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KATECHEZA WPROWADZAJĄCA DO ŻYCIA WSPÓLNOTOWEGO W KONTEKŚCIE ZAŁOŻEŃ PROGRAMU DUSZPASTERSKIEGO DLA KOŚCIOŁA W POLSCE „WIERZĘ W KOŚCIÓŁ CHRYSTUSOWY”

INTRODUCTORY CATECHESIS TO COMMUNITY LIFE IN THE CONTEXT OF THE ASSUMPTIONS OF THE PASTORAL PROGRAM FOR THE CHURCH IN POLAND "I BELIEVE IN THE CHURCH OF CHRIST"

Streszczenie

Program duszpasterski Konferencji Episkopatu Polski na rok liturgiczny 2022/2023 „Wierzę w Kościół Chrystusowy”, jako pierwszorzędne zadanie duszpasterskie wskazuje budzenie i umacnianie wiary w Kościół. Uzasadnieniem podjęcia wskazanej tematyki są obserwowane przejawy utraty zaufania wobec wspólnoty Kościoła oraz zwołanie przez Franciszka Synodu o synodalności. Soborowa wizja Kościoła: otwartego, wspólnotowego i służebnego pozostaje nadal niezrealizowanym programem odnowy. Realizacja tego zadania zakłada podniesienie u wiernych poziomu rozumienia Kościoła oraz obudzenia w nich świadomości bycia Kościołem. W wymiarze katechetycznym, zadanie to powinno zostać zrealizowane poprzez wprowadzanie do życia wspólnotowego. Celem artykułu jest wskazanie szczegółowych zadań dla katechezy wprowadzającej do życia wspólnotowego w Kościele, próba oceny obecnej sytuacji katechetyczno-duszpasterskiej oraz prezentacja podejmowanych w Kościele katowickim inicjatyw wspomagających wprowadzanie do życia wspólnotowego.

Słowa kluczowe: katecheza o Kościele, wspólnota Kościoła, ogólnopolski program duszpasterski, archidiecezja katowicka

Abstract

INTRODUCTORY CATECHESIS ON COMMUNITY LIFE IN THE CONTEXT OF THE ASSUMPTIONS OF THE PASTORAL PROGRAM FOR THE CHURCH IN POLAND “I BELIEVE IN THE CHURCH OF CHRIST”

The pastoral program of the Polish Bishops' Conference for the liturgical year 2022/2023 “I believe in the Church of Christ” indicates the awakening and strengthening of faith in the Church as the primary pastoral task. The reason for taking up the subject discussed are signs of loss of trust in the Church community that can be observed in the society and the synod on synodality convened by Francis. The conciliar vision of the Church that is open, communal and servant, remains an unimplemented program of renewal. The implementation of this task assumes raising the level of understanding of the Church among the faithful and awakening in them the awareness of being the Church. In the catechetical dimension, this task should be accomplished through introduction to community life. The aim of the article is to indicate the specific tasks for catechesis introducing to community life in the Church, an attempt to assess the current catechetical and pastoral situation and to present initiatives undertaken in the Katowice Church to support the introduction to community life.

Keywords: catechesis on the Church, the community of the Church, a nationwide pastoral program, the Archdiocese of Katowice

Introduction

In shaping the concept of the national pastoral program, the *sine qua non* condition is the need to discover the signs of the times and new challenges and needs of the Church. These, in turn, are read to the fullest by listening to the current ecclesiological teaching of Pope Francis and undertaking an analysis of the current catechetical and pastoral situation. The draft pastoral program for the liturgical year 2022/2023 "I believe in the Church of Christ", taking into account the indicated premises, "grows from the analysis of the current situation of the Church and its fairly widespread recognition, not only among the clergy, as extremely difficult"¹. As Bishop Andrzej Czaja (Chairman of the Pastoral Care Commission of the Polish Episcopate) states, in order not to get frustrated or even give up searching for ways leading to the work of renewal, the primary pastoral task for today and tomorrow of the Church in Poland was considered to be "awakening and strengthening faith in the Church, because we are beginning doubt this work of God on earth, ordained for our salvation"². A special reason for taking up the subject of faith in the Church was the convening by Pope Francis of a synod on synodality. In the title of the synod: "Towards a synodal Church: communion, participation, mission", Francis pointed out the areas of scientific reflection as well as the goals and directions of pastoral activities. The conciliar vision of the Church: open, communal and servant, remains fully valid, but unfortunately still unrealized program

¹ Andrzej Czaja, Introductory word to *Program duszpasterski Kościoła katolickiego w Polsce na rok 2022–2023 „Wierzę w Kościół Chrystusowy”*. Zeszyt teologiczno-pastoralny, ed. Roman Chromy, Waldemar Musioł, Krystian Piechaczek (Katowice: Instytut Gość Media, 2022), p. 6.

² Czaja, Introductory word..., p. 6.

of its renewal. The implementation of this task assumes raising the level of the faithful's understanding of the Church and awakening in them the awareness of being the Church³. In the catechetical dimension, this task should be carried out through introduction to community life⁴.

The pastoral program "I believe in the Church of Christ" adopts a three-stage perspective, typical for pastoral theology, included in the key: "review, consider (evaluate) and apply in life"⁵. In accordance with the methodology adopted in the program, the aim of the article is to indicate the specific tasks for catechesis introductory to community life in the Church, an attempt to assess the current catechetical and pastoral situation and to present initiatives taken in the Katowice Church to support the introduction to community life.

1. Shaping the community of the Church with the task of catechesis

Ecclesia, quid dicis de te ipsa? – this is the fundamental question that the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council sought to answer. The truth they worked out about the Church understood as a community in Christ found expression and confirmation in the conciliar documents. The Constitution on the Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, brings to the fore the idea of the community of the People of God⁶. One could even say that the whole meaning of the renewal of the liturgy outlined in the document aims at making the liturgy an expression and sign of the community of the People of God. The idea of community is also the basis of the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen gentium*. The mystery of the Church is presented here mainly as a sacrament of unity; gathering people into one for the implementation of the saving plan of God the Father, in union with Christ in the love of the Holy Spirit⁷. According to God's will, the sanctification and salvation of people is not carried out individually, to the exclusion of all interconnectedness, but in the community of a people called to serve him sacredly⁸. Also, other conciliar documents – almost all of them – focus on the basic task of building the Church as a community in specific parish communities. The decree on the ministry and life of priests, *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, mentions "forming a true

³ Czaja, Introductory word..., p. 7.

⁴ Pontifical Council for the New Evangelization, *Directory for Catechesis*, (Kielce: Jedność, 2020), pp. 88–89.

⁵ Czaja, Introductory word..., p. 8.

⁶ Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, in: Vatican Council II. Constitutions. Decrees. declarations. Polish text. New translation (Poznań: Pallottinum, 2002), 26, 42 (hereinafter KL).

⁷ Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen gentium*, in: Vatican Council II. Constitutions. Decrees. declarations. Polish text. New translation (Poznań: Pallottinum, 2002), 4 (hereinafter KK).

⁸ KK, 9.

Christian community" among the tasks entrusted to the shepherds of the Church⁹. However, the possibility of carrying out this task was fortified in the document with an unequivocal statement that "no Christian community will be built if it does not find its roots in the celebration of the Holy Eucharist; from it, therefore, education in the spirit of community must begin¹⁰.

In the history of the Church, it is the first such holistic reflection about oneself, explaining the sense, mystery and structure of the Church. It is also the foundation of the Church's post-conciliar self-understanding, which, despite the passage of time, still appears as a fully valid challenge for catechesis¹¹.

In accordance with the above, catechesis, which finds its inspiration in the conciliar teaching, accepts as one of its basic tasks an introduction to community life and active participation in the life of the Church¹². The catechetical and pastoral aspects of the introduction to community life are once again precisely indicated in the new *Directory on Catechesis*: "Catechesis therefore has the task of developing a sense of belonging to the Church; to teach a sense of unity in the Church, leading to the acceptance of the Magisterium, communion with the pastors and fraternal dialogue; to form a sense of co-responsibility for the Church, so that its members actively participate in building the community and, as missionary disciples, contribute to its development"¹³. The purpose of catechesis understood in this way is therefore to show the richness of the Church in such a way that the catechized person can identify with it. This should be expressed above all in the effective realization of the communion of man with God and believers with one another, and in a full life in Jesus Christ¹⁴. Introducing the catechized into the mystery of the Church community is, in essence, introducing them into the circle of the salvific action of God's Persons, enabling the personal response of man. Introduction to life in the Church aims at full inclusion of man in the community of believers – in the community of God's children. The community of the Church

⁹ Decree on the ministry and life of priests *Presbyterorum ordinis*, in: Vatican Council II. Constitutions. Decrees. declarations. Polish text. New translation (Poznań: Pallottinum, 2002), 6 (hereinafter DP).

¹⁰ DP, 6.

¹¹ Andrzej Czaja, *Aktualne samorozumienie Kościoła wezwaniem dla katechezy*, in: *Katecheza w Kościele i dla Kościoła*, ed. Ryszard Czekalski (Płock: Płocki Instytut Wydawniczy, 2006), p. 25.

¹² Congregation for the Clergy, *General Directory for Catechesis* (Poznań: Pallottinum, 1998), 86; Polish Bishops' Conference, *Catechetical Directory of the Catholic Church in Poland* (Kraków: WAM, 2001), 2

¹³ Pontifical Council for the New Evangelization, *Directory for Catechesis*, 89.

¹⁴ Kazimierz Misiaszek, „Kościół jako komunია w przekazie katechetycznym”, in: *Communio w chrześcijańskiej refleksji o Kościele*, ed. Andrzej Czaja, Marek Marczewski (Lublin: TN KUL, 2004), p. 445.

then becomes, like a family, a natural environment for spiritual development, and the individual discovers and realizes his life vocation in it¹⁵.

Catechetical introduction into the community of the Church takes place basically in two ways. The first of them is the comprehensive transmission of the truth about the Church. The second should be properly used opportunities for catechized formation to participate in the life of the Church community. It is in the parish, in the groups and associations operating in it, that the catechized have a chance to experience their ontological (through baptism) belonging to the Church in the existential plane. The Catechetical Directory of the Catholic Church in Poland expresses the conviction that the task of catechesis is to enable the disciples of Jesus to be present as Christians in society, in professional, cultural and social life, and to prepare them to cooperate in various ecclesiastical tasks – in accordance with their own vocation¹⁶.

However, the catechetical and pastoral experience gained since the end of the Second Vatican Council leads to the conclusion that it is not enough to simply convey a doctrinally correct vision of the Church to effectively lead the catechized to identify with the Church. This is confirmed by the results of numerous sociological studies conducted in recent years on the sense of belonging of children and young people to the Church¹⁷. The thesis put forward by Roman Murawski as early as 1975 that young people participating in catechesis have a relatively appropriate concept of the Church, but they do not experience a living connection with it, is still a fully valid form of conclusion summarizing scientific research in this area. As Murawski states: “There was an impression that the Church was a community that existed behind its back. Not one of the respondents (...) mentioned the catechetical group as a small church community. It was also impossible to notice in the statements of young people that they saw any specific functions in the Church and tasks to be fulfilled. This proves that young people attending catechesis (...) do not feel closely connected with it. It can be seen from this

¹⁵ Decree on the apostolate of the laity *Apostolicam actuositatem*, in: Vatican Council II. Constitutions. Decrees. declarations. Polish text. New translation (Poznań: Pallottinum, 2002), 2.

¹⁶ Polish Bishops' Conference, *Catechetical Directory of the Catholic Church in Poland*, 28-29. See also: Roman Buchta, Introduction to the Pastoral Program of the Catholic Church in Poland for 2022-2023 *I believe in the Church of Christ*. Catechetical notebook, ed. Roman Buchta, Kazimierz Misiaszek (Katowice: Instytut Gości Media, 2022), 6.

¹⁷ Janusz Mariański, *Charakterystyka religijno-moralna współczesnej młodzieży*, in: *Katecheza młodzieży*, ed. Stanisław Kulpaczyński (Lublin: Poligrafia Inspektoratu Towarzystwa Salezjańskiego, 2003), pp. 17–70; Krzysztof Pawlina, *Kondycja duchowa młodego pokolenia Polaków*, in: General Chaplaincy Commission of the Polish Episcopal Conference, *Głosić Ewangelię nadziei. Program duszpasterski na rok 2004/2005*, ed. Piotr Kurzela, Anna Liskowacka (Katowice: Księgarnia św. Jacka, 2004), pp. 94–105; Andrzej Offmański, *Młodzież a Kościół. Relacje młodzieży względem Kościoła*, in: *Katecheza w Kościele i dla Kościoła*, ed. Ryszard Czekalski (Płock: Płocki Instytut Wydawniczy, 2006), pp. 37–51; Anna Zellma, Roman Buchta, Wojciech Cichosz, *The (non)transgressive character of religious education form children and young people in Polish schools*, *British Journal of Religious Education* 44, 235 (2021): pp. 1–15. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/01416200.2021.1887082>.

that our catechesis usually only conveys information about the Church, and contributes little to transforming the catechetical group into an ecclesial community, and then does not try to include this small community into a larger ecclesial community, which is the parish, and through it the universal Church¹⁸. In practice, a catechesis that only transmits knowledge "about the Church", without caring about creating a community – especially liturgical – and a community of love, is not able to effectively lead to the experience of the Church and ultimately to life in its community.

Defining the detailed tasks of catechesis introductory to community life, it is worth recalling the thought of Fr. Franciszek Blachnicki, who pointed to the introduction into the life of the Church as "the fullest definition of the purpose of catechesis". It is a particular paradox, however, that many Christians, even zealous Christians, live their Christian lives alongside the life of the Church, but not in the Church. The source of the problem – according to the venerable servant of God – is the lack of a deepened awareness that every Christian is the Church, because the Church is the whole Christ, head and members. The task of catechesis is therefore to educate not to believe individually perceived, but to discover and live it in the spirit of the Church's *communio*. Building a supernatural relationship between man and God and the faithful among themselves is the realization of the original community with God, which found its fulfillment in Jesus Christ. The life of the Church grows when the life of faith of each of its members grows. Father Blachnicki indicates the spiritual dimensions of the communal life of the Church, which should be integrally introduced by catechesis. With reference to the conciliar thought, it should be borne in mind that the Church is a liturgical community. It exists because Christ makes his paschal mystery present in it. Introducing the catechized into the Church means preparing them for a conscious, full and active participation in the Eucharistic mystery and for meeting Christ in the other sacraments. Secondly, the Church is a community of love. To be a Christian means to have a new being and a new nature formed by the Son's love for the Father, poured into us by the Holy Spirit. Christians share in this love as they radiate it to the world around them. To introduce into the community of the Church means to introduce into the community of radiant love. Thirdly, the Church is an apostolic society. Therefore, all members of the Church should feel obliged to build it by preaching the Good News, passing on the word of God and the witness of life.

¹⁸ Roman Murawski, „Co katecheza daje młodzieży w wychowaniu do odpowiedzialności za Kościół”, *Katecheta* 19, 5 (1975): p. 197.

Introducing one into the community of the Church means for catechesis the same thing as arousing the desire to participate in the Church's mission¹⁹.

Catechesis, which aims to build the community of the Church, does so by introducing new generations into its community. The pastoral effectiveness of this process, however, directly depends on whether the Church as a divine-human reality will be noticed and lived by the catechized. For this reason, F. Blachnicki so strongly emphasized the need for the existential nature of catechesis. As an obligatory motto for pastoral care, one should accept his statement, expressed with evangelical radicalism, that catechesis about the Church will be suspended as if in a vacuum, if the Church that is constantly being talked about is only a detached, abstract idea, and not a reality that can be experienced and experienced. The Church, to which catechesis is to lead and which it is to build, must first come into existence within the range of experience of those who are catechized. Otherwise, it will lead into the unknown²⁰. So that we do not become "blind guides of the blind"²¹, but effectively read the signs of the times, we must discover in ourselves the "sacrificing and almost impatient desire for renewal" and "pastoral conversion" to which Pope Francis calls the Church²².

2. Catechetical and pastoral conversion as the task of the parish community in the service of the Church's evangelizing mission

In shaping the assumptions and goals of the pastoral program "I believe in the Church of Christ", the "definite reference to the ecclesiological thought of Pope Francis" was adopted as an important point of reference. Consequently, the creators of the program refer to pastoral indications contained in papal documents²³. In them one can find the urgent call of the entire ecclesial community to "follow the path of pastoral and missionary conversion, which cannot leave things as they are. We don't need "ordinary administration"²⁴ now. The pastoral conversion of the Church begins with a deepening of self-awareness and meditation on one's own mystery. As Francis points out, "from this clear and effective awareness arises a spontaneous desire to compare the ideal image of the Church as Christ saw her (...) with the

¹⁹ Franciszek Blachnicki, *Pisma katechetyczne*, vol. 2: *Katechetyka fundamentalna*, ed. Marek Marczewski, (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Salezjańskie, 2006), p. 171.

²⁰ Roman Buchta, *Mistagogia w polskiej refleksji katechetyczno-duszpasterskiej po II Soborze Watykańskim* (Katowice: Księgarnia św. Jacka, 2017), pp. 388–391.

²¹ Matthew 15:14.

²² Pope Francis, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (Wrocław: TUM Wydawnictwo Wrocławskiej Księgarni Archidiecezjalnej, 2013), 26 (dalej EG).

²³ Czaja, *Introductory word...*, pp. 6–7.

²⁴ EG, 25.

real face that the Church presents today. From this arises a selfless and almost impatient desire for renewal, that is, for the correction of the errors which this consciousness condemns and rejects, almost an internal examination in the light of the pattern that Christ has left us with²⁵.

The Congregation for the Clergy, in the instruction *Pastoral Conversion of the Parish Community at the Service of the Church's Evangelizing Mission*, approved by Pope Francis on June 27, 2020, states that the fundamental path leads "from the conversion of persons to the transformation of structures"²⁶. The indications contained in the document, having the character of a pastoral imperative, are a call for parish communities "to go beyond their structures, offering tools for reform, also structural, aimed at communion and cooperation, encounter and closeness, mercy and concern for the proclamation of the Gospel." The essence of pastoral conversion is that "Christian communities may increasingly become a driving force for an encounter with Christ"²⁷. In this context, the words of Francis should be recalled, who, diagnosing the current pastoral situation, reminded that: "If something is to cause holy indignation, disturb and cause remorse, let it be the fact that so many of our brothers live deprived of the light and comfort of friendship with Jesus Christ, without the community of faith that embraces them, without the perspective of meaning and life. I hope that instead of the fear of making a mistake, we will be guided by the fear of being locked up in structures that give us false protection, the fear of rules that make us inexorable judges, the fear of habits that make us feel at peace while there is a hungry crowd around us. people, and Jesus repeats to us again and again: "You give them something to eat!" (Mk 6:37)²⁸. In the Pope's words we discover concrete indications for pastoral conversion. The basic condition, however, according to Francis, is the rediscovery of a missionary dynamism "capable of transforming everything, so that customs, styles, schedules, language and all ecclesial structures become more suitable for evangelizing the contemporary world than for preserving the state of affairs"²⁹.

Missionary conversion concerns the parish in a special way as a community gathered around the table of the word and the Eucharist³⁰. Given the signs of the times, the parish is called to adapt its ministry to the spiritual needs of the faithful and to historical changes. What

²⁵ EG, 26.

²⁶ Congregation for the Clergy, *Instruction Pastoral conversion of the parish community in the service of the evangelizing mission of the Church* (Wrocław: TUM Wydawnictwo Wrocławskiej Księgarnia Archidiecezjalna, 2020), 34.

²⁷ Congregation for the Clergy, *Instruction...*, 2.

²⁸ Congregation for the Clergy, *Instruction...*, 3.

²⁹ EG, 27.

³⁰ Congregation for the Clergy, *Instruction...*, 6.

is needed, however, is the renewed dynamism already mentioned, which will rediscover the vocation of every baptized person to share in the mission of Christ and the Church, in accordance with the documents of the Second Vatican Council and the subsequent Magisterium of the Church³¹. In order to promote the fundamental missionary role of the Christian community in the world, it is necessary to rethink not only new experiences and pastoral conditions of parishes, but also the ministry and mission of priests. Together with the lay faithful, they have the task of reading the signs of the times and showing the face of the ecclesial community capable of giving a coherent witness to the gospel life.³² The primary condition for the effectiveness of pastoral conversion is that the parish should be a “place” conducive to being together and developing lasting personal relationships that allow everyone to experience a sense of belonging and being accepted.³³ As emphasized in the Instruction Pastoral Conversion, the parish community is called to develop a true "art of closeness". If it takes root deeply, the parish will truly become a place where the loneliness present in many people's lives is overcome, a "sanctuary where the thirsty come and drink to continue on their way, and a center of constant missionary outreach."³⁴ In the quoted words of Francis, one can find the previously discussed range of detailed catechetical and pastoral tasks introducing one into the community of the Church. In their essence, they also confirm and support Father Blachnicki's postulate on the necessity of catechesis "about the Church", conditioned by the personal experience of the community.

An important attempt to assess the current catechetical and pastoral situation was the 2nd Synod of the Archdiocese of Katowice³⁵ held in 2012–2016. As part of the synodal works, it was noticed that the pastoral situation related to the return of religious education to schools and kindergartens – apart from the undoubted advantages (such as: teaching a larger group of children and youth, improving the regularity of catechetical work or the possibility of overcoming discrepancies in the educational activities of the family, school and parish) revealed the weaknesses of the existing pastoral ministry and caused new difficulties. Among the most disturbing phenomena indicated were: the regression of parish catechesis at all its

³¹ Congregation for the Clergy, *Instruction...*, 11.

³² Congregation for the Clergy, *Instruction...*, 13.

³³ Congregation for the Clergy, *Instruction...*, 13.

³⁴ Congregation for the Clergy, *Instruction...*, 26; EG 28.

³⁵ As part of the synodal work, the Commission for Catechesis and Catholic Education was appointed, which developed questionnaires on catechetical ministry in parishes of the Archdiocese of Katowice and teaching religion after 25 years of his presence at school. The questionnaire forms were sent to parish priests, catechists, teachers, parents and to middle and high school students. The Commission's questions were answered by 2,052 respondents, whose opinions were taken into account in further work of the synod and in the developed documents. See: Ks. Roman Buchta wprowadza do projektu Komisji ds. Katechezy i Wychowania Katolickiego, access, 17.11.2022, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FFE6wDL-LpA>.

levels, the disappearance of the sense of bond, and consequently the identification of children and youth with their own parish, and the weakening of the catechetical and educational cooperation of pastors and religion teachers with their parents. Added to this is the disappearance of the so-called "Church of Tradition" and the basic environments of religious socialization³⁶. The effectiveness of catechetical ministry in the parish and the effectiveness of religion teaching at school are also adversely affected by secularization and de-Christianization processes, tendencies that undermine the educational authority of the family and the Church, the relativization of traditional values and principles of life based on the values of the Gospel, and finally the promotion of unfavorable patterns in the mass media³⁷.

Heeding the warning of the Venerable Servant of God, Fr. Franciszek Blachnicki, it was noted that "conciliar renewal will be fiction as long as it does not descend to the level of the parish"³⁸. According to these words, all the faithful (clergy, laity and consecrated persons) must strive to make each parish more and more a community of communities (*koinonia*), communities built on the word of God (*martyria*), sacramental ministry (*liturgia*) and service (*diakonia*)³⁹. With a view to the implementation of the indicated directions of pastoral activity, it was ordered to establish the Archdiocesan Center for Pastoral Formation (Polish abbr. ACFP), whose task is to develop formation programs to implement the model of the parish as a community of communities and the formation of pastors, lay people and consecrated persons for the implementation of this vision⁴⁰. In accordance with the recommendations of the synod, ACFP operating within the Department of Pastoral Care prepares aids for pastoral work in parishes, with particular emphasis on the indications of the universal Church and the nationwide pastoral program of the Polish Episcopal Conference⁴¹. Since its establishment in 2017, ACFP has been systematically implementing new catechetical and pastoral projects, which are carried out at the diocesan and deanery levels and in individual parishes⁴². They will be presented in detail in the last part of the study.

³⁶ Katecheza i wychowanie katolickie w Kościele katowickim, in: *Wsluchani w Ducha. Uchwały II Synodu Archidiecezji Katowickiej* (Katowice: Księgarnia św. Jacka, 2016), p. 264.

³⁷ Katecheza i wychowanie..., p. 265.

³⁸ Franciszek Blachnicki, *Oaza rekolekcyjna Diakonii Ruchu Światło-Życie* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Światło-Życie, 1995), p. 146.

³⁹ Duszpasterstwo w Kościele katowickim, in: *Wsluchani w Ducha. Uchwały II Synodu Archidiecezji Katowickiej*, (Katowice: Księgarnia św. Jacka, 2016), 2.

⁴⁰ Duszpasterstwo w Kościele katowickim..., 11.

⁴¹ Duszpasterstwo w Kościele katowickim..., 20. The indirect fruit of ACFP's work is the *Catechetical Notebooks* edited in Katowice since 2017, which are part of the annual pastoral program of the Catholic Church in Poland: *We are filled with the Holy Spirit* (2017); *In the Power of God's Spirit* (2018); *The Great Mystery of Faith* (2019); *Gathered for Holy Supper* (2020); *Sent in the Peace of Christ* (2021); *I believe in the Church of Christ* (2022).

⁴² Archidiecezjalne Centrum Formacji Pastoralnej, access 17.11.2022, <http://centrum.katowice.pl/>.

3. Catechetical and pastoral initiatives in the Catholic Church supporting the introduction to community life

The Second Synod of the Archdiocese of Katowice, distinguishing the basic functions of catechesis, which are: initiation, upbringing and teaching, more clearly defined the tasks of the parish, family and school, emphasizing the diversity and complementarity of their roles in the work of catechesis and education⁴³. After 1990, catechesis for children and youth took the form of teaching religion at school, which does not mean that less attention can be paid to catechesis for adults and catechetical ministry for children and youth in the parish⁴⁴. In the Resolutions of the Second Synod of the Archdiocese of Katowice, one can read that “the Katowice Church, rich in pastoral experiences of the last quarter of a century, is fully aware that teaching religion at school often takes the form of pre-evangelization processes. For this reason, teaching religion at school does not fully exhaust the tasks set by catechesis and it is necessary to supplement it with catechesis in the family and in the parish, especially in the mystagogical aspect⁴⁵ .

The Archdiocesan School of Parish Catechists (ASKP) was established in order to implement the synod guidelines in pastoral practice. The main goal of ASKP is to prepare lay people to conduct catechesis in the parish. The tasks of catechists include:

- a) to support priests and deacons in the formation of the faithful;
- b) assistance in preparing parents and godparents for the child's baptism;
- c) assistance in the catechesis of parents and children before and after receiving the first holy communion;
- d) participation in the preparation of candidates for confirmation and in the catechesis of parents and witnesses;

⁴³ The relationship between religious education and catechesis is one of diversity and complementarity. There is an inseparable connection between them and a clear difference. The Directory for Catechesis even warns that where this distinction is not clear, there is a risk that they will lose their identity. Catechesis has as its primary goal adherence to Christ and the maturation of Christian life. Teaching religion at school, on the other hand, provides students with knowledge about the identity of Christianity and Christian life. See Pontifical Council for the New Evangelization, *Directory for Catechesis*, 313.

⁴⁴ Katecheza i wychowanie katolickie w Kościele katowickim, p. 266.

⁴⁵ Katecheza i wychowanie katolickie w Kościele katowickim, p. 266. The catechetical documents leave no doubt that, regardless of the school teaching of religion, the primary place of catechesis is the parish, which is a privileged environment for catechesis preparing for the sacraments. Also, in accordance with the current religious education curriculum, catechetical meetings organized once a month in the parish should cover all educational stages and have a formative and liturgical character. See Commission of Catholic Education of the Polish Bishops' Conference, Program for teaching the Roman Catholic religion in kindergartens and schools (Częstochowa: Edition of Saint Paul, 2019), p. 9.

- e) helping priests in closer preparation of secondary school youth for marriage;
- f) participation in animating and leading parish and apostolic groups, in organizing biblical circles, evangelization courses, assistance in closed retreats⁴⁶.

Organized under the substantive supervision of the Catechetical Department and the patronage of the Faculty of Theology of the University of Silesia, the study is a formative proposal addressed to all adults interested in deepening their understanding of their faith, and in particular to people already serving in parishes (animators, leaders, responsible for groups, communities, etc.). In the program of four semesters (120 teaching hours each), academic lecturers and priests conduct classes in the field of philosophy, church history, biblical studies, dogmatics, moral theology, psychology, pedagogy, catechetics, liturgy, pastoral theology and spirituality. The program also includes exercises in the methodology of catechesis, developing the ability to animate community prayer (e.g. catechetical celebrations, mystagogical catechesis) and workshops dealing with the issues of new evangelization, animation of charity, self-awareness in communication and preparation for marriage⁴⁷. During the five editions organized since 2018, ASKP promoted over 300 graduates, many of whom received a canonical mission to perform catechetical ministry in parishes. The Archdiocesan School of Parish Catechists, through its ideological assumptions and the formation program implemented, appears as a pre-emptive response of the Katowice Church to the call for the formation of parish catechists (catechists) and the lay ministry of catechists established in 2021 by Pope Francis⁴⁸.

In the instruction *Pastoral Conversion*, the parish was indicated as a community gathered around the table of the word and the Eucharist. Remaining in the indicated trend of spirituality, ACFP proposes a formation cycle *Liturgiology for everyone*, organized in deaneries, concerning basic issues related to the liturgy, especially the Eucharist and other sacraments. During ten two-hour meetings, the following issues are discussed: what is the liturgy?; the language of the liturgy and liturgical space; liturgy and time; Eucharist (parts 1–3); sacraments; sacramentals and popular piety; liturgical texts; the liturgy of the hours⁴⁹. *Spirituality for everyone* is a formation cycle consisting of a synthetic introduction to issues related to spiritual life and its development. The following issues are discussed during ten

⁴⁶ Katecheza i wychowanie katolickie w Kościele katowickim, 267.

⁴⁷ Archidiecezjalna Szkoła Katechetów Parafialnych, access 18.11.2022, <http://skp.centrum.katowice.pl/>.

⁴⁸ Pope Francis, Apostolic letter in the form of a motu proprio of Pope Francis "Antiquum Ministerium", in which he establishes the ministry of catechist, eKAI, access 18.11.2022, <https://www.ekai.pl/dokumenty/list-apostolski-w-formie-motu-proprio-papieza-franciszka-antiquum-ministerium-w-ktorym-ustanawia-posluge-katechety/>.

⁴⁹ Liturgika dla każdego, access 18.11.2022, <http://liturgika.centrum.katowice.pl/>.

two-hour meetings: man in relation to God; development of spiritual life; the word of God and the spiritual life; prayer; examination of conscience and spiritual discernment; Christian asceticism; liturgy of the hours - the prayer of all of us; community prayer; lay Christian spirituality; holiness as the goal of the spiritual life⁵⁰. According to the assumptions of the Katowice synod, the study of liturgy and spirituality is an attempt at catechetical and pastoral formation of the faithful for the sacramental service (liturgy), carried out by ACFP in the context of the current assumptions of the pastoral program of the Church in Poland.

Among the pastoral initiatives conducted by the ACFP in selected deaneries of the archdiocese is the *Ask for Faith* course. It is a formation cycle intended for all interested parties, in particular for catechists, leaders and animators of parish communities. Ten two-hour meetings are a synthetic introduction to the basic truths of faith – from the one and only God in the Holy Trinity to the ultimate things⁵¹. At the level of deaneries, the formation cycle Ecumenism for everyone is also organized. Ten two-hour meetings help to systematize basic information about the division of Christianity, the diversity of the Church and the conditions of interfaith dialogue⁵².

The Second Synod of the Archdiocese of Katowice also postulated the need to deepen the formation of the faithful in the field of Catholic social teaching. An attempt at pastoral implementation of the synodal indication is the *Study of Catholic Social Teaching*, prepared and conducted by the ACFP at the level of deaneries. It is a series of meetings on topics related to contemporary social problems and challenges in the light of the Church's social teaching. Among the proposed themes are: Christian involvement as a moral duty; criteria of Christian evaluation of social reality; our times and their moral dilemmas; freedom and truth versus changes in Poland; family – education – culture; Christian towards politics – social and moral order and democracy; work – free market – consumerism – business ethics; exclusion as a socio-moral problem; ecology as a call for the Church; social Catholicism in Upper Silesia – history and prospects⁵³.

Starting from February 2022, the cyclical implementation of two more ACFP initiatives was launched in selected deaneries. These are the Study of the *Thought of John Paul II* and *Silesia and the History of the Church in Silesia*. The first proposal is a continuation of the *Study of Catholic Social Teaching* project. The formative cycle consists of ten two-hour meetings covering the following topics: Karol Wojtyła/John Paul II; theology;

⁵⁰ Duchowość dla każdego, access 18.11.2022, <http://duchowosc.centrum.katowice.pl/>.

⁵¹ Zapytaj o wiarę, access 18.11.2022, <http://zapytajowiare.centrum.katowice.pl/>.

⁵² Ekumenizm dla wszystkich, access 18.11.2022, <http://ekumenizm.centrum.katowice.pl/>.

⁵³ Studium katolickiej nauki społecznej, access 18.11.2022, <http://studiumkns.centrum.katowice.pl/>.

Church –clergy, laity, consecrated; marriage and family; social thought; moral challenges of the present day; missions and ecumenism; spiritual testament and dialogue with the world; pilgrimages to Poland (1979–1987); pilgrimages to Poland (1991–2022)⁵⁴. *Silesia and the history of the Church in Silesia* is a formative cycle on topics related to Silesia, its history and the beginning of the formation of the Katowice diocese. The study program covers the following issues: the place of Silesia as a region in the emerging statehood of Poland (the Middle Ages); Church in Silesia in the Middle Ages; Czech times of Silesia; the Reformation and its significance for the region; Prussian times of Silesia; Silesian uprisings and the incorporation of part of Upper Silesia into Poland, new structures of the Catholic Church; The Second World War; the birth of the diocese of Katowice and Opole; bishops and clergy of the Diocese of Katowice; Silesia - the specificity of the borderland⁵⁵.

Among the latest catechetical initiatives carried out by ACFP online since October 2022, there are formation cycles *Has it always been like this? Meetings with the history of the Church and theology* and *Meetings with the Word*. The first of them was conceived as seventeen thematic meetings covering two clock hours of the lecture with a break enabling the participants to ask questions to the lecturers. The program includes discussion of such issues as: the formation of the community of the ancient Church; the first millennium councils; stages of evangelization of Europe; the development of the practice and theology of the sacraments; the Council of Trent and the Catholic Reform; The Second Vatican Council (preparation, process and reform of the Council)⁵⁶. Among the synodal indications regarding the ecclesial formation of the faithful, the building of communities based on the word of God (*martyria*) was adopted. One of the attempts at their catechetical implementation is the formation cycle *Meetings with the Word*. It consists of seventeen biblical meetings conducted twice a month online and four days of retreat in the form of *Lectio Divina*, organized in the post-Cistercian abbey in Rudy Raciborskie⁵⁷. Classes conducted by ACFP are co-organized with the *Missio Initiative Foundation* from Gliwice⁵⁸.

The common catechetical and pastoral goal that unites spiritually all activities inspired and conducted by ACFP, in addition to substantive knowledge of the issues provided for in the formation programs, is to prepare the faithful for the 100th anniversary of the establishment of the Diocese of Katowice in 2025.

⁵⁴ Studium myśli Jana Pawła II, access 18.11.2022, <http://www.jp2.centrum.katowice.pl/>.

⁵⁵ Śląsk i historia Kościoła na Śląsku, access 18.11.2022, <http://www.kosciolnaslasku.centrum.katowice.pl/>.

⁵⁶ The detailed program of the cycle is available on the website: *Czy zawsze tak było? Spotkania z historią Kościoła i teologii*, access 18.11.2022, <http://czyzawszetakbylo.centrum.katowice.pl/>.

⁵⁷ *Spotkania ze Słowem*, access 18.11.2022, <http://spotkaniazeslowem.centrum.katowice.pl/>.

⁵⁸ Fundacja Inicjatywa Misio, access 18.11.2022, <http://www.inicjatywamissio.pl/>.

Conclusion

The divine life embracing people creates the Church, which thus becomes a communion of divine-human life. In the community of the Church, two orders merge and interpenetrate each other: the natural and the supernatural. What happens in the natural order is accessible to the eyes of the human body, while what takes place in the supernatural order can only be grasped by faith.

Catechesis introducing into the community of the Church, taking up its task in the context of the assumptions of the pastoral program "I believe in the Church of Christ", must reveal the entire content richness of the truth about the Church. It is also a pastoral necessity to make the catechists aware that the Church as a divine-human work is a mystery that cannot be grasped by reason and therefore "requires faith". Finally, the inalienable task of catechesis is to show the faithful that – even in the face of manifestations of distrust manifested in public space – the Church is "worth believing" because of the presence of God in it and the salvific value of God's gifts from which, as members of the Mystical Body of Christ, they can fully draw.

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