artykuly/zawieranie-kontraktow-z-uczniemi/> (01.15.2018).

³⁷ Por. E. Rutkowska, *Mediacje i inne sposoby rozwiązywania konfliktów w gimnazjum*, Warsaw 2015, pg. 9.

³⁸ M. S. Szymański, *O metodzie projektów*, Warsaw 2000, pgs. 7-8.

³⁹ Por. T. Gordon, *Wychowanie bez porażek*, Warsaw 1998, pg. 19.

⁴⁰ E. Kobyłecka, *Nauczyciel wobec współczesnych zadań edukacyjnych*, Cracow 2005, pg. 12.

consistent in applying the rules of cooperation in the classroom. Failure to do so destroys any sense of collaboration. It is equally important for teachers to foster good relationships between students and establish and maintain mutual respect and trust. This can be achieved only when teachers abandon the façade of schoolmasters, which gives them a false sense of security; demonstrate to the students that they have their own strengths and weaknesses; and show they are ready to collaborate and be in authentic contact.⁴¹ The teacher who is also an educator plays a special role here.⁴²

Students are indispensable in the education process, and their influence on each other is decisive because they will one day grow up and interact in society. Students are particularly influential when they consciously take advantage of their rights and express their willingness to take responsibility for specific school activities. Student Council is a good way to help students learn to be proactive.⁴³

Parent cooperation in difficult situations (i.e. conflicts) is also very important, and such cooperation should take place in the everyday life of the school.⁴⁴ From current practice, it is obvious that “an educator who does not cooperate with parents will have no impact on the student’s personality and psychological development. Their cooperative role should be one of teacher-functionaries.”⁴⁵ It does not have to be standard practice for parents to be present on a school campus. Rather, teachers should invite parents to the school or classroom for designated meetings and regular conversations that do not necessarily have anything to do with difficult situations pertaining to their child. In this way, parents are welcome to the school environment for reasons other than resolving problems related to their children.⁴⁶

The school principal should serve as a negotiator or mediator when resolving particularly difficult conflicts at school. Because of the principal’s role, he or she is also someone to whom others can appeal; who can assess the activity of other educational institutions at the school;

⁴¹ Por. A. Aleksander, *Drogi i bezdroża, czyli słów kilka o autorytecie nauczyciela w okresie przemian*, “Edukacja Dorosłych” 1(1999), pgs. 56-86.

⁴² Por. A. Konopnicki, *Rola pedagoga szkolnego w rzeczywistości edukacyjnej*, in *Wychowanie w szkole od bezradności ku możliwościom*, pg. 218n.

⁴³ Por. P. Ziółkowski, *Samorząd uczniowski: idee, uwarunkowania i doświadczenia*, Bydgoszcz 2014, pg. 9.

⁴⁴ Educational System Act, September 7, 1991 (Dz.U. 1991 nr 95, poz. 425).

⁴⁵ E. Kosińska, *Rodzice a szkoła*, Cracow 1999, pg. 47.

⁴⁶ Por. K. Hernik, K. Malinowska, *Jak skutecznie współpracować i komunikować się z rodzicami i społecznością lokalną*, Warsaw 2015, pg. 9.

and who can make independent decisions in contentious matters.⁴⁷ In the educational process, the principal is only one of many participants. Therefore, the principal should not act as a judge because his or her autonomy could be taken away by other entities in the educational environment.⁴⁸ The team of educators should meet regularly in order to talk about current problems and share their experiences so that they can learn from each other.

Working Towards Teaching and Educational Schools

With regard to the turbulent development of civilization that will occur in the next decade, many new phenomena have appeared that dynamically affect contemporary students.⁴⁹ The lives of young people have become saturated with unprecedented technological and scientific progress as well as cultural changes.⁵⁰ The significant number and quality of these changes have had a particular influence on how students function in the contemporary world in the area of norms and values.⁵¹ Despite schools' educational entities' efforts to achieve the highest pedagogical mastery, radical changes have not taken place in the lives of particular pupils. It is for this reason that Pope Francis wrote the following in his Apostolic Letter *Misericordia et Misera*:

In a culture often dominated by technology, sadness and loneliness appear to be on the rise, not least among young people. The future seems prey to an uncertainty that does not make for stability. This often gives rise to depression, sadness and boredom, which can gradually lead to despair. We need witnesses to hope and true joy if we are to dispel the illusions that promise quick and easy happiness through artificial paradises.⁵²

⁴⁷ Por. B. Tołwińska, *Kierowanie szkołą: rola dyrektora – partycypacja nauczycieli*, in *Przywództwo edukacyjne w szkole i jej otoczeniu*, eds. S.M. Kwiatkowski, J.M. Michalak, I. Nowosad, Warsaw 2011, pg. 105.

⁴⁸ A. Iszczuk, *Dyrektor szkoły – pierwszy odpowiedzialny za wychowanie w szkole*, in *Wychowanie w szkole od bezradności ku możliwościom*, pg. 171 (171-176).

⁴⁹ Por. A. Kielian, *Wychowanie w szkole w dokumentach Unii Europejskiej*, in *Wychowanie w szkole od bezradności ku możliwościom*, pg. 15-16 (11-22).

⁵⁰ A. Potocki, *Wychowanie religijne w polskich przemianach*, Warsaw 2017, pg. 199.

⁵¹ Por. M. Szymański. *Socjologia edukacji. Zarys problematyki*. Cracow 2013, pg. 65.

⁵² Francis. Apostolic Letter: *Misericordia et Misera*, Vatican City, 2016, 3, https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_letters/documents/papa-francesco-lettera-ap_20161120_misericordia-et-misera.html (05.04.2018).

Values-based educational programs must fulfill this mission in contemporary schools.⁵³ In other words, schools must form their students to follow the natural principle to do what is good for religious motives.⁵⁴

Contemporary Polish curriculum also includes religion. A correct understanding of this issue should resolve the difficult choice that the Catholic Church must make when it proposes educational strategies to modern schools.⁵⁵ Among its priorities, the Catholic Church wants to be educationally relevant and useful; this is why the Church wishes to illuminate educational dilemmas with the light of the evangelical truth. The Church achieves this by demonstrating that, even if the contemporary world's educational ideas distance themselves from God and religion, religion does not distance itself from the world, which it authentically desires to serve.⁵⁶

Catechetics

The General Directory for Catechesis states that "The relationship between religious instruction in schools and catechesis is one of distinction and complementarity: 'there is an absolute necessity to distinguish clearly between religious instruction and catechesis'" (73). When analyzing the educational guidelines for all school subjects through which the school wishes to educate new citizens, it is evident that teaching religion involves a similar realm of activity.⁵⁷ Students are encouraged to be responsible for their own choices, especially those that concern other people.⁵⁸ In this context, the correlative possibilities are almost limitless and should focus on a range of key skills that will be useful to the students during their adult lives.

⁵³ Z. Struzik, *Program wychowawczy oparty na wartościach*, pg. 9.

⁵⁴ Por. A. Dulles, *The Splendor of Faith: The Theological Vision of Pope John Paul II*, The Crossroad Publishing Company, 2003.

⁵⁵ "If we do not answer simple questions about God, the Commandments, Gospel teaching, the Teaching Office of the Church, the limits of freedom, the way to human emancipation, the right of some to tell others what is important, then we will never really reach education." A. Nalaskowski, *Szkoła jako dobro kultury wobec mechanizmów edukacji*, "Paedagogia Christiana" 1(1997), pg. 62.

⁵⁶ Por. M. Zając, *Idea Królestwa Bożego w nauczaniu katechetycznym*, in *Scripturae Lumen. Ewangelia o Królestwie*, ed. A. Paciorek, Lublin 2009, pg. 435.

⁵⁷ S. Ruciński, *Wychowanie jako wprowadzenie w życie wartościowe*, Warsaw 1988, pg. 14.

⁵⁸ Por. *Rozporządzenie Ministra Edukacji Narodowej z dnia 23 grudnia 2008 r. w sprawie podstawy programowej wychowania przedszkolnego oraz kształcenia ogólnego w poszczególnych typach szkół* (Dz. U. z January 15, 2009, no 4, poz. 17.

In light of the above, religious education proposes two possible ways to consider the issues that are important to schools.⁵⁹ First, all interactions that occur on a school's campus involve elements that are considered to be morally negative (e.g. competition, eliminating one's opponents, aggression, the desire to win at all cost). Because of this, teaching religion in schools can potentially minimize morally negative values that can manifest in student activities. Second, all school activities involve elements that are morally positive (i.e., cooperation, unity in a group, the principle of "fair play," forgiveness, the ability to apologize and reconcile). Therefore, forming new citizens in a digital age through religious education can strengthen their positive moral values by providing them with supernatural motivation.⁶⁰ Despite the best intentions and efforts of people involved in the educational and formation process, it is not possible to avoid all educational difficulties and crises. Sometimes it is necessary to refer to a religious motivation such as "life has deeper meaning"⁶¹ when resolving a very difficult problem.

The educational means used until now by so-called "traditional schools" are losing their splendor and spiritual authority. In school, just like in life, individuals have become increasingly more bereft of moral principles and ruthless in the last two decades. Students' criminal behavior toward their peers as well as scandals involving violence have shown the hegemony that dominates noble competition.⁶² From an ethical point of view, the problem is much more complicated. Most likely, there is no middleman who can help heal this situation. Therefore, Christian education—or moral education that is inspired by evangelical principles—should be included among every teacher, trainer, tutor, and educator's duties.⁶³ This education should begin early in order to instill in children and youth a stable code of moral values before they develop their own work and professional interests as adults.⁶⁴

⁵⁹ P. Mąkosa, *Szkolna lekcja religii istotnym elementem wychowania w szkole*, in *Wychowanie w szkole od bezradności ku możliwościom*, pg. 353.

⁶⁰ See B. Śliwerski, *Program wychowawczy szkoły*, Warsaw 2001, pg. 28.

⁶¹ P. Mąkosa, *Największa jest miłość. Ewangelizacyjny katechizm młodych*, Tarnow 2015, pg. 7.

⁶² See M. Zajac, *Agresja wśród młodzieży jako problem katechetyczny*, in *Katecheza młodzieży*, ed. S. Kulpaczyński, Lublin 2003, pg. 335.

⁶³ Z. Struzik, *Program wychowawczy oparty na wartościach*, pg. 10.

⁶⁴ Por. S. Dziekoński, *Korelacja wychowania w rodzinie, parafii i szkole. Potrzeba i możliwości*, in *Rodzina - Szkoła - Kościół*, Warsaw 2003, pgs. 30-31.

Conclusion

When creating an educational system in schools, it is necessary to define the aims of education, the methods used to achieve these aims, as well as the role of particular subjects in the educational process. The solutions proposed here illustrate precisely this kind of coherent and consistent system, which seeks to meet the challenges of modern times and create the necessary conditions for students to develop and learn how to live well in a society founded on liberalism and democracy, meaning a knowledge-based society. This educational system should also be based on religious principles.

MOŻLIWOŚCI WYCHOWAWCZE WSPÓŁCZESNEJ SZKOŁY

Podstawowym celem artykułu jest ukazanie, w jaki sposób potencjał wychowawczy szkoły może wpłynąć na ukształtowanie ucznia, który będzie się sprawnie poruszał w przestrzeniach społeczeństwa opartego na wiedzy, zachowując poprawne relacje z innymi ludźmi. Podjęta będzie próba wskazania, jak szkoła wykorzystując swój kapitał ludzki oraz organizacyjny powinna uczynić edukacyjne doświadczenia uczniów koherentnymi z najpilniejszymi wyzwaniami dorosłego życia w społeczeństwie opartym na wiedzy. Artykuł zakończą wskazania, jak dzieło wychowania może przysłużyć się nauczaniu religii. Postulaty końcowe będą dotyczyć wykorzystania potencjału duchowego w edukacji szkolnej.

Słowa kluczowe: edukacja, wychowanie, szkoła, nauczanie religii.

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Social Insurance for Religious and Clergy in Polish Legislation

This article considers issues pertaining to social insurance for clergy and religious in Poland. More specifically, this article discusses regulations concerning when clergy and religious must enroll in mandatory and/or voluntary retirement, disability, and accident insurance as well as the consequences of not paying the premium when and in the amount it is due. This study also presents the consequences of having more than one insurance title. In practice, these issues raise the most doubts.

Key words: religious, clergy, social insurance, insurance premium.

Introduction

The Act regarding social insurance systems implemented on October 13, 1998¹ differentiated four types of insurance due to the type of risk it protects: retirement and pension insurance, medical and maternity insurance, as well as accident insurance (for work accidents and occupational disease). The clergy are included among those individuals who either must have or be voluntarily covered by these insurances. According to Article 8, section 13 of the u.s.u.s., clergy are defined as priests and members of male and female religious orders within the Catholic Church as well as other church and religious associations, with the exception of seminarians, novices, postulants, and junior candidates who are under 25 years of age. It follows from the above provision that every person who is part of the clergy or a male or

¹ Dz. U. z 2017 r., poz. 1778. Abbreviated hereafter as “u.s.u.s.”

female member of a religious order must be covered by social insurance after being ordained or making final vows regardless of their age and the church to which they belong. This is not the case, however, for seminarians and candidates for religious or monastic life (novices, postulants, etc.) who, according to the statutory provisions, must be enrolled in a social insurance policy after the age of 25. Until then, seminarians, novices, postulants, and junior candidates are excluded from social insurance. They are able, however, to join optional retirement and disability pension plans (Article 7 of the u.s.u.s.). By virtue of the law, these insurances terminate on the day that these individuals have reached the appropriate age, been ordained, or made final vows.

The citizenship of clerics, religious, and candidates for the clerical life does not matter. Consequently, the precepts contained the Act concern both clergy who are Polish citizens and clergy who are citizens of other countries and also take into account the exemptions provided for in Article 5, section 2 of the u.s.u.s, which particularly concerns citizens of foreign countries who are staying in Poland temporarily. Foreigners are considered those who live in countries outside of the European Union, the European Economic Area, and Switzerland. The subjection of those who are from Switzerland to the Polish insurance system is regulated by the Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council (WE) nr 883/2004 on coordinating social security systems, which was enforced on April 29, 2004.²

Mandatory and Optional Insurance for Clergy

According to Article 6, paragraph 1, point 10 of the u.s.u.s., clergy must have retirement and pension insurance.³ An exception to this is contained in Article 9 of the u.s.u.s., which concerns multiple insurance titles. When spiritual ministry is linked to other kinds of professional activity or the collection of certain benefits, then the obligation to be insured is associated with a different legal status than the clerical status, or it includes more titles. In this regard, a number of doubts arise in practice. Employees and members of agricultural production cooperatives and agricultural cooperative groups⁴ who

² Dz. Urz. UE L 166 z 30.04.2004 r., str. 1, z późn. zm.

³ This also applies when an individual simultaneously collects unemployment benefits, integration benefits, scholarships during internships, or the vocational training of adults. See Article 9, paragraph 6a of the u.s.u.s

⁴ For those who have privileged titles, they can collect training, social benefits, and social allowance or remuneration due while coal mining service is provided or when using a scholarship for retraining.

are also members of the clergy must always have retirement and disability insurance both as farmers whose titles are absolute and also as clergy, provided that they submit the proper application to the Zakład Ubezpieczeń Społecznych [Social Security Administration] (hereafter abbreviated as ZUS; see Article 9, paragraph 1 of the u.s.u.s.). Article 9, paragraph 1 of the u.s.u.s. contains an exception, which concerns the basis for assessing an obligatory retirement insurance contribution. This provision stipulates that, if the amount per month is lower than the minimum wage, then the person who remains in an employment relationship or membership in a farming or agricultural cooperative *ex lege* must have mandatory retirement and disability insurance, both under absolute titles as well as a cleric or religious. This is also the case when someone who has the status of a cleric is also part of a civil legal agreement (see Article 9, paragraph 2c of the u.s.u.s.). If clerics obtain profits from a contract for the provision of services in an amount lower than the minimum remuneration, then it is obligatory for them to have insurance.

Law

The mandatory subject of retirement and disability insurance for two titles also includes pastoral ministry and maternity or child benefit allowance (Article 9, paragraph 1d of the u.s.u.s.) as well as the members of a supervisory board for remuneration (Article 9, paragraph 9 of the u.s.u.s.).

Article 9, paragraph 2 of the u.s.u.s. states that a person who meets the conditions for mandatory retirement and disability pension coverage under several titles (remote work contract, an agency agreement, a commission contract, non-agricultural activity, or receiving a salary as a deputy, senator, or clergy) is mandatorily covered by whichever insurance the individual enrolled in first. It follows from this provision that, as a general rule, mandatory social insurance is associated with the earliest insurance title. Consequently, clergy who are contracted to provide services before becoming clergy are excluded from pension and disability insurance. The party of interest may, however, apply for insurance for the remaining, all, or selected titles, or change the insurance title. In this regard, clergy can take advantage not only of insurance titles on a voluntary basis, but also on a compulsory one,⁵ which means that, with permission, they can be insured under

⁵ Similarly, A. Pędziński, *Podstawa wymiaru składek na ubezpieczenia społeczne i ubezpieczenia zdrowotne*, P i ZS 1999, no. 9, pg. 33; A. Pędziński, *Zmiany przepisów z zakresu podlegania ubezpieczeniom społecznym i składek na ubezpieczenie społeczne oraz na Fundusz Pracy i Fundusz Gwarantowanych Świadczeń Pracowniczych*, P i ZS 2000, no. 1, pg. 16. T. Bińczycka-Majewska is of a different opinion; she thinks that the interested individual may use the

a different title than the one that was arranged earliest. This does not apply to situations, however, where a member of the clergy runs a non-agricultural business at the same time. In this case, pursuant to Article 9, paragraph 7 of the u.s.u.s., a given person is mandatorily subject to social insurance as an economic entity regardless of the date the insurance began. In this case, a person cannot exercise the right to change the insurance title.

The right to enroll in voluntary insurance as a member of the clergy can be exercised by someone who receives a retirement or disability pension that combines such benefits with the employment relationship (membership in a cooperative) or civil law contracts. The decree issued by the Appellate Court of Gdansk on June 17, 2015⁶ upholds that, once a member of the clergy's right to a retirement pension is acquired, this individual is obligated to pay contributions to the pension and disability insurance pursuant to Article 6, paragraph 1, point 10 of the u.s.u.s. A member of the clergy who receives a pension at the same time as he performs work on the basis of an employment relationship pursuant to Article 9, paragraph 4 of the u.s.u.s. is mandatorily subject to this insurance only as an employee.

The case mentioned above also applies to a member of the clergy who is simultaneously in a service relationship (Article 9, paragraph 8 of the u.s.u.s.). Based on Article 8, paragraph 15 of the u.s.u.s., those in service are professional soldiers and uniformed offices, in particular the Police, Internal Security Agency, and Foreign Intelligence Agency, Border Patrol, State Fire Service, and Customs and Tax Service. Professional soldiers and officers of these services do not fall within the scope of social insurance, but rather social provision. These resolutions, however, raise some doubts. In the first sentence of Article 7 of the Act of February 18, 1994, which speaks about retirement provision for officers of the Police, Internal Security Agency, Intelligence Agency, Military Counterintelligence Service, Military Intelligence Service, Central Anticorruption Bureau, Border Patrol, Government Protection Bureau, State Fire Service, Customs Service, the Tax Office, and the Prison Service and their families,⁷ it states that, the right to a retirement or disability pension provided for in the Act, along with

option provided for in the said provision only in the case that the person has optional insurance. See T. Bińczycka-Majewska, *Zbieg tytułów ubezpieczenia emerytalnego i rentowego w nowym systemie ubezpieczeń społecznych*, P i ZS 2000, no. 12, pg. 5.

⁶ III AUa 99/15, LEX nr 1764095.

⁷ Dz.U. z 2016 r., poz. 708 z późn. zm. Abbreviated hereafter as u.z.e.f.

the right to a retirement or disability pension or to the retirement or family salary provided for in separate regulations, pays out either the higher benefit or the one that the entitled person selects insofar as specific provisions do not state otherwise. The same regulations apply to the Act of December 17, 1998 regarding retirement and disability pensions from the Social Insurance Fund.⁸ Article 95, paragraph 1 of the u.e.r. provides that, in the event that an individual has the right to several benefits provided for in the Act pays, then he pays for either the higher benefit or the benefit of his choice. This provision also applies in the event that an individual forgoes the right to a retirement or disability pension specified in the Act, along with the right to the benefits provided for in the retirement provision for persons referred to in Article 2, paragraph 2, except when a military or police pension has been calculated in accordance with the precepts set out in Article 15a or Article 18e of the Act issued on December 10, 1993, which concerns the retirement provision of professional soldiers and their families, or in Article 15a, Article 15d, or Article 18e of the u.z.e.f. It follows from the aforementioned provisions that a person who acquires a pension under both social provision and social insurance is entitled to only one benefit—namely, the more favorable benefit in terms of the amount, or the one that the beneficiary chooses. The exception to this case is contained in the second sentence of Article 95, paragraph 1 of the u.e.r., which specifies the situations in which this limitation does not apply. As a result, officers of uniformed services who are entitled to retirement on the basis of the regulations indicated have the right to combine benefits from two areas of social security (provision and insurance). This option is also available to professional soldiers and officers who were first called to serve after December 31, 2012. In the case of the latter, this option was also created for individuals enlisted in service after January 1, 1999 and for Customs Service Officers who began serving after September 14, 1999.⁹

Article 2, paragraph 2 of the u.e.r., also points out that professional soldiers and officers of other uniformed services acquire retirement or pension benefits according to the regulations set forth in this Act if they do not meet the conditions necessary to acquire the right (or have lost the right) to benefits specified in the rules on retirement provision for these persons, and to the members of the families who remain after these persons. Submitting additional pension and disability insurance

⁸ Dz. U. z 2017 r., poz. 1383 z późn. zm. Abbreviated hereafter as u.e.r.

⁹ This also concerns customs officers whose employment relationship has changed into a business relationship.

during service may provide higher-rank officers with better social security benefits. However, considering information about the financial state of the Social Insurance Fund and predictions regarding future pensions, it is unlikely that those in uniform, including those who are simultaneously religious and clergy, would be interested in joining social insurance.

According to Article 11, paragraph 2 of the u.s.u.s., clergy have the right to sign-up for medical insurance if they are covered by mandatory retirement and pension insurance. *A contrario* clergy who, based on Article 9 of the u.s.u.s., are not subject to retirement and pension insurance at all or who are voluntarily covered by such insurance are not allowed to sign-up for medical insurance.¹⁰

If clergy have either mandatory or optional retirement and disability insurance, then they are also obliged to enroll in accident insurance (see Article 12 of the u.s.u.s.).

Social Insurance Coverage

According to Article 13, point 10 of the u.s.u.s., clerics are subject to clerical status and to mandatory insurance (retirement, disability, and accident insurance) from the day that they are admitted to the clerical state. Therefore, from a legal point of view, they are obliged to have insurance starting on the day that they are ordained or make vows. In the case of seminarians, novices, postulants, and junior candidates, they are obliged to have insurance starting when they have reached 25 years of age. The insurance expires the moment that these individuals resign from or leave the religious or clerical state before the age indicated. In the Decree of August 21, 2013,¹¹ the Court of Appeals in Rzeszow stated that the phrase “until the day that one leaves this state” contained in Article 13, point 10 of the u.s.u.s. should be explained (with regard to the representatives of the Catholic Church from the point of view of Canon Law) only as the situation wherein a person has forfeited the religious state or has been defrocked (by either a court verdict or administrative decree that declares the invalidity of ordination, the punishment of expulsion imposed in accordance with the codes of the law, respect of the Holy See). In this respect, the court considered the statement of the interested party inadequate. The court noted that, based on the justification, a different line of reasoning would lead to

¹⁰ Por. W. Sobczak, *Ubezpieczenie społeczne na wniosek zainteresowanego*, PUS i G 1999, no. 3, pg.16.

¹¹ III AUa 468/13, LEX nr 1366133.

absurd situations wherein the insurance system's coverage would depend on the declaration.

In principle, optional insurance covers clergy during the periods indicated in the application for inclusion and exclusion from these insurances. In special cases, these insurance contracts cease *ex lege*. According to Article 14, paragraph 2, point 2 of the u.s.u.s., this goes into effect on the first day of the calendar month for which the premiums are due but have not been paid on time, unless the ZUS accepts the insured's application to agree to pay the premium after its due date. The application should indicate the circumstances justifying the assignment of a new date of payment.

Law

Regardless of whether it is obligatory or optional, social insurance entails the obligation to pay contributions that are due on time. This argument was upheld by the Warsaw Court of Appeals on October 4, 2000¹² in its ruling that the person who applies for voluntary medical insurance and expects benefits from the pension provider is obliged to pay the insurance premiums on time and in the appropriate amount.

Article 47, paragraph 1 of the u.s.u.s. states that contributions should be paid no later than 1) the 10th day of the following month, in the case of a cleric who pays only for himself, 2) by the 5th day of the following month, in the case of budgetary units, budgetary establishments, and ancillary enterprises, and 3) by the 15th day of the following month, for other payers.

Article 14, paragraph 2, point 2 of the u.s.u.s. indicates that violating the deadline specified in Article 47, paragraph 1 of the u.s.u.s. results, in principle, in a given person's automatic exclusion from health insurance. The insured may, however, request and obtain consent to pay the premium after the deadline. If the pension provider agrees and the insured pays his contribution in the time period set by ZUS, then the social insurance will continue. If the pension provider does not grant consent, then the health insurance expires by virtue of the law. The provision stipulates that the pension provider agree to this change in "justifiable cases." The legislation does not explain this term, leaving the pension provider to assess the situation and determine whether the insured's justification of his failure to meet the payment deadline is reasonable. This reason should be objective. If the circumstances were due to the insured's deliberate fault, then they do not warrant restoring the due date.¹³ This does not mean, however, that the applicant

¹² III Aua 1514/99, OSA 2001, nr 4, poz. 15.

¹³ See the decree issued by the Court of Appeals of Lublin on July 19, 2017, III AUa 1434/16, LEX nr 2333181.

is completely at fault.¹⁴ Consent to pay the premiums on a different date than the one required by insurance regulations is completely justified in the event that the delay was not excessive and occurred, for example, due to illness.

On August 8, 2001, the Supreme Court ruled that in every case a subject's termination of voluntary social insurance coverage or reintroduction of voluntary social insurance requires that the person concerned submit a new application. However, once a voluntary insurance title does cease to exist by law, then payment for voluntary social insurance contributions does not ensure continued insurance coverage by the expired voluntary social insurance. The decision of the pension body to refuse to restore the deadline for paying voluntary social security contributions (currently, not agreeing to pay the premium after the deadline) is subject to appeal to the labor and social security courts.¹⁵ The Supreme Court of Gdansk also came to a similar decision on September 29, 2016.¹⁶ The court stated that the competence awarded to the pension body should be determined by verifiable and fair criteria. ZUS should disclose the reasons why it refused to agree to allow the individual to pay the premium after the deadline, and its decision is subject to substantive assessment by the court.

In light of the provision of the Act, health insurance ceases by law in the event of non-payment within the time period that the premium for the insurance policy is due. The same applies if the premium is not paid in full. The Supreme Court decision on April 18, 2012 confirms this conclusion.¹⁷ It states that the use of the term "premium due" is intentional because the adjective that refers to the contribution means that it is full premium and not just part of the premium. The premium due is that which should be paid. If the premium is not due

¹⁴ See the decree issued by the Court of Appeals of Lublin on October 27, 2016, III AUa 253/16, LEX nr 2157790; decree issued by the Court of Appeals of Lublin on May 31, 2017, III AUa 1298/16, LEX ne 2304349.

¹⁵ The decree issued by the Supreme Court on November 7, 2001, II UKN 577/00, OSNP 2003, nr 15, poz. 361; decree issued by the Court of Appeals of Gdansk on May 6, 2016, III AUa 2104/15, LEX nr 2106961; decree issued by the Court of Appeals of Gdansk on June 8, 2016, III AUa 148/16, LEX nr 2106943.

¹⁶ III AUa 684/16, LEX nr 2157829; the decision issued by the Court of Appeals of Lodz on November 3, 2000, III AUa 774/00, upholds that the literal and systemic interpretation of the provision of the second sentence of Article 14, paragraph 2, point 2 of the Act that was issued on October 13, 1998 regarding the social insurance system indicates that ZUS's position, which is expressed the matter of restoring the payment deadline for voluntary insurance contributions, is not subject to judicial review, OSA 2001, nr 2, poz. 5.

¹⁷ II UK 188/11, LEX nr 1217208.

and, therefore, less than due, then the voluntary medical insurance ceases to exist under the law.

If the benefit was collected for part of a given month, then medical insurance ceases from the day following the last day for which the allowance provides coverage. The same applies if an individual receives remuneration for his inability to work as a result of illness or sequestration due to an infectious disease.

As a rule, contributions toward mandatory pension, disability, and accident insurance for clergy are financed in the following way: 20% of the premium is covered by the insured, and the remaining 80% is covered by the Church Fund. The latter pays insurance premiums for members of contemplative cloistered orders and missionaries while they are working in mission territory. The provisions stipulate that the Church Fund is obliged to pay 80% of the amount (which is the difference between the amount of the minimum wage and the income from work provided as an employee) toward mandatory retirement and pension insurance for clergy who provide spiritual service. Clergy who obtain voluntary insurance are obliged to pay their contributions toward it in full.

In general, minimum wage is used to calculate insurance payments. The amount may be increased at the insured's request. The clergy or diocesan and religious institutes should finance the premium from the base of the assessment in the part exceeding the value of the minimum remuneration (Article 18, paragraph 11 of the u.s.u.s.).

Conclusion

In the social insurance system, the religious state as a rule is an independent insurance title. In particular circumstances, it is necessary to be subject to pension and disability insurance under other titles as well. This applies to situations wherein the basis for social insurance contributions under an employment contract or the execution of a civil law contract is lower than the minimum remuneration. In the first case, however, coverage includes only the difference between the remuneration obtained and the minimum wage. This limitation, however, is irrelevant with regard to mandated contracts and contracts for the provision of services. Remuneration (due to contracts) that is lower than the minimum remuneration makes it necessary for the insured to pay premiums for both a civil law contract and for pastoral ministry.

Clergy who engage in business are mandatorily subject to social insurance as an economic entity, which is different from other kinds

of non-agricultural activities. In effect, according to the general rule, a member of the clergy who is also an artist, for example, and is subject to the retirement and pension insurance for the role in which he enrolled earliest, can also change the insurance title.

Some officers of uniformed services have an opportunity to simultaneously collect insurance benefits and social provision. It is highly doubtful whether such regulations violate the constitutional principle of equality.

UBEZPIECZENIA SPOŁECZNE DUCHOWNYCH W USTAWODAWSTWIE POLSKIM



Przedmiotem rozważań są kwestie dotyczące podlegania ubezpieczeniom społecznym przez osoby duchowne. Omówiono sytuacje, w których duchowni są objęci tymi ubezpieczeniami w sposób obowiązkowy. Dotyczy to ubezpieczeń emerytalnego, rentowych oraz wypadkowego. Analizie poddano także przepisy regulujące dobrowolne ubezpieczenie chorobowe, zwracając w szczególności uwagę na konsekwencje wiążące się z nieopłaceniem należnej składki. W opracowaniu przedstawiono także konsekwencje wynikające ze zbiegu tytułów ubezpieczeniowych. W praktyce kwestie te budzą największą wątpliwość.

Słowa kluczowe: duchowny, ubezpieczenia społeczne, składka na ubezpieczenia.

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4. W. Sobczak, *Ubezpieczenie społeczne na wniosek zainteresowanego*, "Przegląd Ubezpieczeń Społecznych i Gospodarczych" 1999, no. 3

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Respecting an Individual's Subsistence Minimum in Administrative Enforcement Proceedings

Multidimensional changes are taking place in the modern world. Generally speaking, these changes concern what is broadly understood as culture, civilization, and religion. These changes can be perceived through their connection with technology, which affects how societies are organized, how people exercise power (politics), the types and features of social bonds, what the economy looks like, man and his existential situation, and man's relationship with himself and his surroundings. These changes also definitively impact administrative enforcement proceedings, which can use coercion to make the obligor fulfill his obligations. Because coercive measures may be used on the obligor during the course of administrative enforcement proceedings, they should be carried out with due care for the good of the individual. This study analyzes principles for respecting the obligor's mandatory subsistence minimum as well as his role in counteracting excessive interference on the part of public administrative bodies in his individual rights and freedoms.

Key words: coercion, administrative enforcement proceedings, subsistence minimum.

¹ An article is a result of research work of co-author conducted in part during her stay as a visiting professor at the Università degli Studi di Bari Aldo Moro.

People have always sought ways to meet their needs, and making changes affects the ways in which they achieve this. Over the centuries, one can see how changes in customs affect human behavior and the phenomena that are inextricably linked with it. One such phenomenon is coercion. People are subject to the processes that take place as societies become civilized. If one considers this in historical, sociological, and psychological categories, then it is clear that these processes unfold independently of our will and brings about certain effects. The individual who functions in a given society has specific rights and must equally fulfill certain public legal obligations. In the event that an individual does not voluntarily meet these obligations, then those in authority have the right to apply measures that will ensure that he behaves in a desirable manner. In some cases, authorities are even authorized to enforce these behaviors through the use of physical force. Legally, only those invested with authority to exercise state or national power can use physical force. As civilizations have developed, the use of coercion and physical force (which has taken on many and often extremely cruel forms² in the past) is being replaced with other more civilized methods that are able to ensure that an individual will fulfill his duties.

This study considers the issue of administrative enforcement proceedings, the essence of which³ are carried out by “public administrative bodies appointed by law who take all of the necessary steps foreseen by the law to bring the factual state of affairs into conformity with individual or general legal norms. This entails that the titularly designated recipient has duties that are subject to compulsory administrative, and not judicial, enforcement.”⁴ As a rule, this concerns

² For more on the topic of using administrative coercion in ancient times, see J. Radwanowicz-Wanczewska, *Początki przymusu administracyjnego w prawie rzymskim i praktyce rzymskiej administracji*, “Administracja. Teoria – Dydaktyka - Praktyka” 2015, no. 4 (41), pgs. 80-121.

³ As D. R. Kijowski notes, “administrative enforcement proceedings should be understood in two ways. Strictly speaking, they should be understood as the procedural steps taken by the administrative enforcement authority, its employees, those designated to take action on the authority’s behalf, and (eventually) the requisition authority in order to enforce the obligation imposed on the obligor. In the broad sense, they should be understood as the activities of other bodies and persons (creditors and those who provide assistance and help in the activities pertaining to execution).” D. R. Kijowski, in *Ustawa o postępowaniu egzekucyjnym w administracji. Komentarz*, ed. D. R. Kijowski, 2nd Edition, Warsaw 2015, pg. 34.

⁴ D. R. Kijowski, in *Ustawa...*, pg. 34. See also E. Smoktunowicz, in *Wielka encyklopedia prawa*, ed. E. Smoktunowicz [et al.], Warsaw – Białystok 2000, pg. 207.

individuals' civil and legal obligations (i.e. those that result from the legal and administrative relations) that are within the scope of the substantive jurisdiction of governing administrative bodies and local self-governing bodies. The regulations concerning administrative enforcement proceedings⁵ that are binding in Poland as of July 17, 1966 specify the means that enforcing bodies can use to coerce an individual to carry out his financial or nonmonetary obligations. On the other hand, the provisions of the aforementioned act also aim to ensure that the individual's rights are protected against the use of coercion. The precepts of the law play an important role in ensuring this protection. The entire legal system has general precepts for administrative enforcement proceedings, which are defined in the Code of Administrative Proceedings,⁶ as well as general precepts for the administrative enforcement proceedings contained in the Law for Administrative Enforcement Proceedings [in Polish: ustawy o postępowaniu egzekucyjnym w administracji (u.p.e.a.); hereafter abbreviated in English as l.a.e.p.].

As of April 2, 1997, the Constitution of the Republic of Poland⁷ upholds that the entire Polish legal system guarantees, among other things, the protection of the individual from coercion. The literature also indicates the precept of a democratic state that is ruled by law as an example of the application of administrative enforcement proceedings. According to Article 2 of the Constitution of the Republic of Poland, Poland is a democratic state that is ruled by law and, therefore, has the obligation to reflect a universally recognized value system, including and above all human dignity and freedom. Any departure from contemporary standards in this area is contrary to the idea of a legal state.⁸ This article does not aim to present the general precepts of an entire system of law, the general principles of administrative proceedings regulated by the Code of Administrative Proceedings [Kodeks Postępowania Administracyjnego; hereafter abbreviated in English as c.a.p.], or the principles that are characteristic of administrative enforcement proceedings regulated in the l.e.p.a., since this

⁵ Dz. U. z 2017 r. poz. 1201 ze zm. Abbreviated hereafter as l.a.e.p.

⁶ Act of June 14, 1960, Code of Administrative Proceedings, Dz. U. z 2017 r. poz. 1257 ze zm. Hereafter abbreviated as c.a.p.

⁷ Dz.U. Nr 78, poz. 483 ze zm.

⁸ For more on this topic, see: J. Radwanowicz-Wanczewska, *Administracyjne postępowanie egzekucyjne a aksjologia demokratycznego państwa prawnego*, in *Aksjologia prawa administracyjnego*, ed. J. Zimmermann, T. 1, Wolters Kluwer, Warsaw 2017, pgs. 1099-1113.

would be beyond its scope. Instead, this article considers the impact of general administrative enforcement proceedings on an individual's situation, specifically with regard to the issue of respecting the subsistence minimum, which the literature has indicated (and is otherwise known) as the principle of respect for the obligor⁹ contained in Articles 8-13 of the l.a.e.p. Moreover, the reflections below pertain only to the protection of the rights of a physical person who is the obligor (and not, for example, a witness or assessor) in administrative enforcement proceedings.

The general administrative principles of enforcement proceedings contain basic guidelines that should be followed during such proceedings. At the same time, these principles indicate features that are specific to enforcement proceedings and their main assumptions. These principles also serve to protect the rights of the obligor.¹⁰ The very important role that the general principles of administrative enforcement proceedings play in the protection of the obligor's rights means that, if they are violated (like other legal norms) in the proceedings, then the bodies conducting these proceedings must take certain actions to exercise supervision and control.¹¹ The principle of respecting the subsistence minimum, to which this study is devoted, is expressed in administrative execution of the obligor's assets only in the areas that do not threaten the minimum necessary to maintain the obligor

⁹ The list of assets that are exempt from execution under the provisions of Article 8 § 1 and 2, point 5 as well as the regulations resulting from Article 8a-10 and 12-13 of the l.a.e.p. are the basis for asserting that these exemptions make up the general rule of enforcement proceedings referred to as the principle of respect for the obligor's human dignity. See P. Przybysz, *Postępowanie egzekucyjne w administracji. Komentarz*, Warsaw 2008, pg. 66. M. Ofiarska also points out this principle. See M. Ofiarska, *Znaczenie zasad ogólnych administracyjnego postępowania egzekucyjnego w orzecznictwie sądów administracyjnych*, Annales Universitatis Mariae Curie-Skłodowska Lublin – Polonia, Sectio H Oeconomia 2016, no. 1, pg. 240. See also the decree that the Provincial Administrative Court in Gorzów Wielkopolski issued on October 20, 2008, I SA/Go 678/08, LEX nr 576720. Due to the scope and subject matter provided for in the exclusions contained in the l.a.e.p., the literature also indicates that Articles 8-10 of the l.a.e.p. influence the general principle of broad exclusions from execution. See J. Służewski, in *Postępowanie administracyjne*, ed. J. Służewski, Warsaw 1975, pg. 166.

¹⁰ Por. Z. Leoński, in R. Hauser, Z. Leoński, *Egzekucja administracyjna. Komentarz do ustawy o postępowaniu egzekucyjnym w administracji*, 3rd Edition, Warsaw 1995, pg. 21.

¹¹ Por. R. Hauser, *Ochrona obywatela w postępowaniu egzekucyjnym w administracji*, Poznań 1988, pg. 52 as well as the literature provided therein.

and those who are supported by him while the obligor fulfills his legal obligations.

The restrictions on enforcement that ensure the subsistence minimum are twofold. On the one hand, the Act lists specific objects, claims, and property rights that, by law, are not subject to enforcement. On the other hand, it also exempts the enforcement authority from executing specific assets pursuant to Article 13 of the l.a.e.p. The principle of respecting the subsistence minimum applies mainly to enforcing cash benefits. According to this principle, administrative enforcement proceedings should not deprive the obligor and his dependents of the minimum subsistence level—that is to say, the means of subsistence and the possibility to be gainfully employed. According to the l.a.e.p., determining the objects that are necessary for an individual is not, however, sufficiently precise. Exemptions from exclusion that are specified in the Act are applicable primarily to real people. The literature points out that the exclusion of certain goods from execution also has a different meaning—namely, it pertains, among other things, to the formulation of certain preferences for the bodies who implement the state's financial policy. For example, by excluding a part of an individual's savings that he deposited at a bank, credit union, or in a cooperative savings, economic incentives were created to invest money in this way.¹²

According to Article 8 § 1, points 6, 10, 11, and 14 of the l.a.e.p., the legislator unambiguously specifies the obligor's assets that are not subject to enforcement. In the remaining cases, the legislator's calculation may necessitate, for example, explanations or interpretations.¹³ The enforcement exemption included in the Act specifies three kinds of property: items, sums of money, active debts, and property rights. According to Article 8 § 1 of the l.a.e.p., items include household appliances, bedding, underwear, and clothing that are necessary for the obligor and his dependents as well as clothing that is necessary to perform a job, service, or profession. As a result of the above, a specific item is excluded if it is considered "indispensable," which in itself is complicated. Because the Act is vague, it is necessary to judicially determine what is "indispensable" to the obligor. The literature points out that it is necessary to consider this issue in light of how it complies with the action indicated in Article 8 § 1, point 1 of the l.a.e.p. and with the constitutional principle of respecting a person's dignity,¹⁴ since

¹² See M. Ofiarska, *Znaczenie zasad...*, pg. 240.

¹³ See D. R. Kijowski, in *Ustawa o postępowaniu...*, pg. 243.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, pg. 245.

some judgments might raise doubts. For example, a decision made by Poland's Supreme Administrative Court states that "The wall unit and refrigerator are items subject to administrative execution. These are not basic home appliances that are necessary for the debtor and his family."¹⁵ Representatives of this doctrine rightly question the legitimacy of including such items in administrative execution and point to the danger of violating the provision contained in Article 8 § 1, points 1 and 9 of the l.a.e.p.¹⁶

In order to specify the scope of enforcement exemptions, Article 8 § 2 of the l.a.e.p. states that some items are not considered necessary to the obligor and the members of his family. These items include: stylish and stylized furniture, color televisions (unless the obligor shows that more than 5 years have passed since the year that the TV was produced), computers and accessories (unless they are necessary for the obligor to work), high-quality fur, porcelain, decorative glass and crystal, cutlery made from precious metals, and works of art. This list, however, is neither exhaustive (as indicated by the use of the phrase "in particular") nor completely precise. Doubts regarding how to understand, for example, terms such as decorative glass, works of art, etc. might arise.¹⁷ In turn, Article 8a of the l.a.e.p. provides a comprehensive list of tools, equipment, farm animals, and other things that are not subject to execution because they are necessary to run a farm. The literature indicates a wide range of execution exemptions of things that are highly valuable that belong to farmers. Some authors point out that the privileges granted to this group of citizens is incompatible with the constitutional principle of citizens' equality before the law.¹⁸

The exclusions provided in the Act also make it necessary for the obligor to engage in gainful employment, study, service, and a profession. This includes the execution exemption of tools and other objects that are necessary for the obligor to personally perform his job, excluding, however, the means of transportation and raw materials necessary for this work for a period of 7 days as well as items that are necessary for the obligor and his family members to learn, and for the obligor to perform service or carry out his work.

¹⁵ Judgment of the Supreme Administrative Court in Lodz issued on December 18, 1996, SA/Łd 2983/95, LEX nr 28977.

¹⁶ See D. R. Kijowski, in *Ustawa o postępowaniu...*, pg. 245.

¹⁷ See M. Masternak, in T. Jędrzejewski, M. Masternak, P. Rączka, *Administracyjne postępowanie egzekucyjne*, Torun 2013, pg. 57.

¹⁸ W. Piątek, A. Skoczylas, in *Postępowanie egzekucyjne w administracji. Komentarz*, ed. R. Hauser, A. Skoczylas, Warsaw 2014, pg. 84.

Doubts may arise regarding excluding means of transportation.¹⁹ According to the provision of Article 8 § 1, point 4 of the l.a.e.p., and reflected in judicial rulings,²⁰ a car is not subject to exemption from execution as an object necessary for the obligor's gainful work. Literature claims, however, that this cannot be equated with the prohibition against excluding from enforcement the means of transportation necessary for the obligor to carry out his profession as part of employment.²¹

Law

Things used in churches and other houses of worship for liturgical or Sunday services or to perform other religious practices as well as objects of religious worship should also be considered for exclusion from execution. This precept applies even when these items are valuable or works of art. The fate of these items, and not their value, is what is important.

The second group of exemptions from enforcement includes specific amounts of money. The aim of these exemptions is to leave the obligor with 760 złoty. The exclusion also includes scholarships, money received to cover the cost of business expenses (including travel), and money obtained from compulsory insurance, excluding life insurance.

The third group of exemptions from enforcement includes liabilities and property rights. Savings deposited with banks under the terms and in the amounts specified in the provisions of the Banking Law Act issued on August 29, 1997²² are not subject to enforcement. According to Article 54, paragraph 1 of this Act, funds reserved in savings accounts, including savings and checking accounts and a time deposit savings account for one person, regardless of the number of contracts established, are free from being pursued based on a juridical or administrative enforcement title in each calendar month in which the seizure is necessary, and up to 75% of the minimum remuneration for work determined on the basis of the Act of October 10, 2002 regarding the minimum remuneration for the work²³ of a full-time employee. According to Article 54, paragraph 2 of the aforementioned Act, cash funds accumulated in a savings account, savings and checking accounts, and a term savings deposit account that are established for

¹⁹ Ibid, pg. 77.

²⁰ Supreme Administrative Court Decree of March 7, 1997, I SA/Gd 1180/96 LEX 29070; Supreme Administrative Court Decree of May 19, 2000, I SA/Gd 1809/98, LEX nr 44380.

²¹ See D.R. Kijowski, in *Ustawa o postępowaniu...*, pg. 245.

²² Dz.U. z 2017 r. poz. 1876 ze zm.

²³ Dz.U. z 2017 r. poz. 847 ze zm.

several physical persons are free from being taken up to the amount specified in paragraph 1, regardless of the number of joint holders on such an account.

According to the provisions of the aforementioned Act of November 5, 2009 regarding cooperative savings and credit unions, execution does not apply to the savings of a person who belongs to a credit union.²⁴ According to Article 28 of this Act, the compound savings of a member of a fund deposited at a teller, regardless of the amount of compound savings, are recorded on an individual's account and are free from seizure based on administrative and judicial enforcement in each calendar month, up to 75% of the minimum remuneration for work determined for a full-time employee based on the Minimum Wage Act.

Excluding remuneration for employment is also important. According to Article 87 of the Labor Code (hereafter abbreviated as l.c.),²⁵ after funds have been deducted as a contribution to social security and advanced payments for personal income taxes, remuneration for work may be withheld, inter alia, from the sums withheld under the enforcement titles. In accordance with Article 87 § 2 of the l.c., withholdings from remuneration for receivables specified by the administrative enforcement title shall be made after the executive sums withheld by virtue of the enforcement titles are deducted for maintenance, and before the amounts resulting from cash advances granted to the employee and from financial penalties specified in Article 108 of the l.c. are deducted. It follows from Article 87 § 4 of the l.c. that withholdings from remuneration for claims enforced on the basis of other enforceable titles, rather than those pertaining to the satisfaction of maintenance, cannot in total exceed half of the remuneration and three fifths of the remuneration, including the deductions intended to meet such benefits.

Pursuant to Article 9 § 1 of the l.a.e.p., provisions that limit the execution of remuneration for work respectively apply to unemployment benefits, activation allowances, scholarships, and training allowances paid based on the provisions for employment promotion and labor market institutions. These regularizations are also applicable to the dues of members of agricultural production cooperatives and their family members for their work in the cooperative and for all recurring services that they provide to ensure their subsistence. Enforcement limitations, however, do not apply to the claims of members of agricultural production cooperatives due to their share in the cooperative's

²⁴ Dz.U. z 2017 r. poz. 2065 ze zm.

²⁵ The Labor Code Act of June 27, 1974, Dz.U. z 2018 r. poz. 917.

income that they have accrued from the contributions made to the cooperative.

Exemptions also apply to pensions and annuities. With regard to enforcing cash benefits provided for in provisions for retirement, Article 10 of the l.a.e.p. refers to separate provisions. According to Article 140 of the Act enforced on December 17, 1998 regarding retirement and disability pensions from the Social Security Fund,²⁶ cash benefits specified therein are subject to a deduction of up to 60%, 50%, or 25%, depending on the type of enforced dues. The aforementioned Act also indicates the amounts that are exempt from deductions, the extent of which is related to types of withholdings to be deducted. The Act's provisions that specify the limits of administrative enforcement apply accordingly to retirement and pensions receive from abroad after they are converted by the borrower of the receivables into Polish złoty according to the rate at which the bank pays the seized amounts to the enforcement authority. Moreover, pursuant to Article 10 § 2 of the l.a.e.p., provisions from the enforcement of benefits provided for in regulations on retirement pensions for employees and their families are applicable to the enforcement of pensions due to a work accident or occupational disease as well as pensions awarded by the court or established by a contract for those who have lost their ability to work, or because the breadwinner of a family has died, or disability insurance has been voluntarily paid out and the enforcement of cash benefits due to social insurance in the event of illness and maternity. Furthermore, pursuant of Article 10 § 4 of the l.a.e.p., it follows that, among the social security benefits, maintenance advances; payments; family benefits; and accessories for family, caretaking, postnatal needs, and orphans were excluded from administrative execution.

The majority of exemptions from enforcement apply only to actual persons and not to obligors who are legal entities or organizational units without legal personality. The literature suggests that the provisions contained in Article 8 and 8a of the l.a.e.p. can be modified to take into account "real protection of obligors and their assets."²⁷ However, in principle, the purpose of the exemptions foreseen by the l.a.e.p. is to protect the obligor and the members of his family from being deprived

²⁶ Dz.U. z 2017 r. poz. 1383 ze zm.

²⁷ P. Możyłowski, *Zasada poszanowania minimum egzystencji prawną gwarancją ochrony zobowiązanego w egzekucji administracyjnej*, in *Ochrona praw jednostki w administracyjnym postępowaniu egzekucyjnym*, ed. T. Jędrzejewski, M. Masternak, P. Rączka, Toruń 2018, pg. 144.

of the assets that would ensure their minimum subsistence level but not protect their economic interests.

The enforcement authority is obliged *ex officio* to determine whether a given article or property right is enforceable. If the authority finds that a particular asset is excluded, then he cannot include it in the enforcement. The Act does not always define the scope of exemptions precisely, which means that the enforcement authority must assess whether a particular object is subject to enforcement or is exempt from it on the basis of all of the other circumstances of a particular case.

Article 13 of the l.a.e.p. makes it possible to exempt specific assets from enforcement. Exemption from enforcement means that all or part of the obligor's assets cannot be taken or withdrawn by enforcement. Such exemption applies to the assets that are not excluded from enforcement under the law; this may take place when the obligor submits an application in this case, and the release is justified by the obligor's important interest. If the aforementioned conditions are met, then the enforcement authority "may" (but does not have to) release the asset from enforcement. This means that adjudication in these cases is based on administrative acknowledgment.²⁸ The order for the assets' release from enforcement favors the obliged complainant.

In conclusion, the development of civilization and social changes that pertain to the standard of living of contemporary societies influence the way that members of societies perceive the subsistence minimum. The legal regulation resultant of Article 8 of the l.a.e.p. gives the obligor a sense of security that his basic material needs as well as his ability to work for pay, which provides a livelihood for him and his family, will be met. Very importantly, it also protects the obligor's assets from being seized, which consequently ensures that the obligor and his family's educational and spiritual needs are met by treating them as those things that are necessary for their existence. Moreover, social honors and merits that the obligor has received (orders, medals, decorations, etc.) are not subject to execution. On the other hand, some actions that the authorities carry out to protect the state are no longer socially acceptable and considered a crime against the state's human dignity. As the doctrine notes, the Constitution of the Republic of Poland upholds the obligation to protect, and ordinary laws are meant to express parliament's observance of the constitution. Moreover, tribunals and courts appointed to do so must assess whether

²⁸ Decree of the Provincial Administrative Court of Gliwice issued on November 5, 2009, I SA/Gl 689/09, LEX nr 566367.

respect for human dignity is being carried out.²⁹ The essential issue, however, that needs to be studied separately is whether non-standard communication activities that are meant to improve the effectiveness of enforcement by admonishing the obligor and urging him to voluntarily follow his civil legal obligations should be introduced into administrative enforcement proceedings.

Law

POSZANOWANIE MINIMUM EGZYSTENCJI JEDNOSTKI W ADMINISTRACYJNYM POSTĘPOWANIU EGZEKUCYJNYM

Zachodzące we współczesnym świecie przemiany mają wielowymiarowy charakter. W sensie najogólniejszym dotyczą szeroko pojętej kultury i cywilizacji oraz religii. Dostrzegalny jest ich związek z techniką i technologią, co przekłada się na sposób organizacji społeczeństw i sprawowania władzy (politykę) oraz na rodzaj i charakter więzi społecznych, a także kształt gospodarki. Wyraźnie zauważalny jest ich wpływ na samego człowieka, jego sytuację egzystencjalną, stosunek do samego siebie i do otoczenia. Zachodzące zmiany mają też określony wpływ na administracyjne postępowanie egzekucyjne. Jest ono nacechowane elementem przymusu służącego wyegzekwowaniu realizacji obowiązku, którego zobowiązany dobrowolnie nie wykonuje. Z uwagi przede wszystkim na istotną dolegliwość środków przymusu, które mogą być stosowane wobec zobowiązanego w ramach tego postępowania, powinno być ono prowadzone z zachowaniem odpowiedniej dbałości o dobro jednostki. Przedmiotem niniejszego opracowania jest analiza treści zasady poszanowania minimum egzystencji zobowiązanego oraz jej roli jako jednego z instrumentów przeciwdziałających nadmiernej ingerencji organów administracji publicznej w sferę praw i wolności jednostki.

Słowa kluczowe: przymus, administracyjne postępowanie egzekucyjne, minimum egzystencji.

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²⁹ See D.R. Kijowski, in *Ustawa o postępowaniu...*, pg. 244.

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The Aging Human Body as a Biological or Sociocultural Reality: A Study Based on the Writings of Select Christian Philosophers and Research on the Elderly

Because the topic is complex, the representatives of various scientific disciplines have taken up the question of the corporeality of the human person. For example, biological and medical science researchers analyze the human body as a biological phenomenon, while those in the humanities, philosophy, or the social sciences consider the socio-cultural dimensions of corporeality. This article takes the latter approach both by considering the thoughts of select Christian philosophers and analyzing results obtained from a study carried out among people aged 60 years and older in order to answer the following questions: Do the elderly perceive the human body as a biological or as a sociocultural reality? How does this same population understand the aging body? According to the results of this study, seniors perceive the human body at any age primarily as a biological reality. The way that the study participants experience the drama of aging, as St. Augustine calls it in his writings, could have influenced why they rarely consider the sociocultural dimension of aging.

Key words: the human body, the aging human body, elderly, Christian philosophy.

Introduction

Not only painters, sculptors, musicians, and other representatives of the world of art have been fascinated by the issue of human

corporeality, but so too have those who study science and religion. Human corporeality has been analyzed from the point of view of how the body functions, its beauty or ugliness, the diseases from which it suffers, sin, debauchery, the indwelling of the soul, etc.¹ These multifaceted analyses of the body reveal that the body can be treated as a biological reality, on the one hand, and as a sociocultural reality, on the other hand.

Anthropology

As a biological reality, the body is made up of a system of organs that are responsible for particular physiological activities. The proper functioning of these organs enables man to live well, meaning healthily. When his body functions well, man is often unaware of the biological workings of his body. However, once the functioning of the body is disturbed, which occurs in the form of health problems caused by various biological, psychological, or social factors, man notices that something is wrong. Among these factors, the aging process plays a huge role.

As a sociocultural reality, the human body is an fluid phenomenon that constantly changes. In this sense, the body is a social construct, meaning that its biology is socialized² and it becomes the basis of social interactions and the means by which an individual becomes either incorporated into or excluded from society. The human body is also a symbolic form that reflects the norms, social hierarchies, and cultural obligations that bind an individual within a given society and at a given historical moment.³ Neither the physiological nor anatomical functions of the human body have changed for thousands of years. However, over the same amount of time, the development of civilizations “has created an amazing repertoire of practices to modify [the body].”⁴ These modifications have either practical applications, are undertaken in order to realize certain social corporeal ideals (e.g., the ideal beauty of the female or male body), or pertain to the sacred.⁵

¹ J. Szymczyk, *Elementy socjologii ciała*, in M. Skrzypek (ed.), *Socjologia medycyny w multi-dyscyplinarnych badaniach humanizujących biomedycynę*, Wydawnictwo KUL, Lublin 2013, pg. 197.

² P. Bourdieu, *Masculine Domination*, (trans.) R. Nice, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001, pg. 10.

³ A. Kumaniecka-Wiśniewska, *Kim jestem? Tożsamość kobiet upośledzonych umysłowo*, Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Akademickie “Żak,” 2006, pg. 80.

⁴ K. Arcimowicz, *Męskie ciało w kulturze współczesnej*, in E. Banaszak, P. Czajkowski (eds.), *Corpus delicti rozkoszne ciało. Szkice nie tylko z socjologii ciała*, Difin, Warsaw 2010, pg. 122.

⁵ D. Majka-Rostek, *Ekstremalne modyfikacje ciała*, in E. Banaszak, P. Czajkowski (eds.), *Corpus delicti rozkoszne ciało. Szkice nie tylko z socjologii ciała*, Difin, Warsaw 2010, pg. 105.

For a long time, the human body has undoubtedly ceased to be (insofar as it ever was) only a biological reality. Instead, it has been and continues to be both a biological and a sociocultural reality that constitutes an immanent element of man's identity, an expression of his personality, as well as an indication of his social status.⁶ The sociocultural dimension of human corporeality is the subject of philosophical, humanistic, and social inquiry among anthropologists, philosophers, sociologists, those who work in mass media, or the average person who observes what is happening around him. Our modern era is extremely focused on the body as a sociocultural construct. Marek Szczepanski calls modernity a body-centered culture in which self-awareness, the formation of one's identity, and one's perception of the world takes place through the body.⁷ This, therefore, poses the question: Is the social dimension of the body's functioning important to everyone?

This article discusses a part of the results of a survey conducted among people 60 years of age and older. The main question that will be addressed and analyzed is: How do the elderly understand the human body—as a biological or as a sociocultural reality? In addition, the survey will consider whether the respondents perceive and understand their own aging bodies (and the bodies of other seniors in general) as a biological and social phenomenon. Answers to these questions will be examined in light of the thoughts of select Christian philosophers.

The Human Body in the Selected Writings of Christian Philosophers

The greatest thinker of early Christianity, St. Augustine, often reflected on questions about the human body. When referring to the works of ancient and contemporary (for St. Augustine's time) thinkers, the Doctor of the Church (during his youth and later years) analyzed the topic of man's corporeality from different perspectives and ultimately concluded that the body and the human soul constitute a substantive union that makes up the nature of man. The Bishop of Hippo believed that "a true and complete person is not made up of just a soul or body, but both. The human body is a substantial reality in which

⁶ A. Kumaniecka-Wiśniewska, *Kim jestem? Tożsamość kobiet upośledzonych umysłowo...*, op. cit., pg. 80.

⁷ M. S. Szczepański, G. Gawron, W. Ślęzak-Tazbir, *Renta urody i tunika Nesspsa. Ciało w społecznej percepcji*, in M. S. Szczepański, B. Pawlica, A. Śliz, A. Zarębska-Mazan (eds.), *Ciało spieniężone? Szkice antropologiczne i socjologiczne*, Tychy – Opole: Śląskie Wydawnictwa Naukowe; 2008, pgs. 55-56.

the soul resides as in its own natural subject.”⁸ In his treatise *On the Nature of Good*, Augustine explained that the body and soul come from God; therefore, they are good: “Corporeality is an integral dimension of man because the body’s elements and natural needs (food, clothing, shelter, etc.) are morally neutral.”⁹ Commentators on the thoughts of St. Augustine emphasize that the “According to Augustine’s anthropology, man’s body is interpreted as a living good: it has its own proper shape, form, harmonious build, [and] natural beauty. It is also, however, fragile in its being; it is subject to limitations, illness, and mortality.”¹⁰ According to St. Augustine, corporeality was primarily a normal and natural biological reality that serves as the basis for the soul’s functioning and union with it. When writing about how the human body must undergo the difficulty of the aging process, the Bishop of Hippo saw that human biology changes with the passing of time.

Thomas Aquinas approaches man’s corporeality in a different way. When analyzing the relationship that connects the soul to the body, Aquinas asserts the primacy of the soul, stating that “man is not a soul only, but something composed of soul and body. Plato supposed that sensation was proper to the soul and, therefore, maintained that man is a soul that makes use of the body.”¹¹ Stanislaw Kowalczyk interprets Aquinas’ thought as such: “for St. Thomas, man is a union of soul and body, but [soul and body] are not existentially the same [...] The soul and body are two elements that are living and substantial, which together constitute the humanity of the human being. Man is a heterogeneous whole. [...] The body, as a material entity, has the ability to adopt a particular form, property, and structure. The human soul is an act of the organic body, meaning an animated body. It is not made up of material and form, but is itself the form of the body and gives it existence.”¹² While St. Thomas Aquinas emphasizes the psychophysical unity of the human person, he believed that the soul

⁸ S. Kowalczyk, *Człowiek i Bóg w nauce św. Augustyna*, Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL, 2007, pg. 73.

⁹ St. Augustine, *On nature of good*, in Św. Augustyn, *Dialogi i pisma filozoficzne*. Vol IV, (trans.) M. Maykowska, Warsaw: Instytut Wydawniczy PAX, 1954, pg. 170.

¹⁰ S. Kowalczyk, *Ciało człowieka w refleksji filozoficznej*, Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL, 2009, pg. 46.

¹¹ St. Thomas Aquinas, *Treatise on Man*, James F. Anderson (ed.), Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall Inc, 1962, pg. 7.

¹² S. Kowalczyk, *Ciało człowieka w refleksji filozoficznej...*, op. cit. pg. 48

is the more ontologically perfect agent whose perfection is attributed to its union with the body.¹³

Karol Wojtyła, who later became known as Pope John Paul II, was a contemporary personality who appreciated man's corporeality. In his reflections and writings, Wojtyła dedicated a lot of thought to man's corporeality. In accordance with St. Thomas Aquinas, Pope John Paul II believed that man is a being made up of both a body and soul. Unlike Thomas Aquinas, however, John Paul II emphasized that both aspects of human nature—the body and the soul (and not just the soul)—have dignity. "For John Paul II the body is the element of human nature that, along with the spirit, is the ontological subjectivity of man, and it participates in his personal dignity."¹⁴ The body is "a properly personal reality, a sign and place of relations with others, with God, and with the world."¹⁵ When interpreting passages from the Holy Scripture, primarily those pertaining to the creation of man, John Paul II writes about man's sexuality as well as the physical and psychological differences between women and men who, when they come together physically, participate in the transmission of new life. According to the Pope, "the human body is a gift from God that we share with others through acts of love, goodness, and helpfulness."¹⁶ The most perfect expression of treating one's own body as a gift is and should be the relationship that connects a woman and a man, through which they personalistically experience their love for each other.¹⁷ Moreover, according to John Paul II, "the human body is an expression of man's personality, temperament, and character; it is a language of love or hatred; it can serve either a good and higher purpose or an evil and perverse purpose."¹⁸ The ambivalence of the body consists in the fact that, on the one hand, it is an expression of the human soul and that, on the other hand, because of original sin, it can lead to a "man of the flesh," meaning someone who uses his body in such a way that he denies his human dignity. In this sense, the Pope emphasized many issues

¹³ Ibid, pg. 49.

¹⁴ Ibid, pg. 118.

¹⁵ John Paul II, *Evangelium Vitae*, Rome, 1995, 23.

¹⁶ John Paul II, *The Redemption of the Body and Sacramentality of Marriage: Theology of the Body*, From the Weekly Audiences of His Holiness, September 5, 1979–November 28, 1984, Available at: https://stmarys-waco.org/documents/2016/9/theology_of_the_body.pdf [Accessed: 05.04.2018]

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ S. Kowalczyk, *Z nauczania społeczno-teologicznego Papieża Jana Pawła II*, Sandomierz: Wydawnictwo Diecezjalne, 2004, pg. 119.

where human dignity is denied such as abortion, euthanasia, artificial reproduction, etc. While living in the modern age, the Holy Father perceived how modern men and women are very obsessed with their bodies, exhibit hedonistic attitudes, and focus on themselves and their appearances to such a degree that it seems as if they understand the body more often as a sociocultural reality than as a biological reality.

The three great thinkers mentioned above had slightly different approaches to the human body. St. Augustine perceived the human body as a biological reality; St. Thomas Aquinas believed that the body was a reality that was lower than the soul; and Pope John Paul II treated the human body as a gift from God that can be used in different ways. The following reflections on how seniors perceive the human body will subsequently reveal to which philosophical approach to human corporeality they ascribe.

Research Method

The data used in this study was obtained through research conducted in November and December 2017 among seniors aged 60 years and older. The research used quantitative method based on a survey. The questionnaire consisted of 42 questions concerning the aged human body as a biological and socio-cultural phenomenon.

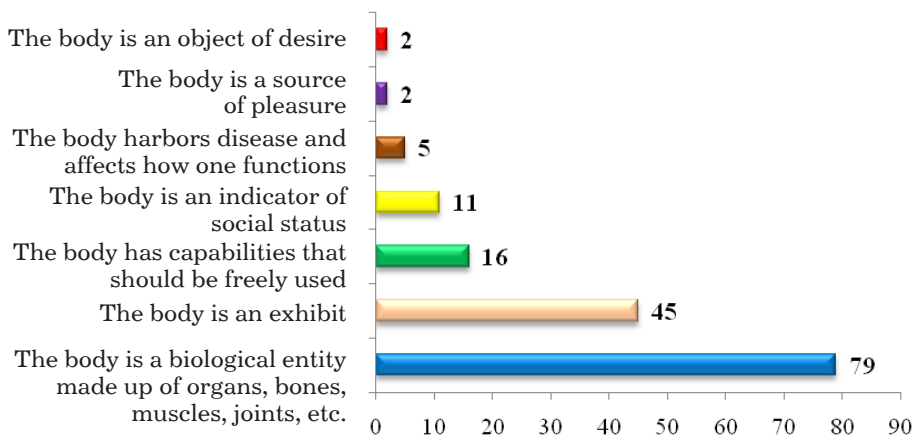
The respondents were randomly chosen from among 60-year-old (and older) residents of the Social Welfare Home [Domu Pomocy Społecznej; hereafter abbreviated as DPS] and students from the Third Age University [Uniwersytetu Trzeciego Wieku; hereafter abbreviated as UTW] in Białystok. Study participants were separated into two groups consisting of those who reside in the DPS and are very ill and inactive, on the one hand, and those who study at the UTW and are very active and in good health, on the other hand. Both groups of people were asked to complete a survey.¹⁹ Participants were chosen randomly. In total, 100 questionnaires were collected: 46 of which were obtained from DPS residents and 54 of which were obtained from UTW students. The majority of the respondents were seniors (63%), among whom 37% were men.

¹⁹ Some of the Residents of the Social Welfare Home helped the respondents read through and mark their responses to the questions presented in the questionnaire. Those who attend the Third Age University received the questionnaire during one of their lectures, and some of the students filled out the questionnaire on the spot, while others brought the questionnaire home, responded to the questions, and returned the questionnaire during the next lecture two weeks later.

How Seniors Perceive the Human Body

The first question presented in the questionnaire was: “What is the human body to you?” Respondents were free to choose more than two responses (see Chart 1). Among the respondents, 79% indicated that the human body is a biological reality consisting of organs, bones, muscles, and joints; 45% indicated that the body is an “exhibit;” 16% indicated that the body is “something of which one can freely dispose;” 11% indicated that “the body is a determinant of social status;” and 5% indicated that the body suffers from disease which hinders its ability to function. It appears, therefore, that the elderly approach the human body in a “primal” way, meaning that they treat it more as a biological phenomenon than a social phenomenon. Interestingly, a few seniors thought about the body in the same way as St. John Paul II’s “man of the flesh” mentioned above. The “man of flesh” presumably sees the body as an object of desire and a source of pleasure, which may not necessarily mean that he respects his dignity or the dignity of others. Most seniors do not ascribe to such an attitude toward the human body.

Chart 1. What is the human body to you? (%)

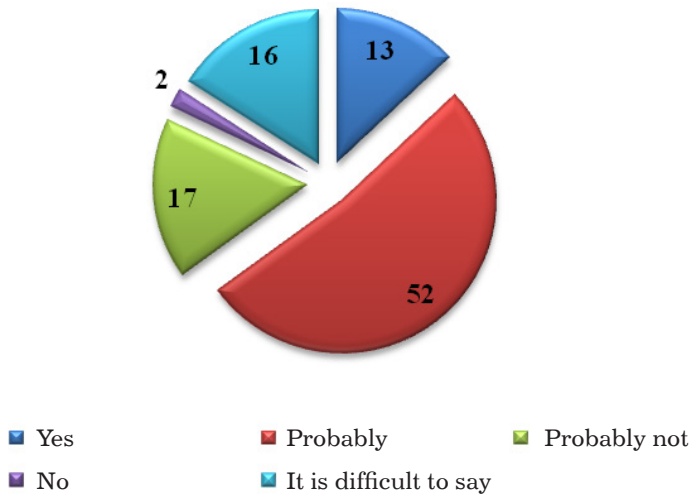


Source: author's calculation

In the following question, the respondents were asked to choose one response from those provided that they believe best defines the human body as a biological phenomenon. The elderly were expected to answer this question by looking at the corporeality of the human body through the prism of their respective and current stages of life.

Old age is a period in life when individuals experience more than ever the deterioration of their own bodies; therefore, we anticipated that the respondents would reflect this way of thinking in the responses that they choose. It turned out, however, that all three options for responses were equally important to the respondents. According to 35% of the seniors, biologically the human body is the biological efficiency of the body, meaning health. For 34% of the respondents, biologically the body is its multitude of cells and organ systems that make up the body. Thirty-one percent of the respondents felt that biological corporeality means feeling a change in one's everyday functioning, meaning pain or bodily ailments (i.e. degeneration). Perhaps the fact that the questions stated the corporeality of the body in general and not specifically the corporeality of the aged body resulted in this distribution in the respondents' answers, which did not, unlike what was expected, confirm our hypothesis.

Chart 2. According to you, can the human body be defined today as a changing social construct that adapts to social norms? (%)



Source: author's calculations

Keeping in mind that some studies assert that corporeality also has a sociocultural dimension, the seniors were asked whether they thought that, in this day and age, the human body can be considered a social phenomenon that changes according to social norms. Chart 2 presents the respondents' answers, which indicate that 65% of seniors agreed with the opinion that man's corporeality can be perceived as

a phenomenon that adapts to social norms; 19% of the respondents disagreed with such a statement; and 16% of respondents were undecided on the issue. When the respondents were asked whether the human body plays a role in determining a person's social status today, 38% of respondents said "yes," 28% responded "no," and 34% responded "I don't know." It seems, therefore, that insofar as seniors unequivocally identify human corporeality with biology, the sociocultural dimension of human corporeality is not as obvious to them.

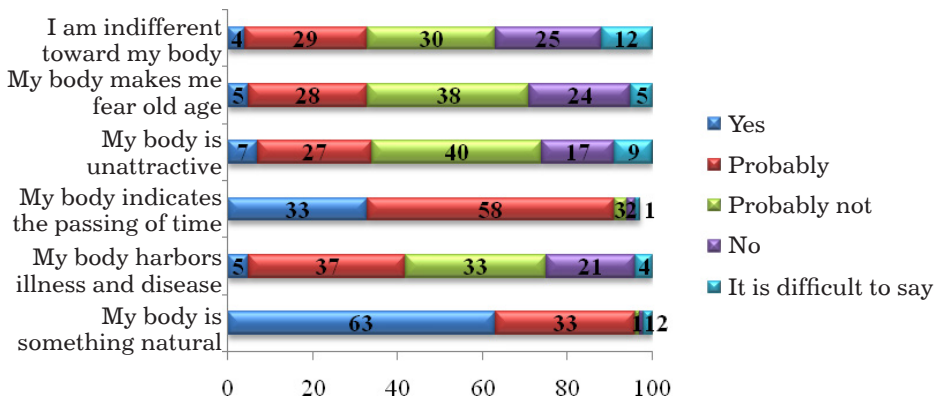
The questions discussed so far pertained to the human body in general. In an effort to determine which understanding of the human body seniors ascribe to—whether, as stated before, they perceive the human body as a biological reality or perhaps a sociocultural reality, the respondents were asked what the aging human body of a typical senior today and what their own bodies are to them.

Anthropology

Seniors' Perception of the Aging Body

Graph 3 below presents the respondent's answers and indicates that 96% of them think that an aging body of a senior is something natural and normal; 91% of them also indicated that the body of a senior represents the passing of time; and 42% responded that the body is a "environment of illness and suffering."

Chart 3. What is a senior's aging body to you? (%)

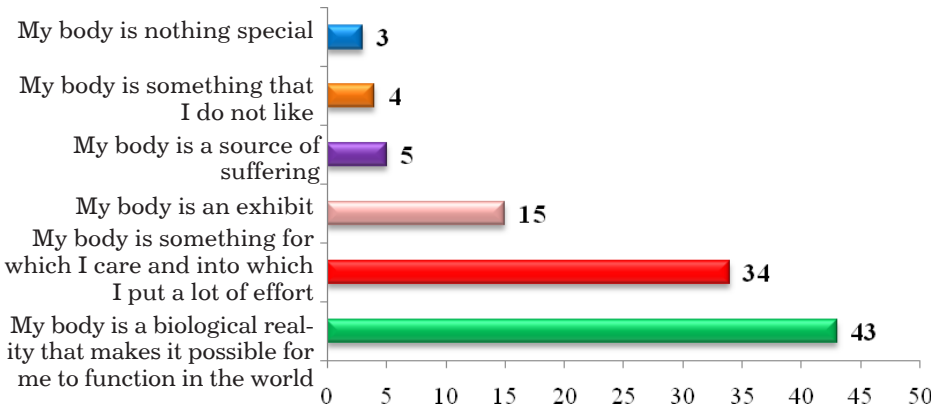


Sources: author's calculations

It appears, therefore, that the respondents did not perceive the human body from the prism of age. Their responses to the questions indicate that they perceive the human body primarily as a biological

reality that naturally and unavoidably changes and ages with the passage of time. Although 57% of seniors disagreed with the opinion that the senior body is something unattractive, 34% of respondents expressed the opposite opinion. Physical attractiveness is certainly a sociocultural approach to corporeality. When answering various other questions about the elderly’s care for the body and its appearance not mentioned in this article, the respondents indicated that, in their opinion, more senior women than men want to have a nice appearance, clothing, or figure. In addition, according to those surveyed, seniors today dress more colorfully and fashionably than seniors dressed 25 years ago, and they see that such rejuvenation of old age has many positive effects. According to the respondents, older people take care of their bodies and its appearance because they feel better both physically and mentally when they do so, and not because they wish to change their bodies to meet corporeal social expectations. Based on these responses, it is clear that the biological dimension of the body is definitely more important to seniors than the sociocultural dimension of the body. This outcome is depicted below in Chart 4.

Chart 4. What is your body to you? (%)



Source: author’s calculations

In one of the final questions, the respondents were asked what their own bodies were to them, and they could choose no more than two responses. Of the two responses, 43% of the respondents marked “a biological reality that allows me to function in the world,” while 34% marked “the object of my care and effort.” The percentage of those who marked the first response reveals that seniors undoubtedly

and primarily think that corporeality has a biological dimension. The respondents who chose the second response, suggests that they understand the body as both a biological and a sociocultural reality. The third response that only 15% of the respondents chose was “my exhibit” and refers strictly to the social dimension of corporeality. This means that almost three times fewer respondents chose the third response than those who chose the first response.

Conclusion

The research conducted among senior citizens residing in DPS and studying at the UTW indicates that they perceive the human body more as a biological than a sociocultural reality. Regardless of whether the respondents were asked specifically about the aging body or the human body in general, the biological dimension of corporeality dominated their responses. In this sense, the elderly ascribe to an understanding of the body that is closer to St. Augustine’s perception of corporeality as being primarily biological. The Bishop of Hippo’s very telling statement that the body experiences the drama of aging is best understood particularly by those who are living the very drama themselves. Old age is a stage in life during which biological fitness or physical disability is particularly significant. If the body functions properly from a biological point of view—that is, if it is healthy—then seniors consider the sociocultural dimensions of corporeality. A person cannot simply desire to look good, have a nice hairstyle, a shapely figure, or be well dressed; rather, an individual has put in effort to achieve these ends. It is particularly difficult for the elderly to make such efforts when their physical bodies do not want to cooperate with their desires. Therefore, seniors’ treatment the body primarily as a biological reality proves that they are aware of the fact that the body’s biological fitness greatly determines all other activities in which they engage.

Anthropology

(STARZEJĄCE SIĘ) CIAŁO CZŁOWIEKA - RZECZYWISTOŚĆ BIOLOGICZNA CZY SPOŁECZNO-KULTUROWA? NA PODSTAWIE PISM WYBRANYCH FILOZOFÓW CHRZEŚCJAŃSKICH I BADAŃ WŚRÓD OSÓB STARSZYCH

Cielesność człowieka to zagadnienie podejmowane współcześnie przez przedstawicieli różnych dyscyplin naukowych. Wynika to przede wszystkim

z ogromnej złożoności tematu. Stąd też, reprezentanci nauk biologicznych czy medycznych analizują ciało człowieka, jako zjawisko biologiczne. Z kolei osoby z obszaru nauk humanistycznych, filozoficznych czy społecznych zajmują się zwykle społeczno-kulturowym wymiarem cielesności. Prezentowany artykuł został napisany w duchu drugiego z podejść.

Autorka pracy, odwołując się do myśli wybranych przedstawicieli filozofii chrześcijańskiej, analizuje wyniki badań przeprowadzonych wśród osób w wieku 60 lat i więcej, poszukując odpowiedzi na pytanie: czym dla osób starszych jest ciało człowieka - rzeczywistością biologiczną czy społeczno-kulturową? Czym jest dla badanych starzejące się ciało? Prowadzone analizy wiodą do wniosku, że badani seniorzy odbierają ciało człowieka przede wszystkim jako rzeczywistość biologiczną. I nieważne, czy pytano ich o ciało człowieka w ogóle, czy o ciało starzejące się. Można przypuszczać, że doświadczanie przez ankietowanych dramatu starzenia się ciała - o czym pisał św. Augustyn, mogło mieć wpływ na rzadsze zwracanie przez nich uwagi na społeczno-kulturowy wymiar cielesności.


Słowa kluczowe: ciało człowieka, starzejące się ciało człowieka, ludzie starzy, filozofia chrześcijańska.

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The Emotional Intelligence of Teacher Candidates

The human ability to “cope in life” is not, as Daniel Goleman asserted at the end of the 20th century, based only on an individual’s cognitive skills. Goleman’s assertion decisively changed the way that individuals think about man’s “emotional talents,” but the reality is that emotional skills are largely congenital, even though current research demonstrates that they can be developed. Indeed, research in the social sciences has been focusing on emotional intelligence, which may be an important determinant of education quality.

This article presents the results of research on the state of the emotional intelligence of students who are preparing to become teachers. This research is part of a broader project that seeks to determine the emotional factors that aid the education process.

Key words: emotional intelligence, teaching candidates.

Introduction

In recent years, more and more research has concentrated on emotional intelligence (EI), which may be an important determinant in education quality. Researchers have systematically identified the factors that support students’ education and the relationships that are important for the learning process. In addition, they have analyzed interventions designed and conducted to improve the quality of the education process¹ since, needless to say, the quality of education depends largely on teachers.

¹ D. Schunk, *Commentary on Self-Regulation in School Contexts*, “Learning and Instruction” 2005, 15, pgs. 173-177.

This study is based on a comprehensive literature review and aims primarily to identify the EI of students from different fields of study who want (or plan) to become teachers.

The Meaning of Emotions and Emotional Intelligence

Anthropology

The social sciences and humanities (philosophy, psychology, and sociology) have long considered the role of the emotions. From a philosophical perspective, emotions were initially considered harmful to reason. From its inception, philosophy has pursued rationalism and, therefore, believes that the reason should be used to control dangerous emotional impulses. Aristotle came up with one of the first definitions of emotions. He thought that emotions “lead to such a change in man’s condition that his ability to make judgments becomes impaired, and this process is accompanied by either pleasure or pain.”² This approach to the emotions indicates that they are a basic element of “a good life,” and that the nature of emotions is an integral part of all ethical analyses.

According to the Stoics, emotions manifest as conceptual errors that make us unhappy. The Stoics perceived emotions as erroneous assessments regarding life that, as such, cause suffering and frustration. Since the emotions are a source of suffering, the Stoics believed that, in order to live a good life, it is necessary to be completely detached and emotionally uninvolved.

In the Middle Ages the emotions were strictly connected with ethical considerations. For this reason, scholars and thinkers considered and analyzed primarily those emotions that were considered sinful, such as greed, jealousy, gluttony, anger, and pride.

The forefather of modern philosophy, Rene Descartes, also took up the issue of the emotions. Descartes considered the emotions to be troublesome but able to be submitted to the influence of reason. According to Descartes, emotions are kinds of passions defined as perceptions, feelings, or emotions of the soul (that are clearly connected to it) and that are triggered, sustained, and intensified by the movement of breath.³

One of the most radical Enlightenment philosophers—David Hume—believed that emotions are fundamental in ethics. Hume divided emotions into two categories: good and bad. For example,

² R.C. Solomon, *Filozofia Emocji*, in M. Lewis, J. M. Haviland-Jones (ed.) *Psychologia emocji*, Gdansk 2005, pg. 21.

³ Ibid, pg. 23.

according to Hume, pride is considered a good emotion, while humility, which evokes unpleasant feelings, is a bad emotion.

Immanuel Kant presented a different position on emotions. According to Kant, there is a clear division between emotions and reason. He perceived that everything great in the world was created with the participation of the passions.⁴ In his reflections on art and aesthetics, Kant elevated the meaning of the emotions by pointing out the delight a person experiences when considering the miraculous beauty of God's work.

In the 20th century, Edmund Husserl, Max Scheller, Martin Heidegger, and Paul Ricoeur all emphasized the important role that emotions play in human life. Jean-Paul Sartre's conception of the emotions is, interestingly, based on the assumption that emotions are what make it possible for man to cope with difficulties realities by "magically transforming the world."⁵

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When considering the emotions, contemporary philosophy focuses primarily on the conceptual structure of the emotions and not on their sensory, social, or psychological aspects.

The acquisition of all skills (including emotional skills) is socially conditioned. This is the reason why sociology has examined the issue of the emotions for years in order to try to describe and explain in what way the emotions are triggered, interpreted, and expressed in the course of an individual's participation in different kinds of groups.

From a sociological perspective, the following issues pertaining to the emotions are analyzed most frequently:

- the emotional basis for social solidarity;
- determining emotions through the effects of social interaction;
- normatively regulating emotional expression and dealing with emotional deviations;
- socializing emotions by giving meaning to physiological experience;
- connecting the emotions with socially conditioned concepts of identity and one's "I,"
- differentiating emotional experiences according to social categories (e.g., social class, profession, origin, race, sex);

⁴ See I. Kant, *Krytyka władzy sądzienia*, trans. J. Gałęcki, Warsaw 1986.

⁵ R.C. Solomon, *Filozofia emocji*, in M. Lewis, J. M. Haviland-Jones (eds.) *Psychologia emocji*, Gdansk 2005, pg. 26.

- emotions involved in large-scale social processes (e.g., stability or change).⁶

Sociology is interested in emotions primarily as a non-verbal form of communication.⁷

Psychological literature has yet to provide a uniform definition of emotions. Some psychologists define emotions as particular states, while others treat them as a process. Emotional processes are referred to as subjective feelings and occurrences that can be measured both physiologically and behaviorally. Frequently literature on psychology states that emotions are experienced in relation to themselves or in relation to one's surroundings. The sources of emotions, therefore, can be seen in objective reality, since man, reflecting his feelings, responds to this reality by either enjoying, sorrowing, loving, or suffering.⁸

The term "emotional intelligence" is controversial, and theoretical data on the topic is still full of insinuations and even often contradictions. Consequently, it is difficult to say whether EI should be treated as an ability, a competence, a skill, or a set of convictions. Since a definitive position has not been determined in this area, different theoretical studies present varying perspectives. For this reason, it is currently difficult to present a definitive and coherent definition of the term "EI."

J. Mayer and P. Salovey's capacity model⁹ as well as D. Goleman¹⁰ and R. Bar-On's¹¹ so-called "mixed models" by are the most frequent models and concepts of EI that appear in scientific research. Initially, Salovey and Mayer distinguished three (and then four) groups of components of EI when observing the development aspect in light of a group of different abilities that comprise EI. They arranged these individual components into a hierarchy, at the bottom of which are the basic skills of perception and emotional expression, and at the top of which is the reflective and conscious regulation of emotions that

⁶ T.D. Kemper, *Modele społeczne w wyjaśnianiu emocji*, in M. Lewis, J. M. Haviland-Jones (eds.), *Psychologia emocji*, Gdansk 2005, pg. 73.

⁷ A. Giddens, *Socjologia*, Warsaw 2005, pg. 105.

⁸ M. Przetacznik-Gierowska, G. Makiello-Jarza, *Podstawy psychologii ogólnej*, Warsaw 2001, pg. 79.

⁹ P. Salovey, J.D. Mayer, *Emotional intelligence*, "Imagination, Cognition, and Personality," 1990, 9.

¹⁰ D. Goleman, *Inteligencja emocjonalna*, Poznan, 1997; D. Goleman, *Inteligencja emocjonalna w praktyce*, Poznan 1999.

¹¹ R. Bar-On, *EQ-i. BarOn Emotional Quotient Inventory. A Measure of Emotional Intelligence. User's Manual*, Toronto 1997.

favor personal understanding and development.¹² According to Salovey and Mayer, the acquisition of emotional skills lasts a lifetime, whereas attaining the individual skills in the EI model requires continual commitment and effort. It seems, however, that people with high EI pass through the stages of acquiring new skills more quickly, and they are able to master more of these skills.

Despite the many doubts (evidenced by empirical data) about the uniformity of EI,¹³ it is likely the only existing consistent model of what can be called “intelligence.” This is justified by the following criteria: the potential to operationalization individual components understood as capabilities; the criteria that are met are correlated with the standard intelligence measured; and an increase in the level of EI depending on age.¹⁴

While many researchers consider the EI model presented above dubious,¹⁵ it is likely the only model that can currently be labeled “intelligence.” The following criteria support this claim:

- the ability to operationalize specific components understood as abilities;
- fulfilled criteria that correlate with the standard of the measured intelligence;
- an increase in EI level depending on age.¹⁶

The second theoretical trend in EI is a mixed model created by D. Goleman. In his bestselling book, Goleman asserts that EI includes the following abilities: to be motivated, to persevere in the pursuit of one’s goals despite failures, to control one’s drives and postpone

¹² P. Salovey, J.D. Mayer, *Emotional Intelligence*, “Imagination, Cognition, and Personality,” 1990. 9, pgs. 185-211.

¹³ See A.L. Day, S.A. Carroll, *Using an Ability-Based Measure of Emotional Intelligence to Predict Individual Performance, Group Performance and Group Citizenship Behaviors*, “Personality and Individual Differences,” 36, 2004; J.D. Mayer et al., *Measuring Emotional Intelligence with the MSCEIT V2.0*, “Emotion 3,” 2003; J.V. Ciarrochi, A.Y.C. Chan, and P. Caputi, *A Critical Evaluation of the Emotional Intelligence Construct*, “Personality and Individual Differences,” 28, 2000.

¹⁴ J.D. Mayer, *A Field Guide to Emotional Intelligence*, “Emotional intelligence and everyday life,” J. Ciarrochi, J. P. Forgas, J. D. Mayer (eds.), New York: Psychology Press, 2001.

¹⁵ See A.L. Day, S.A. Carroll, *Using an Ability-Based Measure of Emotional Intelligence to Predict Individual Performance, Group Performance and Group Citizenship Behaviors*, “Personality and Individual Differences” 36, 2004.

¹⁶ J. D. Mayer, *A Field Guide to Emotional Intelligence*, “Emotional Intelligence and Everyday life,” J. Ciarrochi, J. P. Forgas, J. D. Mayer (eds.), New York: Psychology Press, 2001.

their satisfaction, to regulate one's mood and not give into worry that disables one's ability to think, to empathize with others, and to have an optimistic outlook on the future.¹⁷ This model is considered mixed because it combines various aspects: cognitive, individualistic, motivational, and emotional. Critics do not consider this concept as scientific theory; instead, they regard it as a collection of information about the ability to function well in life by developing one's own emotional potential.

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Rueven Bar-On's model of EI is also a mixed model. This theorist defines EI as a series of non-cognitive abilities, competences, and skills that enable an individual to deal effectively with environmental demands and pressures.¹⁸ The basic components of this model are: self-awareness, understanding one's strengths, perceiving one's weaknesses, and the ability to constructively express one's feelings and thoughts. The interpersonal plane includes an ability to know the emotions, feelings, and needs of others, as well as an ability to establish and maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships. According to Bar-On, EI also entails an ability to effectively cope with changes that take place in one's personal and professional life by being flexible and creative in different life situations.

Up to now, studies on these phenomena have focused on determining the relationship between, for example, EI and academic success in college and during the first year of university studies.¹⁹ Studies on professional groups (managers, psychotherapists) confirm that people who are emotionally intelligent are more successful in their professional life.²⁰ EI is particularly significant in professions that involve interpersonal and communication-based cooperation. For this reason, EI is undoubtedly an important component of teaching competences. EI directs emotional energy by strengthening communication and interpersonal competences and motivating individuals to make socially valuable decisions.²¹ An emotionally intelligent teacher is able

¹⁷ D. Goleman, *Inteligencja Emocjonalna*, Poznan, 1997, pg. 67.

¹⁸ R. Bar-On, *EQ-i. BarOn Emotional Quotient Inventory*, pg. 3.

¹⁹ See Schutte, Malouff, Hall, Haggerty, Cooper, Golden, Dornheim, per A. Jaworowska, A. Matczak, *Kwestionariusz Inteligencji Emocjonalnej INTE*, Warsaw 2001.

²⁰ Por. R.K. Cooper, A. Sawaf, *EQ. Inteligencja emocjonalna w organizacji i zarządzaniu*. Warsaw, 2000; D. Goleman, *Inteligencja emocjonalna w praktyce*, Poznan 1999.

²¹ Por. P. Salovey, D.J. Sluyter, *Rozwój emocjonalny a inteligencja emocjonalna*. Poznan 1999, pgs. 335-339.

to ascertain more thoroughly in what kinds of relationships his or her emotionality affects the attitudes and behaviors of his or her students. An emotionally competent teacher is also able to: appreciate and reward students' abilities and achievements; help students in their intellectual development; be involved in students' intellectual inquiries; and serve as a personal example to students. Such a teacher is able to understand different points of view and perceive the driving force of development in this variety.

Methodological Assumptions

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The main question that this research seeks to address is: What is the EI level of teaching candidates?

This study assumes that the state and level of the teaching candidates' EI will be either average or low. The indicators of the candidates' EI level was determined by taking the sum of the points obtained when completing the INTE Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (165 points total).

The items listed on the questionnaire follow Salovey and Mayer's EI model's assumptions. Therefore, 13 questions pertain to the perception, assessment, and expression of emotions; 10 questions pertain to the regulation of emotions; and 10 questions pertain to the use of emotions to think and act.

Table 1. Research Sample According to the Following Independent Variables

	Sex		Education Level			Academic Profile				Total
	Women	Men	Postgraduate Studies	Masters	Bachelors	Humanities	Mathematics and Informatics	Natural Sciences	Arts and Technology	
#	40	9	1	3	45	12	12	25	0	49
%	81.6	18.4	2	6.1	91.8	24.5	24.5	51	0	100

Source: author's calculations

Fifty students from the Pedagogy Track of study participated in this study, which was conducted in 2017 as part of the Center for Long-Term Education at the University of Białystok. Among the 50 participants, only 49 filled out the questionnaire correctly. The respondents were

made up of 40 women and 9 men. One participant had been enrolled in postgraduate studies; 3 people had a master’s degree; and 45 individuals (91.8%) had a bachelor’s degree.

Among the respondents, 24.5% were specializing in the humanities, 24.5% were specializing in mathematics and informatics, and 25% were specializing in mathematics and the natural sciences.

The respondents’ level of EI was determined based on the INTE Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire prepared by N. S. Schutte, J. M. Malouff, L. E. Hall, D. J. Haggerty, J. T. Cooper, C. J. Gloden, and L. Dornheim, and adapted to Polish by Aleksandra Jaworowska and Anna Matczak.²² The INTE is made up of 33 self-reported items whose truthfulness in relation to one’s own person is assessed on a five-point Likert scale. Analysis of the results was carried out using the SPSS 23.0, and the hypothesis was verified at a significance level of 0.05.

Study Results

EI cannot be underestimated today. Although the family is the primary place in which individual’s emotions become socialized,²³ people are expecting that emotional education should also play an increasing role in schools and taught by competent teachers.²⁴ In this context, it is important to examine whether teaching candidates demonstrate high EI, which is a very important quality to have when establishing and fostering good relationships with students and developing their EI.

Table 2. EI Level According to According to Sex

Emotional Intelligence Level	Women		Men		Total		Difference by Sex	
							Women/Men	
	N=40	%	N = 9	%	N=49	%	Sig.	p.i.
High Level	6	15	1	11.1	7	14.3	.595	n.i.
Average Level	28	70	6	66.7	34	69.4		
Low Level	6	15	2	22.2	8	16.3		

Source: author’s calculations

²² A. Jaworowska, A. Matczak, *Kwestionariusz Inteligencji Emocjonalnej INTE*, Warsaw 2001.

²³ K. Oatley, J. Jenkins, *Understanding Emotions*, Wiley Blackwell, 1996.

²⁴ See P. Salovey, D.J. Sluyter, *Rozwój emocjonalny a inteligencja emocjonalna*, Poznan 1999, pg. 253.

An analysis of the study results indicates that women show a 3.9% higher level of EI than men. This follows the theory of the lateralization of the emotional processes that take place in the brain. According to this theory, men exhibit lower emotional proficiency than women due to the fact that their brains are more lateralized and the left hemisphere of their brains (which is responsible for verbalization of emotions) is dominant. Recognition of emotions, however, is a process that takes place in the right hemisphere of the brain. Women's brains, on the other hand, are less lateralized than men, and neither side of their brain (left or right) is primarily dominant. As a result, they often have a greater ability to orientate themselves in their own subjective and somatic states.²⁵ In order to better understand these differences, it is worthwhile to refer to Tomasz Maruszewski and Elzbieta Scigala's concept of the psychic representation of emotions. According Maruszewski and Scigala, emotions are represented on three interrelated levels: pictorial (including, among other things, somatic experiences related to emotions); verbal (the expression of emotions through words); and abstract (the analysis of the meaning of emotions).

Because women do not have strong functional emotional predominance of the left hemisphere of the brain, it can be difficult for them to find the verbal expressions necessary to describe the emotional states that they are experiencing. They understand emotions, even though they are unable to describe them precisely using words.²⁶

Men, however, demonstrate a lower level of EI than women, which the aforementioned theory confirms.

Table 3. Emotional Intelligence Level According to Education Level

Emotional Intelligence Level	Postgraduate Level		Master's Level		Bachelor's Level		Total		Difference by Education	
	N=1	%	N=3	%	N=45	%	N=49	%	Sig.	p.i.
High Level	0	0	1	33.3	6	13.3	7	14.3	.211	n.i.
Average Level	0	0	1	33.3	33	73.3	34	69.4		
Low Level	1	100	1	33.3	6	13.3	8	16.3		

Source: author's calculations

The research results show that teaching candidates who are studying at the bachelor's level (13.3%) and the master's level (33.3%) show the highest levels of EI. Surprisingly, the respondents who were

²⁵ T. Maruszewski, E. Ścigala, *Emocje – aleksytymia – poznanie*, Poznan 1998.

²⁶ Ibid, pg. 198.

postgraduates demonstrated the lowest level of EI, which may suggest that a higher level of education is not necessarily an indicator of high emotional proficiency.

A comparison of the study results based on education level is promising. While the bachelor’s students achieved a high level of EI at only 13.3%, the master’s level students EI increased by as much as 20%, thereby indicating that EI levels increase as students pass through subsequent stages of their academic education.

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Table 4. Emotional Intelligence Level According to Academic Profile

Emotional Intelligence Level	Humanities		Mathematics & Informatics		Biology & Chemistry		Total		Difference by Academic Profile	
	N=12	%	N=12	%	N=25	%	N=49	%	F	p.i.
High Level	1	8.3	1	8.3	5	20.0	7	14.3	.578	n.i.
Average Level	8	66.7	10	83.3	16	64.0	34	69.4		
Low Level	3	25.0	1	8.3	4	16.0	8	16.3		

Source: author’s calculations

Data analysis shows that the level of EI of future teachers differs based on academic profile (see Table 4). Those who study biology and chemistry have a higher level of EI than those who study other subjects (20.0% of respondents in this group demonstrated a high level of emotional ability, while only around 8.3% of the candidates for teachers who were educated in the humanities and mathematics-informatics showed a high level). One might wonder why the humanities students were found to have lower results, especially since, according to popular opinion, individuals who study the humanities are sensitive, empathetic, and easily identify and express their emotional states. However, according to the results, up to 25% of the humanities students surveyed demonstrated a low level of EI.

Conclusions and Practical Implications

The students enrolled in the Pedagogical Course are from different academic backgrounds. These future teachers, educators, and pedagogues will likely play a significant role in the lives of many of their students both inside and outside of the classroom. When teachers intentionally strengthen their ability to deal with their own and other people’s emotions in the context of everyday experiences, they help others become actively involved and create the foundation for their

students to experience years of success in both school and life. This, however, is possible only if teachers themselves have a high level of EI.

In light of theoretical principles, the practical implications of the results of this study are interesting and demonstrate that:

- women have a 15% higher level of emotional intelligence,
- 33% of the respondents with a master's degree reported a high level of EI; 13.3% of students at the bachelor degree demonstrated a high level of EI; while 0% of the postgraduate students demonstrated a high level of EI.
- 20% of the respondents with a biology-chemistry academic profile showed high EI.

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In this study, the respondents are students enrolled in the Pedagogical Course and preparing to become future teachers. In addition to their didactic preparation, which will enable them to teach certain subjects (among other things), the students are also enrolled in an extensive series of classes in pedagogy and psychology. In the other courses that they are taking in their fields of specialization, these students will likely encounter content that will help them to develop their emotional competence.

The purpose of educating teaching candidates to become emotionally competent is to enable them to have a well-conceived idea of emotional education, since students acquire some of the most important knowledge in EI when interacting directly with their teachers.²⁷ Moreover, only an emotionally competent teacher is able to introduce a student or young person into the difficult and unpredictable world that Umberto Eco calls “dangerous,” which is fitting because this postmodern world is one of permanent transition and one in which conflicting realities—both old and new—clash.²⁸

INTELIGENCJA EMOCJONALNA KANDYDATÓW NA NAUCZYCIELI

Ludzkie umiejętności „radzenia sobie w życiu” nie opierają się tylko na umiejętnościach kognitywnych, co ogłosił pod koniec XX wieku Daniel Goleman, a co spowodowało zdecydowany zwrot w myśleniu o „wyposażeniu emocjonalnym” człowieka. Umiejętności emocjonalne są w dużej mierze wrodzone, jednak z pewnością, co potwierdzają współczesne badania, można je rozwijać. I rzeczywiście ostatnio coraz większe zainteresowanie badań w naukach

²⁷ See P. Salovey, D.J. Sluyter, *Rozwój emocjonalny a inteligencja emocjonalna*, Poznań 1999, pg. 51.

²⁸ U. Eco, *Semiologia życia codziennego*, Warsaw 1996, pg. 91.

społecznych koncentruje się wokół obszaru inteligencji emocjonalnej, która stanowić może ważne determinanty jakości edukacji.

W artykule zostały przedstawione wyniki badań, mających na celu rozpoznanie stanu inteligencji emocjonalnej studentów przygotowujących się do pełnienia roli nauczyciela. Jest to fragment szerszego projektu badawczego, w którym poszukiwane są czynniki emocjonalne wspierające proces edukacji.

Słowa kluczowe: inteligencja emocjonalna, kandydaci na nauczycieli.

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Expanding the Boundaries of Self: Self-Realization, Transgression, and Creative Competence

This article examines the issue of personal experience with regard to creative development. Humanistic-existential psychology emphasizes the individual's ability to cross the boundaries of experience. The question remains, however, whether transgressive action is conducive to self-realization. This study considers results of research on the determinants of creative competence with regard to creative behaviors and transgressive actions. According to Koziński, transgression as a determinant of creative competencies means the ability to think and act innovatively, creatively, deliberately, and in a manner oriented toward a particular goal that lies beyond what seems possible (Koziński, 2007). From a transgressive perspective, creative competencies entail not only the ability to take transgressive action in both task-oriented situations and in different areas of life, but also the ability to expand one's personal developmental resources.

Key words: creative development, self-realization, creative attitude, transgressive behaviors.

Introduction

When perceived as a metaneed that is identified with self-actualization, self-realization means using the subjective possibilities in one's specific living conditions better. Creativity is the fundamental means to continually express oneself and to effectively realize oneself. Man brings about the meaning of his existence through creative acts of

expression. Subjective creative attributes are the determinants of creative competences. The creative character of competences emphasizes the humanistic paradigm adopted in this study and creates the space for a broad understanding of creative development which, according to humanistic assumptions, is considered a subject's set of competences that are conducive to helping it achieve self-realization. From a transgressive perspective, an active person who creatively transforms his environment and himself demonstrates creative competences. While a boundary acts as a barrier and divides, it also "broadens the boundaries of one's own 'I' to transgression and creative competence" through self-realization.

Self-Realization and the Actualization of Potentiality

Self-actualization means [...] transcending the needs that arise due to a lack of something. This state, which can be called metamotivated or unmotivated [...] is one of being rather than seeking. It can be considered a synonym for self, being 'authentic,' for fully being a person. This process of growing is the process of becoming a person (Abraham Maslow, 1986).

Kierkegaard introduced the term "self-realization" into the humanities in the 19th century. The term was understood according to deeply existential convention to mean a category of human existence that is opposed to a feeling of transience and emptiness in the face of death. In psychology, Kurt Goldstein used the term "self-realization" as an overarching motive that controls human activity that is oriented toward achieving one's potential possibilities. Other motives derive from self-realization. Viktor Frankl developed a very interesting approach to self-realization in terms of personal development.¹ He asserted that having a sense of meaning in one's life is a key to the development of an individual, whose formation is the basic reason for human action. The process of **self-actualization** that is connected with fulfilling one's interior qualities is linked to the process of **self-transcendence**. Holistic (organismic) concepts recognize self-realization as a process that expresses the personality's healthy functioning, which constitutes a coherent and integral system. The motive to **realize one's individual potential** is fundamental and regulates an individual's functioning and development.² The works of Abraham Maslow are significant

¹ V. E. Frankl, *Wola sensu. Założenia i zastosowanie logoterapii*, Warsaw 1971.

² E. Fromm, *Serce człowieka: jego niezwykła zdolność do dobra i zła*, Warsaw 1989; K. Obuchowski, *Adaptacja twórcza*. Warsaw 1985; K. Obuchowski, *Człowiek*

achievements in the development of humanistic ideas.³ According to Maslow, self-realization is transcending the needs that arise due to a lack of something. This state of being (rather than of seeking) is a synonym for self, for being “authentic,” for being a person, for being fully human. This state reveals the human tendency to integrate dichotomies into a whole. This tendency indicates internal transformation (maturation), which occurs when that which had been formerly perceived as conflicting and antagonistic is perceived as that which reconciles contradictions into a synergistic whole on the level [...] of the heart and head, the reason and instinct, cognition and will [...], since it expresses these same things and comes to these same conclusions.⁴ Maslow associated the concept of self-realization with the concept of mental health, with the hierarchy of needs, as well as with the idea of **creative development**. He acknowledged that, when it is based on **the motivation to grow**, striving for self-realization is the attribute of a healthy and creatively developing personality. Self-realization is the process of actualizing one’s potential abilities and achieving a sense of satisfaction in the process. According to Abraham Maslow, the process of healthy development takes place in a constant sequence of events that involve free choice and that the individual must face throughout his entire life. Maslow believed that we will never understand human life if we do not take into account our highest aspirations. Human development, self-realization, striving for health, seeking one’s identity and autonomy, and the desire for perfection must be unconditionally accepted as a common to everyone and universally sought out.⁵

Homo transgressivus

Humanistic and existential psychology emphasizes that the individual’s ability to transcend his current state and objectively existing reality is an aspect of human existence.⁶ These states of “trans” or “going beyond” (transcendence, auto-transcendence) are particular

intencjonalny, Warsaw 1993; Z. Pietrasiński, *Ekspansja pięknych umysłów. Nowy renesans i ożywca autokreacja*, Warsaw 2008.

³ A. H. Maslow, *W stronę psychologii istnienia*, Warsaw – Poznań 2004.

⁴ A. H. Maslow, *Motywacja i osobowość*. Warsaw 1990.

⁵ A. H. Maslow, *Motywacja...*, op. cit., pg. 13.

⁶ M. Opoczyńska, *Wprowadzenie do psychologii egzystencjalnej*, Cracow 1999; A. Galdowa, *Powszechność i wyjątek*, Cracow 2000.

to man and demonstrate his unique abilities.⁷ The transgressive concept of man, which focuses on change and development, assumes that human behavior is intentional, autonomous, goal-oriented, and strives to go beyond man's abilities.⁸ Just as in the concept of creativity, this concept promotes a new understanding of the human being as an active and creative person who forms and influences both his surroundings and himself. Development enables transgressive actions, which are the opposite of the protective behaviors that seek to conserve and maintain the *status quo* and give an individual a sense of stability and security. "Almost every modern person has an intellectual and praxeological ability to create if not historical then at least psychological transgression to a greater or lesser degree. No one has ever failed to take advantage of the generative mind that he has received from nature, society, and culture."⁹ According to Jozef Kozielecki, as a transgressive being—*homo transgressivus*, man is able to transcend material, social, and symbolic boundaries. This article distinguishes four directions in which transgressive actions can be directed: 1) autcreative activity, which is concentrated on the self-development and self-realization of one's abilities; 2) creative activity, which consists in creating new, unconventional mental and imaginative constructions; 3) activity directed toward people, which aims to broaden the scope of one's personal freedom, gain power, and control others; and 4) practical activity, which aims to increase the production of material goods.

Transgressive and Creative Actions

Transgressions are **innovative** and **creative** activities. They allow a person to go beyond the boundaries of the way that he presently functions and, thereby, gain new areas of activity or create new values. Transgressiveness is revealed in the form of man's activities directed

⁷ A.H. Maslow, 1986/2004; C.R. Rogers, *Uczenie się, jakbyć wolnym*, in K. Jankowski (ed.), *Przełom w psychologii, wybór tekstów*, Warsaw 1978, pgs. 289-301; C.R. Rogers, *Sposób bycia*, Poznań 2002; C.R. Rogers, *O stawianiu się osobą*, Poznań 2002; M. Straś-Romanowska, (ed.), *Na tropach psychologii jako nauki humanistycznej*, Warsaw–Wrocław 1995; M. Straś-Romanowska, *Rozwój człowieka a rozwój osobowy*, "Studia Psychologica" 2002, 3, pgs. 91-104.

⁸ J. Kozielecki, *Koncepcja transgresyjna człowieka. Analiza psychologiczna*, Warsaw 1987; J. Kozielecki, *Psychotransgresjonizm. Nowy kierunek psychologii*, Warsaw 2001.

⁹ J. Kozielecki, *Spółeczeństwo transgresyjne. Szansa i ryzyko*, Warsaw 2004, pg. 71

toward things, people, symbols, and himself.¹⁰ Competences in transgression include an ability to engage in transgressive activities in different areas of life.¹¹ Transgressions can be associated with different aims. When transgressions are directed toward things, they aim to increase material goods, expand territories, and possess new things. Human involvement in economics, politics, polytechnics lead to these new things. Transgressions that are directed toward symbols elevate the level of a civilization's development; in other words, through creative acts, man enriches his knowledge about the world and contributes to the development of the sciences, culture, art, and religion. The essence of transgression directed toward another is to gain power, dominate a group, and create new social orders and political systems. From a positive perspective, an individual can use these transgressions to improve social relationships, whereas, from a negative perspective, an individual can use them to manipulate those people over whom he has power. Transgressions directed toward each other enrich man's development and experience—his achievements and abilities, and they lead to personal changes and improvements. Koziellecki writes that: "Transgressive actions—in short, transgressions—are those actions by which man consciously transcends heretofore material, social, and symbolic boundaries. Transgressive activity makes it possible for man to transform reality. Consequently, new discoveries occur, new interventions arise, and new works of art and virtual realms are created, original political structures are formed, and obsolete structures disappear. Transcending the boundaries in which the individual works is like another act of creating—or at least broadening—the world."¹²

Do Transgressive Actions Promote Self-Realization?

The hubris need plays a central role in motivating an individual to do things that exceed his own capabilities. This need is made up of positive emotions such as hope, joy, or pride, and, above all, mechanisms such as self-valorization, self-presentation, and increasing one's own competences, which serve to continually confirm and increase one's

¹⁰ J. Koziellecki, *Koncepcja transgresyjna człowieka. Analiza psychologiczna*, Warsaw 1987.

¹¹ I. Pufal-Struzik (ed.), *O przekraczaniu granic własnych ograniczeń – z perspektyw psychotransgresjonizmu*, Cracow 2008; M. Wróblewska, *Predyspozycje do zachowań transgresyjnych a wskaźniki jakości życia*, in I. Siudem, M. Stencel (eds.), *Zrozumieć człowieka – zrozumieć świat*, Lublin 2013, pgs.11-31.

¹² J.Koziellecki, *Koncepcja transgresyjna człowieka. Analiza psychologiczna*, Warsaw 1987.

value.¹³ What role does transgressive behavior play in the need for the self-realization that Rogers and Maslow understand in the spirit of humanistic psychology as striving to realize one's innate potential to develop? Transgression does not guarantee that an individual will fully realize himself. Rather, transgressions that open an individual are a necessary for him to achieve the goals that he has set for himself. Awareness of the risk of and responsibility for the future results of choices made can incline an individual to either act defensively in a given semantic context (**transgression as the "alienation of the I"**), or to initiate new possibilities and overcome his limitations (**transgression as the "syntonization of the I"**). Transcending one's own limitations and weaknesses is an important factor that influences the scope and quality of an individual's subjective self-knowledge, self-esteem, and self-acceptance. It is the psychological foundation of being ready to engage in creative and self-realizing activities. Transgression that leads to the **syntonization of the "I"** opens an individual up to new contexts. It makes him reflect on and reevaluate his own world of meanings and senses (*logos*), to accept a point of view, and to understand matters that are relevant to him. In turn, this leads to an individual's interior transformation, which provides him with a new understanding of values (accepting new values) and enables him to engage in new (modified) activities directed at these values.¹⁴

Personal transgression occurs along with creative transgression. In personal transgression, completely new and heretofore unknown possibilities in which an individual can function and initiate change in some area of his life appear. Changes are important and valuable primarily from a given individual's point of view and so that he can function better. According to Kozielecki's theory, many personal and social needs give rise to specific activities that manifest various **transgressions**.¹⁵ One can assume that hope is included in the hierarchy of transgressive activities. This hope stimulates and sustains expansive

¹³ J. Kozielecki, *Psychotransgresjonizm. Nowy kierunek psychologii*, Warsaw 2001.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ K. Obuchowski, *Człowiek intencjonalny*, Warsaw 1993; K. Obuchowski, *Od przedmiotu do podmiotu*. Bydgoszcz 2002; T. Giza, *Procesy samokształtowania jako działania transgresyjne człowieka*, in I. Pufal-Struzik (ed.), *O przekraczaniu granic własnych ograniczeń – z perspektywy psychotransgresjonizmu*, Cracow 2008, pgs. 49-59; S. Popek, *Człowiek jako jednostka twórcza*, Lublin 2001; I. Pufal-Struzik (ed.), *O przekraczaniu granic własnych ograniczeń – z perspektyw psychotransgresjonizmu*, Cracow 2008; B. Bartosz, A. Keplinger, M. Straś-Romanowska (eds.), *Transgresje – innowacje – twórczość*, Wrocław 2011.

and creative pursuits. Hope specifically comes into play with particular transgressive activities whose likelihood of being achieved is minimal because they involve great difficulty and risk. According to Koźielecki, **hope** determines the direction of human activity. In this sense, hope is multidimensional cognitive structure, the main element of which is the individual's conviction that he will likely achieve the important goal in the future. **Active hope** plays a particular role here, since it expresses an individual's conviction that it is very possible for him to achieve his goal. In this case, the individual's strong motivation, ability to perform tasks, and actions themselves are helpful. General hope gives a person an overall sense that his life has meaning, which makes it easier for him to realize his individual goals. An individual's greatest source of satisfaction can be "transcending the existing system," meaning an individual's involvement in completely new activities, transcending limits, coming to know the limits of his own abilities, and exploring the unknown. A person's satisfaction with life is connected with the fulfillment of his own needs and achieving the goals that he has set out for himself and believes to be valuable.¹⁶

A Creative Attitude and Types of Creative Behaviors

Creativity tests man in how active and "intense" he can be—how far he can demonstrate his existence in the world so that what he leaves behind will last¹⁷.

Creativity is a complex process that is conditioned by personal and environmental factors, their mutual diffusion, and individual configuration. Those who support a humanistic vision of creativity¹⁸ emphasize the importance of the relationship between the creative personality and the person's tendency toward self-realization. Humanistic psychologists who believe that an individual's self-fulfillment is an important aim of development introduced the concept of "creative attitude."¹⁹ Someone with a creative personality is open to experiences, has an ability to tolerate ambiguity, and exhibits fewer defense mechanisms. From a humanistic perspective, being creative entails being conscious of one's own predispositions to create and courageously

¹⁶ J. Koźielecki, *Psychologia nadziei*, Warsaw 2006.

¹⁷ M. Gołaszewska, *Zarys estetyki*. Warsaw 1986

¹⁸ See E. Nęcka, *Psychologia twórczości*, Gdansk 2001.

¹⁹ E. Fromm E., *Ucieczka od wolności*, Warsaw 1978; E. Fromm, *Mieć czy być*, Poznan 1999; A. H. Maslow *Motywacja...*, op. cit.

taking advantage of one's potential. Curiosity is necessary for a creative attitude, which is understood as an ability to see, understand, and react. Curiosity is the ability to focus on the present and experience oneself as a causative subject.²⁰ According to this approach, a creative attitude does not necessarily lead to the creation of material products and works that are novel, original, or useful. Rather, a creative attitude is manifested in man's developmental activity exhibited through his tendency to "ennoble" his own person. A contemporary understanding of a creative attitude is connected with an individual's characteristics, including his curiosity, ability to focus on the tasks and actions he carries out, his experience of himself, and acceptance of the conflicts and tensions that are associated with his emotional and social cognitive functioning. According to Stanislaw Popek, these characteristics have two dimensions: cognitive and characterological. The cognitive dimension involves algorithmic and heuristic behavior, while the characterological dimension pertains to the personality's structures and is defined by conformist or nonconformist behavior. A creative attitude is the configuration of nonconformist traits and heuristic behaviors. Its opposite is a system of conformist and algorithmic behavior (imitative attitude).²¹ The concept of creative styles of behavior that are based on the results of this study made it possible to characterize the attributes of each of the five styles: 1) **approbation of life** (self-direction, abiding by personal values, and effectiveness); 2) a **strong ego** (self-knowledge, self-approval, one's own coherent value system, autonomy, stability, and perseverance); 3) **self-realization** (establishing long-term ambitious tasks for oneself and the ability to implement them, satisfaction in taking on challenges, and consistently fulfilling tasks); 4) **flexible cognitive structures** (creatively formulating problems, elasticity in establishing problem-solving strategies, originality, and innovation); 5) **internal self-direction** (the ability to resist group and environmental pressure, effectively implementing one's own tasks despite external pressure and failures).²²

²⁰ Fromm E., *Postawa twórcza*, in M. Malicka, *Twórczość, czyli droga w nieznanne*, Warsaw 1989, pgs.59-69

²¹ S. Popek, *Kwestionariusz Twórczego Zachowania KANH*, Lublin 2000.

²² A. Strzałecki, *Psychologia twórczości. Między tradycją a ponowoczesnością*, Warsaw 2003; A. Strzałecki, *Style twórczego zachowania się w przedsiębiorstwie*, in A. Strzałecki, A. Lizurej (ed.), *Innowacyjna przedsiębiorczość. Teorie. Badania. Zastosowanie praktyczne. Perspektywa psychologiczna*, Warsaw 2011, pgs. 119-154.

From Adaptation to Transgressive Actions and Creative Competences

The concept of “limitedness” in references to man’s capabilities and experience can have **sensory and creative** (many different interpretations) as well as **heuristic** (open to seeking new interpretations) potential because a limit is that which closes off and separates but also opens up a new kind of perspective on experience.

This study’s outcomes²³ in the area of creative competences—the creative dimension of functioning in adulthood—adopt three basic strategies to implement creative subjective and transgressive resources. The first strategy is known as the **adaptive-conservative** strategy (where a restorative attitude and protective behaviors dominate) to implement creative competences. The second strategy is the **creative-transgressive** or **pro-innovative** strategy (creative attitude, transgressive behavior, and proactivity). The third strategy is the **integrated** strategy (**adaptive, conservative, and innovative**). At the heart of each of these strategies is a creative need that constitutes a developmental power and the dynamism behind every activity through which the individual realizes his potential.²⁴ The results of this research also prove that the subjectively creative traits that are expressed in a creative attitude co-exist with transgressive behaviors: **pro(creative) motivation to seek change, nonconformity, an orientation toward activity and overcoming difficulties, openly and courageously taking on new tasks, and innovation and acceptance of that which is novel**. The greater a person’s creative attitude and its components in the cognitive (heuristic behavior) and characterological (nonconformist orientation) spheres, the stronger are the associations that manifest transgression: an emphasis on dominating others, motivation to enrich team spirit, innovation in coming up with new solutions, and the courage to take on new tasks. The lower a person’s level of subjective creative traits (creative attitude), the weaker is his determination to realize his goals, (pro)creative motivation to seek change, nonconformity, orientation to act and overcome difficulties, and openness and courage in taking on new tasks (activity directed toward change). The traits of subjective nonconformity that are most strongly associated with transgressive behavior are: **dominance, activity, courage, spontaneity, consistency, originality, and high self-esteem**. According to the assumptions of

²³ M. Wróblewska, *Kompetencje twórcze w dorosłości*, Białystok 2015.

²⁴ A. H. Maslow, *Motywacja...*, op. cit.; K. Obuchowski, *Adaptacja twórcza*, Warsaw 1995; S. Popek, *Człowiek jako jednostka twórcza*, Lublin 2001.

the concept of transgression, man engages in protective activities as a part of his own activity. Man's protective actions seek to preserve his own existing boundaries and maintain everything that he has achieved through adaptation. The lower the level of his creative traits (creative attitude), the weaker his determination to achieve his goals, pro(creative) motivation to seek change, nonconformity, orientation toward activity and overcoming difficulties, and openness and courage in taking on new tasks (activity directed toward change). Conformism weakens an individual's deliberate behavior, his orientation to perform tasks, activity, and resolution to overcome difficulties. The lower a person's level of subjective creative traits (creative attitude), the weaker is his determination to realize his goals, pro(creative) motivation in seeking change, nonconformity, orientation to act and overcome difficulties, and openness and courage in taking on new tasks (activity directed toward change).²⁵

Conclusion

Individuals co-create every area in which they actively participate. This is a manifestation of **synergy** (a synergistic effect) wherein an individual reaps many benefits by skillfully bringing individual components into a whole. This article presents a view based on expanding the boundaries of the "I" through: **self realization, to transgression, and creative competences**, in order to characterize the behaviors of an active individual who is involved in making changes, initiating change, and the creative process. This concept corresponds to an understanding of man as a subject who, by actualizing his own interior potentialities in an active context, **becomes** who he is. In this way, this article proves that the concept of "limitedness" with regards to man's abilities and experiences can contain sensory and creative (meaning many different interpretations) and heuristic (open to seeking new interpretations) potential. Diversity and contradictions along with oppositions and dialectics confirm and demonstrate that the essence of the creative process is the "**search for diversity**" as well as the "**diversity of the search**." This final reflection serves as a kind of "fastener" that brings everything together into a whole, or the emergence of the mechanisms of creative human adaptation and the expansion of the limits of the "I" in personal and social experiences.

²⁵ M. Wróblewska, *Kompetencje twórcze w dorosłości*, Białystok 2015.

O POSZERZANIU GRANIC JA. SAMOREALIZACJA – TRANSGRESJA – KOMPETENCJE TWÓRCZE

Prezentowany artykuł dotyczy problematyki doświadczenia osobistego w aspekcie twórczego rozwoju. Psychologia humanistyczna i egzystencjalna podkreślają zdolność jednostki do przekraczania granic doświadczenia. Podjęto pytanie czy podejmowanie działań transgresyjnych sprzyja samorealizacji? Przedstawiono wyniki badań dotyczących wyznaczników kompetencji twórczych w aspekcie twórczych zachowań, twórczej postawy i działań transgresyjnych. Zdolność transgresji jako wyznacznik twórczych kompetencji – to innowacyjny, twórczy, zorientowany na cel sposób myślenia i działania, którego cechą jest wychodzenie poza możliwości (Kozielecki, 2007). Kompetencje twórcze w perspektywie transgresyjnej zawierają zdolności do transgresyjnych działań w sytuacjach zadaniowych i różnych dziedzinach życia, ale także zdolności do poszerzania osobistych zasobów rozwojowych.

Anthropology

Słowa kluczowe: twórczy rozwój, samorealizacja, twórcza postawa, działania transgresyjne.

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