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Missionary attitude as an essential dimension of Catholic Spirituality

For, on one hand, the missionary activity of the Church is the work of the Holy Spirit, who is also the main creator of spiritual life. It is one of the most important tasks and goals of the Christ's Church. This means that missionary attitude is an essential dimension of Christian spirituality.

The whole Christian life, especially spirituality, understood as a fruit of the cooperation with the Holy Spirit, is permeated with missionary attitude to such a degree that it should be said that Christian spirituality is simply a missionary spirituality. Its unique feature is the particular docility to the Holy Spirit.

Joy is an important feature of missionary spirituality, and apostolic love up to Christ's standard. It is a love for the Church as Christ's Mystical Body. It is a radical ecclesial love, which does not evade the toils of missionary work, and even the sacrifice of one's own life. Another important feature of missionary spirituality is striving for sanctity, because Christian spirituality is a function of holiness, that is – it remains in the service of holiness.

Key words: Christian spirituality, spiritual life, mission, missionary attitude, missionary spirituality.

Saint John Paul II's encyclical *Redemptoris missio* on the permanent validity of the missionary mandate (from 7th Dec 1990), published on the 25th anniversary of the conciliar decree on the missionary activity of the Church – *Ad gentes*, begins with the words: "The mission of Christ the Redeemer, which is entrusted to the Church, is still very far from completion. As the second millennium after Christ's coming draws to an end, an overall view of the human race shows that this mission is still only beginning and that we must commit ourselves

wholeheartedly to its service. It is the Spirit who impels us to proclaim the great works of God [...]”.

These words form a scheme within which the topic of the present spiritual theology reflection finds its proper place. For, on one hand, the missionary activity is the work of the Holy Spirit, who is also the main creator of spiritual life, and on the other – it is one of the most important tasks and goals of the Christ’s Church. This means that missionary attitude is an essential dimension of Christian spirituality.

To substantiate the thesis that Christian spirituality is missionary in its nature, it is first necessary to specify the very concept of “spirituality” and explain its essence from the point of view of the Catholic faith. This is because, in our times, marked by a “universal need of spirituality,” as St. John Paul II stated in the Apostolic Letter *Novo millennio ineunte* (no. 33) – this concept has become very fashionable and consequently – ambiguous.

The concept and essence of Christian spirituality

The key term *spiritualitas* (spirituality)¹ originated in the first half of the 5th century and is one of the oldest theological terms. Several centuries later, in the age of the scholasticism, it was used in philosophy to denote the immateriality of the human soul. Later it came out of use. When it returned to the language of theology at the break of the 19th and 20th centuries, it meant the whole sphere of man’s relationships to God, encompassing not only ascetics and mysticism, but also various styles of striving after holiness. In the modern times, however, it gained a much broader sense. This was mainly the result of post-modern and New Age influences as well as of the fact it has been assimilated by psychology and other social sciences and arts. So spirituality ceased to be an exclusively theological issue.

Having this in mind sociologists in the 1990-ies identified a social phenomenon which they dubbed “a new spirituality”. It is quite heterogeneous and it develops outside institutional forms of religion and often also separately from any religious involvement. This means that spirituality exceeds the religious context, even more so – an ecclesiastical one. No wonder that recently more and more often the term “spirituality” is used instead of the “religiousness”. Whereas until recently religiousness was considered a fundamental feature of

¹ See. A. Solignac, *Spiritualité*, in: *Dictionnaire de spiritualité ascétique et mystique*, ed. M. Viller, F. Cavallera, J. De Guibert, v. 14, Paris 1990, col. 1142-1143.

human existence, at present spirituality becomes crucial, including both religious and non-religious one.

The latter usually does not have public representations, universally approved dogmas and moral rules, rites and cults celebrated in community. Instead of a religious institution, a concrete person becomes the subject, defining what is spiritual. So the “new spirituality” is characterized by a transition from being institution-oriented to being individual-oriented. As a result – what has already been said – spirituality, until recently a nearly exclusive domain of theology and pastoral work, now has become the object of interest for psychology and social sciences.² Moreover, “the new spirituality” has begun to permeate public consciousness so strongly that it is considered one of the megatrends of the early 21st century. This spirituality focuses on the experience of *sacrum*, sometimes nameless, understood in the categories of something personal, intimate, something that relates to the power located in the man’s interior. Consequently, “new spirituality” stresses the role of experiences as well as psychological and spiritual exercises and it considers the human body to be filled with an internal, spiritual meaning and, at the same time, to be a manifestation of a creative power of the Spirit. So it refers with respect to nature and promotes so called healthy eating. Moreover, it attaches a lot of significance to inter-human bonds, as long as they are based on faithfulness and love. It is sensitive to art in broad sense and also emphasizes the equality of the sexes. In a word, it is a holistic spirituality, democratic, so available for everybody and at the same time subjective and non-hierarchic, situated in opposition to institutionalized religion, especially Christianity³. “The new spirituality” focuses most of all on providing a general good mental state and self-fulfilment of the individual, but has nearly no interest in the well-being of the others.

One particular example of the “new spirituality” is so called spirituality without God, that is an atheistic spirituality, as well as even further-reaching spirituality without religion⁴. According to one of the representatives of the atheistic spirituality, it is based not on religious faith but on faithfulness, especially to the cultural heritage. In his opinion faithfulness is more important than faith. Faith is the basis

² See: Z. Pasek, *Nowa duchowość. Konteksty kulturowe*, Kraków 2013, p. 37-38.

³ J. Mariański, S. Wargacki, *Nowa duchowość jako megatrend społeczny i kulturowy*, „Przegląd Religioznawczy” 4(2011), p. 138.

⁴ See: A. Comte-Sponville, *Duchowość ateistyczna. Wprowadzenie do duchowości bez Boga*, transl. E. E. Aduszkiewicz, Warszawa 2011; S. Harris, *Przebudzenie. Duchowość bez religii*, transl. J. Zuławnik, Łódź 2015.

of religion, whereas faithfulness is the basis of spirituality. Thanks to the faithfulness to the cultural heritage a spiritual bond is formed, on which society is constructed. The second essential feature of the atheistic spirituality is being rooted in the present. In contrast to the traditional religious spirituality, especially Christian one, atheistic spirituality is far from eschatological attitude. If eternity and God's Kingdom, understood in any way, consists in an eternal "now," then, being involved in what is *hic et nunc*, man builds God's kingdom and tastes eternity. Therefore – as another author writes – "our task is to reclaim this material and spiritual space (world, we ourselves: the present), in which there is nothing to be believed in, since everything can be known; there is nothing to be hoped, since everything can be done or loved; to do – what depends on us; to love – what does not depend on us"⁵. In this sense atheistic spirituality is not opposed to religious spirituality, as the common notion of atheism might suggest, but seems to be its more primeval form and at the same time – a more universal one.

There is a more radical form of "new spirituality", the so-called spirituality without religion, understood as "deepening the very comprehension and incessant breaking through the illusory veil of one's own 'self'"⁶. In fact the spirituality so understood concentrates on psychological processes. It is particularly interested in neurophysiology and neuropsychology, that is the control over one's consciousness and cognitive and mental processes⁷.

It is close to the psychology of spirituality, which has attracted more and more interest in the last decades. In fact, a Polish Society of Psychology of Religion and Spirituality was established. A psychological approach to spirituality is sometimes transferred uncritically into the formation for priesthood and consecrated life, not without disastrous results for shaping the attitudes of faith. This is because an impression is made that the application of appropriate psychological methods can replace the cooperation with God's grace. Surreptitiously, a spirituality without God and even spirituality without religion forces its way into the life of the faith milieus, such as seminaries and novitiates should be.

Spirituality approached from the psychological side is understood as a property that is innate, given by God, nature or perhaps other

⁵ A. Comte-Sponville, *Duchowość ateistyczna*, p. 71; see: R. Zas Friz De Col, *Dalla trascendenza celeste alla trascendenza terrena. Saggio sulla 'nuova' spiritualità*, „Mysterion” 4 (2011), no. 1, p. 3-16.

⁶ S. Harris, *Przebudzenie. Duchowość bez religii...*, p. 18.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 47-61.

supernatural or so-called “essential” power and is a nearly biological characteristic of the *homo sapiens* species. So, spirituality, from the formal point of view, is a process or integrated set of mental processes, appearing as an adaptative response of every human being to the consciousness of their own existence and condition. Sometimes psychology understands spirituality also as a sphere of the activity of spirits, that is an extra-sensory dimension of reality and a field of practices aiming at “spiritualizing and/or coming into direct contact with the supernatural sphere”⁸.

When analyzing various contemporary conceptions and expressions of spirituality it is not difficult to notice that their common denominator is the ability to transcend, inherent in human nature, that is the ability to overcome the limitations related to the bodily-mental dimension of existence. Approaching reality from the phenomenological point of view, Card. Karol Wojtyła in his work *Person and act (Osoba i czyn, Kraków 1969)* stated that the ability to auto-transcend, being a permanent element of human nature, is the essence of spirituality. To present the issue in a simpler way, one can say, following the Cardinal, and later – Pope, that every human being as *homo sapiens* – a rational and free being expresses his/her spirituality in activity (act). Everything that makes up culture, taken broadly, bears testimony to the spiritual nature of man, which differentiates him fundamentally from animals. Therefore, I put forward a proposal that the spirituality, on this fundamental level, be called anthropogenic spirituality, since it has its source in the ability to transcend, inherent in human nature⁹.

Card. Wojtyła teaches that man as a person through an act crosses over the present experience of one’s “self”, in a conscious and free way. In this way he/she reveals immaterial, that is spiritual nature and the spirituality belonging to it. But this should not be considered equivalent to the negation of materiality, as early scholasticism did when it used the *spiritualitas* term. According to the Archbishop of Krakow, the essence of spirituality should be seen in verity, that is in being assigned to the truth¹⁰. This means that human spirituality is expressed not only in consciousness and thinking, but also in acting and experiencing. On the basis of these two fundamental dynamisms of human existence the inherent ability to auto-transcend is actualized, in which both the consciousness and the freedom of the subject

⁸ See: P. M. Socha, *Przemiana. W stronę teorii duchowości*, Kraków 2014, p. 24-28.

⁹ Paweł M. Socha states that “it is not so much religiousness, but spirituality which is the anthropologic feature.” – *Przemiana. W stronę teorii duchowości...*, p. 58.

¹⁰ K. Wojtyła, *Osoba i czyn*, Kraków 1985 (ed. 2), p. 218-219.

are involved, as well as acting and experiencing. And his/her whole carnal dimension is indispensable for this purpose¹¹.

Our Author, as the Pope, often referred to this truth, but there is also a noticeable evolution of his views. In the later period he connected spirituality, taken in the anthropogenic sense, not only with verity, that is striving after truth, but above all with love. One can find the confirmation of this in the words of post-synodal Exhortation *Familiaris consortio* (from 22 Nov 1981), in which St. John Paul II develops the notion that God created man in his image and likeness, calling him to existence through love and towards love (cf. Gen 1:27). At the same time he states that God inscribed in the humanity of man and woman the capacity for love, and also the responsibility for the communion that is born out of this love. In this context there is also a statement that “As an incarnate spirit, that is a soul which expresses itself in a body and a body informed by an immortal spirit, man is called to love in his unified totality. Love includes the human body, and the body is made a sharer in spiritual love” (FC 11). So the integrality of soul and body was emphasized and love was shown as the essential bond of the unity of a human person. Love, understood as mutual self-giving of persons for the sake of each other’s happiness, is the factor making the spiritual and corporeal dimension interpenetrate in an inseparable way.

This topic, based in the context of philosophical anthropology, made a return in the Letter to families *Gratissimam sane* (from 2 Feb 1994), published in the Year of the Family. Calling to mind the thought of Descartes, St. John Paul II said that “It is typical of rationalism to make a radical contrast in man between spirit and body.” But, as he emphasized, “man is a person in the unity of his body and his spirit. The body can never be reduced to mere matter: it is a *spiritualized body*, just as man’s spirit is so closely united to the body that he can be described as *an embodied spirit*” (no. 19).

From both, most representative of the Holy Pope’s statements, it appears that the tension, typical of the spiritual nature of man, is situated not so much on the body-soul axis, which is of interest to philosophy and psychology, but on the truth-love axis, which is the subject of theology in the first place. A conclusion can be drawn that the above mentioned capacity for auto-transcending, that is crossing over the corporeal dimension by the spirit, takes its dynamism from truth and love, so it encompasses the cognitive, volitional and affective acts,

¹¹ See: A. Szostek, *Autotranscendencja podstawą duchowości w ujęciu kard. Karola Wojtyły – Jana Pawła II*, in: *Jan Paweł II – Mistrz duchowy* („Homo meditans”, 27), ed. M. Chmielewski, Lublin 2006, p. 37-51.

which become manifest in the act¹². In a nutshell, everything characterizing man as *homo sapiens*, that is all the manifestations of his rational activity, and especially the creations of civilization and culture, are the manifestation of his spirituality, taken in the anthropogenic sense¹³.

Therefore one should speak about different kinds of anthropogenic spirituality, respective of what man transcends to, in the quest for truth and love thanks to his liberty and rationality. So, if auto-transcendence has soteriological direction, which means that is turned towards something or someone in order to cross over the time-space limitations and to ensure for oneself the permanence of being and happiness, then one can speak about religious spirituality. It is a particular form of anthropogenic spirituality. In this area there are to be found different spiritualities of the religions of the world, different in their doctrine, ethics and cults/rites, including Christianity, but with a very important reservation that various spiritualities of non-Christian religions, including the above mentioned “new spirituality” can be defined as “grass-roots”, that is natural or innate. However, Christian spirituality, from the Catholic faith point of view should be treated as a “top-down”, that is super-natural religion. So we face some kind of a qualitative “leap” between the spiritualities of various religions and Christian spirituality. As it is known, it has as its subject, the self-revelation of the Divine Trinity of Persons in the Incarnate Son of God, Jesus Christ. It is characterized by being based on Biblical revelation and it has a Trinitarian-Christological character, as well as an ecclesial, sacramental and Marian one¹⁴. This means that in the doctrinal, ethical and cultic-ritual respect it is incomparable and non-reducible to any other religious spiritualities, even more so – to non-religious (atheistic) ones.

¹² Benedict XVI teaches about the close connection of the truth and love, both of which are the basis of anthropogenic spirituality, in the Encyclical *Caritas in veritate* (from 29 June 2009). We can read there about the necessity “to link charity with truth not only in the sequence, pointed out by Saint Paul, of *veritas in caritate* (Eph 4:15), but also in the inverse and complementary sequence of *caritas in veritate*. Truth needs to be sought, found and expressed within the “economy” of charity, but charity in its turn needs to be understood, confirmed and practised in the light of truth. In this way, not only do we do a service to charity enlightened by truth, but we also help give credibility to truth” (no. 2).

¹³ See: R. Zas Friz De Col, *La vocazione universale all'auto-trascendenza*, „Mysterion” 8 (2015), n. 1, p. 124-132.

¹⁴ See: M. Chmielewski, *Główne rysy duchowości katolickiej*, in: *Duchowość, mistyka i medytacja chrześcijańskiego świata – katolicyzm* („Duchowość Dalekiego Wschodu a chrześcijaństwo. Dialog czy konfrontacja?”), ed. I. Kamiński, J. Perszon, J. Kulwicka-Kamińska, Toruń 2014, p. 13-27.

Christian spirituality, as a supernatural spirituality is identical with a strictly understood “spiritual life,” which, according to St. John Paul II is a life in Christ, under the influence of the Holy Spirit or simply the life of the Holy Spirit in man and a close cooperation with Him, which has as its aim leading man towards holiness, that is to being unified with Christ. So, whereas every man manifests a spirituality proper to himself in the anthropogenic sense, the spiritual life, as a fruit of cooperation with the Holy Spirit, is an exclusive attribute of baptised persons. But, because the cooperation with the sanctifying activity of the Holy Spirit is actualized on the basis of innate capacities, which we defined as the anthropogenic spirituality, it can, to a large extent, be described and researched attitude-wise. And every attitude, as a position taken in the face of a given reality, is characterized by three main references: cognitive, axiological-affective and behavioural. So this should be the key to investigating the missionary spirituality.

Missionary spirituality

John Paul II presented in detail what missionary spirituality is and what it should be like in his Encyclical *Redemptoris missio*,¹⁵ mentioned at the beginning of the paper. Pope Francis refers to this encyclical in his Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii gaudium* on proclaiming Gospel in the modern world (24 Nov 2013). Therefore, to fully discuss the topic it would be enough to present the content of these two documents.

St. John Paul II in the first words of his encyclical briefly recalls what has been elaborated on half a century earlier by the Second Vatican Council, that the essential aim of the Church in the world is to continue the mission initiated by Jesus Christ for the redemption of the world. This mission has, above all, a Trinitarian, Christological and Pneumatological character, since – as 2nd Vatican Council teaches in the Decree on missions *Ad gentes* – “The pilgrim Church is missionary by her very nature, since it is from the mission (*ex missione*) of the Son and the mission of the Holy Spirit that she draws her origin, in accordance with the decree of God the Father” (no. 2). So it is not so much the mission of the Church, but above all the mission of Christ¹⁶, which the Church, as His Mystical Body, enlivened with the power of

¹⁵ See: A. Cattaneo, *Un papa missionario. L'enciclica „Redemptoris missio” – 7 XII 1990*, in: *Giovanni Paolo II teologo. Nel segno delle Encicliche*, ed. G. Borgonovo, A. Cattaneo, Milano 2003, p. 183-196.

¹⁶ With reference to this Pope Francis writes: “Though it is true that this mission demands great generosity on our part, it would be wrong to see it as a heroic individual undertaking, for it is first and foremost the Lord’s work, surpassing

the Holy Spirit, is to continue till the end of the world. The mission, then, is not limited either in time or space. So it cannot be said that because Christianity is one of the predominant religions in the world, since it totals about 1210 million believers, the mission of the Church is finished. Quite the contrary, taking into account on one hand the undefined time-spatial horizon, and on the other – constantly changing cultural conditions, the holy Pope states emphatically that “this mission is still only beginning and that we must commit ourselves wholeheartedly to its service” (RMs 1). And Pope Francis stresses that “today missionary activity still represents the greatest challenge for the Church and the missionary task must remain foremost” (EG 15).

It is worth recalling here the characteristic words of John Paul II from the post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Christifideles laici* about the vocation and mission of the laity in the Church and the world (from 30 Dec 1988). Defining the nature of the laity, John Paul II, referring to his predecessor, Pius XII, states forcibly that lay people “in particular, ought to have an ever-clearer consciousness *not only of belonging to the Church, but of being the Church*” (no. 9). So if the mission, inherent in the very nature of the Church, is a constant task to be undertaken, then also the laity, together with the clergy and consecrated persons, bear the responsibility for fulfilling it. This was articulated by St. John Paul II, when he wrote further in his encyclical: “Above all, there is a new awareness that *missionary activity is a matter for all Christians*, for all dioceses and parishes, Church institutions and associations” (no. 2). This thought has been sustained by Pope Francis, who said that “all of us are called to take part in this new missionary ‘going forth.’ Each Christian and every community must discern the path that the Lord points out, but all of us are asked to obey his call to go forth from our own comfort zone in order to reach all the ‘peripheries’ in need of the light of the Gospel” (EG 20).

Whereas St. John Paul II only says that fulfilling the mission is the matter of each member of the Church, his successor points to the main reason for this duty. It is based on the baptism. Francis writes, “In virtue of their baptism, all the members of the People of God have become missionary disciples (cf. *Mt 28:19*). All the baptized, whatever their position in the Church or their level of instruction in the faith, are agents of evangelization, and it would be insufficient to envisage a plan of evangelization to be carried out by professionals while the rest of the faithful would simply be passive recipients. [...] Every Christian

anything which we can see and understand. Jesus is ‘the first and greatest evangelizer’” (EG 12).

is a missionary to the extent that he or she has encountered the love of God in Christ Jesus: we no longer say that we are ‘disciples’ and ‘missionaries’, but rather that we are always ‘missionary disciples’” (EG 120).

The existence of a universal missionary duty, involving every member of the Church, and in a particular way those who have the ministry of the word, is the fundamental conclusion from the papal documents relating to the missionary spirituality discussed here¹⁷.

Another important conclusion which can be gathered from the reading of the encyclical *Redemptoris missio* by St. John Paul II is that “the missionary thrust belongs to the very nature of the Christian life, and is also the inspiration behind ecumenism” (RMs 1). This statement of St. John Paul II can be reinforced with the sentence of Bl. Paul VI, which the Polish pope quoted, precisely, that “in the Church’s history, missionary drive has always been a sign of vitality, just as its lessening is a sign of a crisis of faith” (RMs 2). Paraphrasing these words, it can be said that the involvement in the missionary activity of the Church proves the quality of the spiritual life of a Christian. So there should be talk not so much about missionary spirituality as such, but rather about the missionary dimension of Christian spirituality. Missionary involvement cannot be reduced to some sector of pastoral initiatives or even less so – short-term pastoral activities. Pope Francis appeals to all communities to “devote the necessary effort to advancing along the path of a pastoral and missionary conversion which cannot leave things as they presently are. ‘Mere administration’ can no longer be enough. Throughout the world, let us be ‘permanently in a state of mission’” (EG 25).

The present Pope dreams about so called “missionary option,” that is a change in customs, ways of doing things, times and schedules, language and all Church structures in order for them to “become suitably channelled for the evangelization of today’s world rather than for self-preservation.” In his opinion the pastoral structures should be renewed in order to “make them more mission-oriented, to make ordinary pastoral activity on every level more inclusive and open, to inspire in pastoral workers a constant desire to go forth and in this way to elicit a positive response from all those whom Jesus summons to friendship with himself” (EG 27).

The papal statements quoted here clearly imply that the responsibility for the Church’s mission should permeate all aspects of Christian

¹⁷ See: W. Seremak, *Duchowość misyjna Kościoła w nauczaniu Jana Pawła II*, in: *Lumen Christi tantum in Ecclesia*, ed. T. Paszkowska, Lublin 2005, p. 223-240.

life, especially spiritual life, even more so because, as one can read in the encyclical of St. John Paul II, this involvement “has as its goal an interior renewal of faith and Christian life” (RMs 2).

Pope Francis, approaching the reality in a very realistic way, observes the spiritual apathy of many Christians. He expresses his observations, writing that “at a time when we most need a missionary dynamism which will bring salt and light to the world, many lay people fear that they may be asked to undertake some apostolic work and they seek to avoid any responsibility that may take away from their free time. For example, it has become very difficult today to find trained parish catechists willing to persevere in this work for some years” (EG 81). In other words, Francis expects that the catechetical ministry will cease to be treated as a more or less profitable teaching profession and will become a ministry full of enthusiasm, motivated by a living faith. Therefore he makes an appeal, “Let us not allow ourselves to be robbed of missionary enthusiasm!” (EG 80).

Consequently, “missionary activity demands a specific spirituality, which applies in particular to all those whom God has called to be missionaries”, says St. John Paul II and adds immediately, that “this spirituality is expressed first of all by a life of complete docility to the Spirit. It commits us to being molded from within by the Spirit, so that we may become ever more like Christ” (RMs 87). In the light of the clarifications made earlier concerning the term and the essence of spirituality, this sentence has a fundamental meaning. For the very core of spiritual life is nothing else but docility to the Holy Spirit, who by his power accomplishes the process of Christ-formization in a man¹⁸. “An essential characteristic of missionary spirituality is intimate communion with Christ” (RMs 88). As the holy Pope explains further, it is impossible to understand the mission and live it out without reference to Christ who was sent out as the first one. Anyone who lives out his spiritual life in a responsible way knows well that missionary activity in every form comes down to man’s experience of communion with Christ, even though usually this is not very spectacular and not effective from the sociological point of view. Building churches and hospitals in missionary areas, collecting money for missions, a huge effort of missionary workers for education and improvement of health standards, not to mention the promotion of local culture, even though very important or even indispensable, are always an intermediate goal, which should lead to the essential purpose of the mission, which is accepting Christ as one’s own Lord and Saviour. This essential goal is unchangeably

¹⁸ See: A. J. Nowak, *Psychologia eklezjalna*, Lublin 2005, p. 110-159.

relevant also in the areas Christianized for a long time, with developed Church structures and extensive catechetical and pastoral activity. All this would mean little if it did not lead people, both the young and the older, to being unified with Christ in His holy Church¹⁹. In this context the words of Fr. Francis Blachnicki († 1987), the founder of the Life-Light movement, sound timeless. He often repeated that “life is only born out of life,” and that one can be a true disciple of Christ only if he/she is able to make others disciples. Pope Francis stresses that “Missionary disciples accompany missionary disciples” (EG 173). This is precisely the meaning of the Greek word *katechidzein*, which is the origin of the contemporary terms “catechesis” and “catechist.” In other words, a catechist who enters catechetical ministry, must have missionary spirituality, whose “essential characteristic is intimate communion with Christ” (RMs 88).

Joy is an important feature of missionary spirituality, but it should not be mistaken for a superficial merriness. For joy is a state of the spirit being in harmony with itself, and above all – remaining in communion with God. “The Gospel joy which enlivens the community of disciples is a missionary joy,” writes Francis (EG 21). This joy, flowing from Holy Spirit, was experienced by the seventy two disciples coming back from the mission (cf. Lk 10:17), as well as Christ himself, who rejoices in the Holy Spirit and praises the Father, because His revelation reached the poor and the little ones (cf. Lk 10: 21). Its fullness is also experienced by the first converts on the day of Pentecost, when they heard the preaching of the Apostles in their own language (cf. Acts 2:6; cf. EG 21).

St. John Paul II draws attention to another important feature of missionary spirituality, that is apostolic love up to Christ’s standard. This is a logical consequence of the communion with Him, discussed earlier. By no means it is about love in the colloquial or sentimental sense, but about “apostolic” love, that is love concerned with the salvation of people. As St. John Paul II writes, “The missionary is urged on by ‘zeal for souls’, a zeal inspired by Christ’s own charity, which takes the form of concern, tenderness, compassion, openness, availability and interest in people’s problems” (RMs 89). In other words, the missionary in particular, but also to some extent every Christian, enlivened by missionary spirituality “is a person of charity. In order to proclaim to all his brothers and sisters that they are loved by God

¹⁹ See: M. A. Rostkowski, *L’animazione e la formazione missionaria del popolo di Dio. La parola di Giovanni Paolo II*, „Rivista di Ascetica e Mistica” 34 (2009), no. 2, p. 467-493.

and are capable of loving, he must show love toward all, giving his life for his neighbor. The missionary is the ‘universal brother,’ bearing in himself the Church’s spirit, her openness to and interest in all peoples and individuals, especially the least and poorest of his brethren. As such, he overcomes barriers and divisions of race, cast or ideology. He is a sign of God’s love in the world – a love without exclusion or partiality” (RMs 89). So the apostolic love is a love for the Church as Christ’s Mystical Body, it is an ecclesial love, which does not evade the toils of missionary work, and even the sacrifice of one’s own life. Indeed, it is a radical love²⁰.

One more feature of missionary spirituality deserves attention: striving for sanctity. St. John Paul II writes clearly: “A missionary is really such only if he commits himself to the way of holiness” (RMs 90). So if holiness and leading people to salvation is the fundamental reason for Church’s existence and activity, it is possible to repeat the Pope’s words that “*The universal call to holiness* is closely linked to the *universal call to mission*. Every member of the faithful is called to holiness and to mission” (RMs 90).

St. John Paul II, presenting the problem in such an unambiguous way, once more emphasizes the fact that missionary attitude should permeate all dimensions of Christian spirituality, because it is a function of holiness, that is – it remains in the service of holiness. Christian spirituality which would not lead to holiness, understood as communion and becoming similar to Christ, would be devoid of sense.

In this context the holy Pope notices that a new stimulus for the development of missions, especially the *ad gentes – ad extra*, as well as for the work of new evangelization, the mission *ad intra*, requires the holiness of life of the people doing the ministry. “It is not enough to update pastoral techniques, organize and coordinate ecclesial resources, or delve more deeply into the biblical and theological foundations of faith. What is needed is the encouragement of a new ‘ardor for holiness’ among missionaries and throughout the Christian community, especially among those who work most closely with missionaries” (RMs 90).

The Holy Father, as an seasoned spiritual master, does not content himself with a general call to the missionaries for their holiness or with an encouragement for them to “reflect on the duty of holiness” (cf. RMs 91), but indicates concrete activities leading there. They include perfecting one’s own doctrinal and pastoral training, and above all,

²⁰ See: P. G. Cabra, *Il cammino spirituale nel cammino della missione*, „Rivista di vita spirituale” 58 (2004), no. 4-5, p. 527-543.

a spirit of contemplative prayer, having its origin in the Holy Scripture and combined with activity. A missionary and everybody who does Christological and ecclesial ministry of missions and evangelism, including the catechists, should be a “man of prayer.” The weight that St. John Paul II attaches to this can be seen in the following sentence: “[...] the future of mission depends to a great extent on contemplation. Unless the missionary is a contemplative he cannot proclaim Christ in a credible way” (RMs 91). Summing up, Holy Father says that “the missionary is a person of the Beatitudes” (RMs 91).

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The reflection presented here makes it possible to realize that the whole Christian life, especially spirituality, understood as a fruit of the cooperation with the Holy Spirit, is permeated with missionary attitude to such a degree that it should be said that Christian spirituality is simply a missionary spirituality. Its unique feature is the particular docility to the Holy Spirit.

This implies that every Christian has a fundamental duty of being involved in the missionary work of Christ which He mandated to the Church. So it is not possible to live an authentic spiritual life disregarding the duty to proclaim Gospel and draw others to Christ – the more so, the more pervasive is the “new spirituality,” destroying the sense of supernaturalism in man. All pastoral structures should be animated with this missionary spirit – and in a particular way those directly related to the proclaiming of the Word, such as preaching or catechesis.

This was appropriately expressed by the post-conciliar German theologian Karl Rahner († 1984), who stated that “every Christian is an apostle everywhere and always just because of being Christian. To be a Christian and to be an apostle is basically the same thing. Apostolic activity is available for every Christian and in every life situation [...]. Every Christian is an apostle already by the very fact and to the very degree that he is a Christian”²¹.

St. Paul is an unrivalled example of an apostle and missionary. In the Letter to Romans he writes that he is “not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes” (Rom 1:16). And since the proclamation of God’s Word is done thanks to the grace of the Holy Spirit, it is necessary to cultivate a missionary spirituality appropriate for this ministry, permeating the whole Christian existence.

²¹ *O możliwości wiary dzisiaj*, Kraków 1983, p. 250.

MISYJNOŚĆ JAKO ISTOTNY WYMIAR DUCHOWOŚCI KATOLICKIEJ

Działalność misyjna jest dziełem Ducha Świętego, który zarazem jest głównym sprawcą życia duchowego. Jest ona jednym z najważniejszych zadań i celów Kościoła Chrystusowego. Oznacza to, że misyjność stanowi istotny wymiar duchowości chrześcijańskiej.

Całe życie chrześcijańskie, a zwłaszcza duchowość, rozumiana jako owoc współpracy z Duchem Świętym, jest przeniknięta misyjnością do tego stopnia, że należałoby mówić, iż duchowość chrześcijańska to po prostu duchowość misyjna. Jej specyfiką jest szczególna uległość Duchowi Świętemu.

Ważną cechą duchowości misyjnej jest radość i miłość apostołska na miarę Chrystusa. Jest to miłość do Kościoła jako Mistycznego Ciała Chrystusa. Jest radykalną miłością eklezjalną, która nie uchyla się nie tylko od trudów pracy misyjnej, ale nawet przed ofiarą ze swojego życia. Inną ważną cechą duchowości misyjnej jest dążenie do świętości. Duchowość jest bowiem funkcją świętości, czyli pozostaje w służbie świętości.

Słowa kluczowe: duchowość chrześcijańska, życie duchowe, misje, zaangażowanie misyjne, duchowość misyjna.

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