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JOHN PAUL II – THE POPE OF HOLINESS

Summary: Among many titles, John Paul II fully deserves to be called the “Pope of Holiness” due to a record number of beatifications and canonizations that he made and an original doctrine on holiness. He wanted to put into practice the conciliar teaching on the universal call of Christians to holiness.

In the Pope’s theology of holiness, the emphasis is placed on the Holy Trinity as the source of all holiness. In addition, he speaks of the manifestations, models and means leading to holiness, and thus of a specific “pedagogy of holiness”.

John Paul II’s doctrine of holiness is closely related to his lifestyle, which was confirmed by the Church with his beatification (1 May 2011) and canonization (27 April 2014). Considering his doctrine, life and concern for the Christian shape of Europe, it is a legitimate expectation that he will soon be proclaimed a Doctor of the Church and Patron of Europe.

Keywords: John Paul II, holiness, saints, beatification, canonization.

Among many titles, John Paul II fully deserves to be called the “Pope of holiness” or the “Promoter of holiness.” There are two fundamental reasons for this: a record number of beatifications and canonizations that he made and an original doctrine on holiness.

1. John Paul II as the promoter of holiness

During his pontificate, John Paul II beatified and canonised more persons than any of his predecessors. With a few exceptions, he personally presided over 51 celebrations of canonisation, during which he proclaimed 482 people holy, and conducted 147 beatifications, declaring 1338 people (including 1031 martyrs and 307 confessors) blessed. In 4 cases, he issued decrees confirming

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the existing cult. (Karczewski, 2005, pp. 445–446, 491) In the number of those elevated to the glory altars there is a large group of Poles or people connected with Poland: 9 saints¹ and 154 blessed.²

Many of these celebrations took place on the occasion of apostolic journeys to individual countries. This was the case in Poland, among others. During his second visit to his homeland, the Holy Father beatified Ursula Ledóchowska (20 June 1983 in Poznań), Brother Albert Chmielowski and Father Raphael Kalinowski (20 June 1983 in Cracow). During his next visit to Tarnów on 10 June 1987, he beatified Karolina Kózkówna, and four days later, in Warsaw, Bishop Michael Kozal. The fourth visit to Poland in the June resulted in the beatification of Bishop Joseph Sebastian Pelczar (2 June 1991 in Rzeszów), Sr. Bolesława Lament (5 June 1991 in Białystok) and Father Raphael Chyliński (9 June 1991 in Warsaw), and in the August on the occasion of World Youth Day, the beatification of Angela Salawa (13 August 1991 in Cracow). On 5 June 1997, once again on a pilgrimage to the homeland, John Paul II in Zakopane elevated St. Bernardyna Maria Jabłońska and St. Maria Karłowska to the altars. A few days later, on June 8th 1997, he canonised Blessed Queen Jadwiga [Hedwig] in Krakow and Blessed John of Dukla (June 10th 1997 in Krosno). Arriving in his homeland two years later, he beatified Fr. Stephen Vincent Frelichowski on June 7th, 1999 in Toruń, and Sr. Regina Protman and Edmund Bojanowski and 108 martyrs of World War II on June 13th, 1999 in Warsaw. He also canonised Blessed Kinga (16 June 1999 in Stary Sącz). The last visit of the Holy Father to the homeland was an occasion for the beatification of Fr. John Balicki, Fr. John Beyzym, Archbishop Zygmunt Szczęśny Feliński and Sr. Sancja Szymkowiak (18 August 2002 in Cracow). It is worth mentioning that on his apostolic visit to Ukraine, the Pope beatified Bishop Joseph

¹ These include: Maximilian Maria Kolbe (1894–1941) – beatified on 17 October 1971 in Rome and canonised there on 10 October 1982; Albert Chmielowski (1845–1916) – beatified on 22 June 1983 in Cracow and canonised on 12 November 1989 in Rome; Rafał Kalinowski (1835–1907) – beatified on 22 June 1983 in Cracow and canonised on 17 November 1991 in Rome; Jadwiga, Queen of Poland (1374–1399) – approval of the cult on 31 May 1979, canonised on 8 June 1997 in Cracow; John of Dukla (1414–1484) – approval of the cult „from time immemorial” 21 January 1733, Canonised on 10 June 1997 in Krosno; Kinga (1224–1292) – approval of the cult “from time immemorial” 11 June 1690, canonised on 16 June 1999 in Stary Sącz; Faustyna Kowalska (1905–1938) – beatified on 18 April 1993 in Rome and canonised there on 30 April 2000; Józef Pelczar (1842–1924) – beatified on 2 June 1991 in Rzeszów and canonised on 18 May 2003 in Rome; Urszula Ledóchowska (1865–1939) – beatified on 20 June 1983 in Poznań and canonised on 18 May 2003 in Rome.

² For comparison, it is worth pointing out that from 1588, when the Congregation of Rituals was established to deal with the issue of beatification and canonization, until the election of John Paul II, only 4 Poles were declared saints: Jacek Odrowąż (canonized on 17 April 1594), Stanisław Kostka (canonized on 31 December 1726), Jan of Kęty (canonized on 16 July 1767) and Andrzej Bobola (canonized on 17 April 1938). At the same period, 63 Poles were beatified by popes. Mostly it an approval of the already existing cult.

Bilczewski and Rev. Zygmunt Gorazdowski (26 June 2001), and in Kiev 28 members of the Greek Catholic Church (28 June 2001). (Mizgalski, 1995)

Among those who were elevated to the glory of the altars there are many who lived in our times or whom John Paul II had met in person. These are: Pope John XXIII (beatified on 3 September 2000), Fr. Pio of Pietrelcina, whom John Paul II beatified on 2 May 1999 and then canonised on 16 June 2002, Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer, beatified by the Pope on 17 May 1992 and canonised on 6 October 2002, the first married couple in the history of the Church: Luigi and Maria Beltrame Quattrocchi, beatified on 21 October 2001, Mother Teresa of Calcutta (beatified on 19 October 2003), Gianna Beretta Molla, whom John Paul II beatified on 24 April 1994 and canonised 10 years later on 16 May 2004.

By elevating to the glory of the altars people who were our contemporaries, the Pope wanted to show that saints do not only belong to ancient history, but are among us and live in the same social conditions as we do. John Paul II showed this time-temporal closeness of saints by elevating to the glory of altars not only clerics and consecrated persons, but also many lay people, not excluding spouses, as well as very young people. In the speeches accompanying the canonisation or beatification celebrations, he generally stressed the topicality of the life models left by these figures. (Oleszek, 2002)

What is it that led John Paul II to promote holiness in the Church? The answer should be sought in his texts. Among other things, in his book *Crossing the Threshold of Hope* he states that the true strength of “the Church in the East and in the West through all epochs are and will always remain the saints, that is to say, those who have made the truth of Christ their own truth, who have followed that path, which He is himself, who have lived the life that flows from Him in the Holy Spirit. And there is still no shortage of these saints in the Church in the East and in the West.” (John Paul II, 1994, 135) In his Letter to Priests for Holy Thursday 2001 he wrote: “It is precisely for this reason that I have sought over the years to foster a wider recognition of holiness, in all the contexts where it has appeared, so that Christians can have many different models of holiness, and all can be reminded that they are personally called to this goal.” (No 15)

Again, in his exhortation *Pastores gregis* he once more explained his commitment to the promotion of holiness, which “is a gift of divine grace and a manifestation of the primacy of God in the life of the Church.” He admitted that he was implementing the programme of the Second Vatican Council, which, in the dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium*, recalled the universal obligation to strive for holiness (No 39). In the aforementioned exhortation he wrote: “I myself wished to propose this programme to the whole Church at the beginning of the third millennium, as a pastoral priority and as

a fruit of the Great Jubilee of the Incarnation. Today too, holiness is a sign of the times and a proof of the truth of Christianity as it shines forth in its noblest representatives, both those who have been enrolled among the saints and the even greater numbers of those who have quietly enriched and continue to enrich human history with the humble and joyful holiness of daily life. Our own time too is not lacking in the precious witness of forms of holiness, personal and communal, which are a sign of hope to all, including the younger generation.” (No 41)

From these words, therefore, three reasons emerge for which John Paul II elevated to the glory of the altars so often so many people, representing different states of life and being of different ages. These are: to show the holiness of the Church, to remind us of the universal call to holiness, and to make Christianity credible.

2. The Pope's theology of holiness

John Paul II raised the issue of sanctity so often in his teaching that it can be said that this was his favourite theme, which most strongly resounded in his preaching on the occasion of the Jubilee Year 2000. In his Apostolic Letter *Tertio Millennio adveniente*, announcing the celebration of the Jubilee of the Year 2000, he wanted “to inspire in all the faithful a true longing for holiness, a deep desire for conversion and personal renewal in a context of ever more intense prayer and of solidarity with one's neighbour, especially the most needy.” (No 42). In his letter *Novo millennio ineunte*, in which he set out the directions of the Church's life and activity for the third millennium, he placed the pursuit of holiness at the centre of the pastoral programme, writing that “all pastoral initiatives must be set in relation to holiness.” He went on to say that leading others to “holiness remains more than ever an urgent pastoral task.” (No 30) (Seremak, 2008, pp. 81–99)

In John Paul II's teaching the term “holiness” conveys a double meaning: an ontological and a moral-spiritual one. In the essential (ontological) sense holiness is God himself, the only holy, who by virtue of the salvific work of Christ, working in man through the Church by the power of the Holy Spirit sanctifies him and makes him a participant of His life and holiness. Holiness in the moral-spiritual sense, on the other hand is, as we read in *Novo millennio ineunte*, a “‘high standard’ of ordinary Christian living.” (No. 31)

a) The Most Holy Trinity as the source of holiness

While presenting an understanding of holiness in its ontological dimension, John Paul II states that the Triune God is the fullness of life and holiness (cf. DeV 7) and it is He who calls everyone to participate in His Life. Among other things, in the encyclical *Veritatis splendor* (No 11-13. 91-92. 104. 107) and on many other occasions (cf. e.g. MD 9; PS 6; LK 1996, 6) he often stressed that the Trinity is an infinite holiness and a source of holiness. Christ is the reflection of this intra-Trinitarian holiness, acting in the power of the Holy Spirit. (Cf. DeV 48) The Pope stresses that “the summit of Christian holiness is the crucified Christ in his supreme self-oblation to the Father and to his brothers and sisters in the Holy Spirit,” (PG 13) so following Him and participating in His sufferings (cf. 1 Pt 4:15) becomes a wonderful way of holiness for all. (Sicari, 2004, pp. 153–167) In Him the holiness of God’s mercy is revealed. (cf. DiM 13) Christ, speaking of himself as the Way, the Truth and the Life (Jn 14:6), presents himself as “the only way that leads to holiness.” (EiAm 31; cf. SD 15) And by giving himself in the Eucharist, he makes it become the Blessed Sacrament and the “inexhaustible source of holiness.” (EdE 10; see VS 107) Underneath the simplicity of the sacramental signs is the “immeasurable depth of the holiness of God.” (EdE 48; see DC 8) In celebrating the Eucharist the Church finds in it “the source of life and holiness” (RH 7; cf. LK 1985, 8) and for this reason, “every commitment to holiness, every activity aimed at carrying out the Church’s mission [...] must draw the strength it needs from the Eucharistic mystery and in turn be directed to that mystery as its culmination.” (EdE 60; cf. EiO 40)

A special role in the sanctification of the Church and its individual members is played by the Third Divine Person, whom the Pope calls “the Spirit of Holiness.” (cf. DeV 24; RM 8; VS 108; EiAf 62) To live in Christ means to “put on” by the work of the Holy Spirit “a new man, created after the likeness of God, in true righteousness and holiness.” (Eph 4: 24; cf. EiO 36) The whole economy of salvation achieved by Christ is realized thanks to sensitivity to the hidden action of the Holy Spirit, “who is the direct author of all holiness.” (SA 31) It is He who “inspires in hearts a profound yearning for holiness” (DeV 65) and is the source and “teacher of all holiness,” (SA 31) that is to say, the one who “changes the interior dryness of souls, transforming them into the fertile fields of grace and holiness. What is ‘hard he softens,’ what is ‘frozen he warms,’ what is ‘wayward he sets anew’ on the paths of salvation.” (DeV 67) He constantly “revives the Church and draws her to the path of holiness and love,” (LK 1981, 1) enriching it with various charisms. (cf. ChL 24)

b) Holiness in the moral and spiritual sense

Holiness, in the moral and spiritual sense mentioned above, consists in the perfect fulfilment of the commandment of love, (cf. ChL 55) which John Paul II repeatedly stressed when he wrote that the call to holiness means “perfection in love.” (ChL 16; cf. PDV 72) In another place he emphasized that “the heart of holiness is love, which leads even to giving our lives for others (cf. Jn 15:13).” (EiAm 30) Thanks to love, which is a “creative power in man,” we have “access to the fullness of life and holiness that come from God.” (DiM 7)

The Pope’s remark that the sanctity of the Christian life can only be spoken of in the Church is worth emphasizing. For the Church is the “reality that expresses the mystery of the Church better than anything else.” (NMI 7). In the context of priestly holiness, our author stresses that “the holiness of a Christian begins with the holiness of the Church, [and] expresses and enriches it at the same time.” (PDV 31) Although the Church has a hierarchical structure, it is completely subordinated to the holiness of her members, (cf. MD 27) which allows the “threefold and unitary *munus propheticum, sacerdotale et regale* to be brought to “full expression and effectiveness,” (VS 107) this being the very essence of the mission of the people of God. Without holiness any evangelization and missionary activity would be impossible, (cf. VS 108. 110; EiO 38) because they are rooted in personal union with Christ. The Pope rightly points out, therefore, that “the effectiveness of the Church’s missionary activity depends on the sanctity of every Christian’s life.” (RMs 77) Holiness, together with conversion and public and private prayers for Christian unity, is the “soul of the entire ecumenical movement.” (UUS 21) “A joint witness of holiness, as fidelity to the one Lord, has an ecumenical potential extraordinarily rich in grace.” (UUS 48) In this respect, the Pope teaches an “ecumenism of holiness.” (see NMI 48; EiE 31) (Chlebowski, 2006, pp. 108–122)

Following the Second Vatican Council, our author often recalls the universality of the call to holiness. It is significant that he devoted most of his attention to this issue in his exhortation *Christifideles laici*. As he pointed out, this is not a mere moral imperative, but an “inalienable requirement of the mystery of the Church.” For the Church is the Mystical Body, whose “members share in the holiness of the Head, which is Christ.” Furthermore, in the Church lives and works the same Spirit, the Sanctifier, “who sanctified the human nature of Jesus in Mary’s virginal womb (cf. Lk 1:35).” He constantly communicates to the Church “the holiness of the Son of God who became man.” (ChL 16) Since baptism incorporates persons into the community of the Church, the call to holiness arises from this sacrament and is renewed in others, especially in the Eucharist. “Baptism is a true entry into the holiness of God through incorporation into Christ and the indwelling of his Spirit.” (NMI 31)

c) The holiness of the states of life in the Church

John Paul II's concern for the sanctity of the members of the Church is particularly evident in what he taught about priests. Although "the ministerial priesthood does not of itself signify a greater degree of holiness with regard to the common priesthood of the faithful," (PDV 17) following the Council decree on the ministry and life of priests *Presbyterorum ordinis* (No 12) the Pope highlighted their "special vocation to holiness." (PDV 82) It results from the sacrament of the orders, because "The priestly vocation is essentially a call to holiness in the form which derives from the sacrament of orders." (PDV 33) In this context John Paul II gives a definition of priestly holiness. It is "intimacy with God; it is the imitation of Christ, who was poor, chaste and humble; it is unreserved love for souls and a giving of oneself on their behalf and for their true good; it is love for the Church which is holy." (PDV 33) Priestly holiness is most fully expressed in pastoral love and has a fundamental and inalienable ecclesiastical dimension, that is to say it is "a sharing in the holiness of the Church herself." (PDV 31; see LK 2004, 6)

Our author places high demands on bishops as regards holiness, as can be seen especially in the post-synodal apostolic exhortation *Pastores gregis*. He states from the very beginning that the sanctity of a bishop's life is the ideal on which the Church bases her hopes (No 1). The personal, subjective holiness of the Bishop is intended to reflect the objective holiness of the Church in which he makes Christ the Good Shepherd present. The holiness of the Bishop is a holiness lived with his people and for his people, in a communion which becomes a stimulus to and a mutual building up in charity." (PG 12) The Bishop is to achieve holiness in his life, "in the context of external and internal difficulties," that is, despite "his own weaknesses and those of others, in daily contingencies and personal and institutional problems." (PG 23) The Pope considers it a strict duty of every bishop to live a Christocentric and ecclesial spirituality, and at the same time to "walk tirelessly on the road to holiness." (cf. PG 24) (Libera, 2004, pp. 217–218)

John Paul II calls consecrated persons to this "high measure of Christian life" in a special way, because, as he writes in the exhortation *Ecclesia in Africa*, "in the Church understood as the Family of God, consecrated life has the particular function," above all because it is about "indicating to all the call to holiness but also of witnessing to fraternal life in community." (No 94) It is of major importance for the life of the Church and for her mission of evangelisation. The search for holiness on the part of consecrated persons "is more necessary than ever, also as a means of promoting and supporting every Christian's desire for perfection" and thus "to inspire in all the faithful a true longing for holiness." (VC 39) Christians immersed in the toils and worries of this world wish to see

in consecrated persons people “who in faith ‘see’ God, people docile to the working of the Holy Spirit.” (VC 109)

John Paul II considers striving for holiness to be “in summary the programme of every consecrated life.” (VC 93) Being chosen by God and being consecrated requires, however, developing this gift. According to the Pope, what is decisive in the growth of holiness in consecrated life is above all fidelity to the founding charism and the subsequent spiritual heritage of a given institute shaped by this charism. (f. VC 36) (Paszowska, 1998, pp. 332–339)

Among the post-conciliar documents, John Paul II’s post-synodal exhortation *Christifideles laici* can be considered the *magna carta* of the dignity and holiness of lay people. In the introduction to this document, the Pope notes how “the Holy Spirit continues to renew the youth of the Church and how he has inspired new aspirations towards holiness and the participation of so many lay faithful.” (ChL 2) Secular character, therefore, is perceived by our author as a theological reality through which holiness can and must be achieved. (Cf. ChL 15) The vocation of lay people to holiness therefore means a call to live according to the Spirit, while remaining integrated into temporal reality and participating in earthly activities. They are to strive for holiness in the normal conditions of professional and social life. “Therefore, to respond to their vocation, the lay faithful must see their daily activities as an occasion to join themselves to God, fulfil his will, serve other people and lead them to communion with God in Christ.” (ChL 17) (Zyzak, 2008)

On various occasions John Paul II reminds us that marriage has its sacramental dignity and sanctity. It is “the path of Christian holiness.” (EiAf 83; EiAm 46) Thus the universal vocation to holiness is also to be realized in marriage and the family. (Cf. FC 34. 56. 58. 66; GtS 19) (Martins, 2004, pp. 717–728) This stems from the will of Christ, who “wants to safeguard the holiness of marriage and of the family. He wants to defend the full truth about the human person and his dignity.” (GtS 20) Christian history confirms the validity of this path, since many fathers and mothers and children have found “their human and Christian vocation [...] to holiness” precisely through the family. (GtS 23)

d) Expressions and models of holiness

According to John Paul II, holiness of Church members manifests itself in many ways. However, its clearest manifestation is martyrdom. From the very beginning the cult of martyrs had a clearly Christocentric character, since “by proclaiming and venerating the holiness of her sons and daughters, the Church gave supreme honour to God himself; in the martyrs she venerated Christ, who was at the origin of their martyrdom and of their holiness.” (TMA 37) The Pope

regards martyrdom as “a wonderful sign of the Church’s holiness”, this being of great importance for preaching and missionary service. (Cf. VS 93) This kind of proclamation of the Good News by word and confirmed by deed, up to the point of readiness to give one’s life, “opens people’s hearts to the desire for holiness, for being configured to Christ.” (EiAf 87)

This thesis corresponds with the Pope’s teaching on missionary spirituality in his encyclical *Redemptoris Missio*, where he states that “the call to mission derives, of its nature, from the call to holiness. A missionary is really such only if he commits himself to the way of holiness: Holiness must be called a fundamental presupposition and an irreplaceable condition for everyone in fulfilling the mission of salvation in the Church.” (RMs 90) This means that authentic holiness manifests itself in missionary zeal. According to the Pope’s teaching, it is possible to equate “missionary zeal” to “zeal for holiness.” (Cf. RMs 91-92)

Nor can one neglect all kinds of manifestations of popular piety, which John Paul II calls “the holiness of the people.” In its practice, as well as in catechesis, it is of great importance to show the saints as examples of the realization of the Christian vocation. (f. EiAm 15) (Połec, 2008, pp. 101–110)

Among the models of holiness, Mary stands out as she reflects perfectly the holiness of Christ. The Pope devotes a great deal of space to this fact in his encyclical *Redemptoris Mater*, in which, following Vatican II, he stresses that “the Mother of God is already the eschatological fulfilment of the Church,” so that Christians, gazing at this model, should grow in holiness. (RM 6) In her “shines a ray of the mystery of God, the glory of his ineffable holiness.” (RM 36) Mary, called “the new Eve” and “Mother of the living,” proclaims the unalloyed truth of “the holy and almighty God.” (RM 37) In turn, the Church, as a spiritual mother to her members, learns to be maternal by “contemplating Mary’s mysterious sanctity, imitating her charity and faithfully fulfilling the Father’s will.” (RM 43. 47)

Mary of Nazareth is the “prototype” of the Church, since she leads all on the path of faith and holiness. Furthermore, “the Church has already reached that perfection whereby she exists without spot or wrinkle.” (MD 27) (Kuczer, 2005, pp. 85–173) Mary’s model of holiness is of particular importance for priests, for whom she is Mother. (Cf. LK 1994, 8) Thus “there is a need for communities which, by contemplating and imitating the Virgin Mary, the figure and model of the Church in faith and holiness, cultivate the sense of liturgical life and of interior life.” (EiE 27)

Writing about the Marian spirituality of St. Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort, our author notes that “like Mary and with her, the saints are in the Church and for the Church, so that her holiness may shine forth.” (MMf 8)

Among them, the first after Mary is her spouse, St. Joseph, who is an example for believers of how to “walk before God in the ways of holiness and justice.” (RC 31) In the exhortation *Redemptoris Custos*, the Pope points to the exemplary holiness of Joseph of Nazareth, stressing that the marriage of “Joseph and Mary arcs the summit from which holiness spreads all over the earth.” (RC 7)

As far as other models of holiness are concerned, the list of figures recalled by John Paul II is very long. In the first place, we should mention all those whom he canonised and beatified during his pontificate.

It is also noteworthy that, taking advantage of various occasions, most often anniversaries of the so-called “birth into heaven,” the Pope dedicated an appropriate *motu proprio* or apostolic letter to some eminent and widely known saints, and, in the case of Saints Cyril and Methodius, an encyclical entitled *Slavorum Apostoli*. In this way, he honoured at least a dozen of the greatest saints.³

e) Pedagogy of holiness

In his Apostolic letter *Novo millennio ineunte*, John Paul II, pointing to holiness as the foundation of the Church’s pastoral programme in the third millennium, also speaks of the need for an appropriate “pedagogy of holiness.” This phrase recurs frequently in his teaching. Since there are different individual paths to holiness, an appropriate pedagogy of holiness, adapted to the rhythm of the individual person, must be applied. (cf. NMI 31)

In his statements on holiness, scattered in almost all of the Pope’s documents and statements, he does not give a cohesive lecture on the pedagogy of holiness. Nevertheless, some of his remarks on the subject deserve to be noted. Conversion plays an important role in the field of holiness. Conversion is the starting point and *conditio sine qua non* of the universal call to holiness, which is the goal of every authentic conversion, (cf. EiAm 26, 30) since through contrition and conversion one comes closer to the holiness of God and finds one’s own inner

³ In chronological order they are: St. Stanislaus of Szczepanów – the letter *Rutilans agmen* to the Church in Poland on the occasion of the 900th anniversary of his martyrdom (8 V 1979); St. Basil the Great – the letter *Patres Ecclesiae* on the 1600th anniversary of his death (2 I 1980); St. Catherina of Siena – the letter *Amantissima Providentia* on the occasion of the 600th anniversary of her death (29 IV 1980); St. Benedict – the letter *Sanctorum altrix* on the occasion of the 1500th anniversary of St. Benedict’s birth (11 VII 1980); St. Augustine – the letter *Augustinum hipponensem* on the occasion of the 1600th anniversary of his conversion (28 VIII 1986); St. Alphonsus Liguori – the letter *Spiritus Domini* on the occasion of the 200th anniversary of his death (1 VIII 1987); St. John of the Cross – the letter *Maestro en la fé* on the occasion of the 400th anniversary of his death (14 XII 1990); St. Ambrose – the letter *Operosam diem* on the occasion of the 1600th anniversary of his death (1 XII 1996); St. Peter Canisius – the letter to the German Bishops on the occasion of the 400th anniversary of his death (19 IX 1997); St. Teresa of the Child Jesus – the apostolic letter *Divini amoris scientia* on the occasion of her announcement as the Doctor of the universal Church (19 X 1997), and many others. (Karczewski, 2005, pp. 553–554)

truth. (f. RP 31) Elsewhere, the Pope points out that holiness is “the fruit of conversion under the influence of the Gospel.” (EiE 14)

Prayer is an indispensable condition for acquiring holiness, inseparable from conversion, being “in a certain sense, the first and last condition for conversion, progress and holiness.” (LK 1979, 10) It is the “foundation” of the aforementioned pedagogy of holiness, (NMI 32) since it recalls the “primacy of the interior life and of holiness,” (NMI 38) which is realized “by a renewed listening to the word of God.” (NMI 39; PG 15) (Kochel, 2012, pp. 219–234) Rosary is a prayer particularly recommended by the Pope, since it brings “fruits of holiness,” (RVM 1) and moreover, it fits well into the “training in holiness,” (RVM 5) strengthening the desire for it, (RVM 26) which, if accepted, “can be cultivated only in the silence of adoration before the infinite transcendence of God.” (VC 38)

The Holy Father points out that the path of holiness, by its very nature, also requires the undertaking of various ascetical measures which have always been present in the practice of the Church and which find their culmination in the sacrament of penance. (Cf. EiAm 32) They are “a powerful aid to authentic progress in holiness.” (VC 38) Among such means, the Pope appreciates pilgrimages to the tombs of the martyrs, “where holiness is particularly expressed in remembering men and women who in every age have enriched the Church with the sacrifice of their lives.” (OL 25) In general, the pursuit of sanctity requires a spiritual struggle, in which the use of spiritual direction will be a valuable help, especially during the formation phase. (Cf. VC 95)

As far as the laity are concerned, work, commitment to temporal realities, and concern for the common good should also be a valuable means of sanctification. (Cf. LE 25)

In general, all should be provided with an adequate formation, so that in their lives and activities they may be oriented towards Christ and, according to their own charism, strive for personal holiness. (cf. EiAs 44) None of the baptized must lack enthusiasm in walking the path of holiness, which the Pope encouraged especially young people to do. By striving for holiness, they can become “a sign of God in the world” and “leaven of the missionary spirit.” (EiAf 136) An appropriate environment for young people to discover the gift of holiness is the various movements in the Church, (Cf. EiO 47) insofar as they give precedence to the vocation of every Christian to holiness. (Cf. ChL 30) (Chmielewski, 1995, pp. 55–72)

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Pope St. Paul VI wrote in his exhortation *Evangelii nuntiandi* that “modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to

teachers, it is because they are witnesses.” (No. 41) This sentence, especially in the aspect of holiness, can be applied to the Pope from Poland. He not only taught what sanctity is and how to pursue it, but he showed it with his life, bearing witness to his love for God and human. Before the Church examined the sanctity of John Paul II’s life in the framework of the beatification process, initiated in an extraordinary procedure by Benedict XVI only five weeks after his death, on the day of the funeral countless crowds gathered in St. Peter’s Square and chanted: “Santo subito” – immediately a saint.

He who was a tireless teacher of holiness also became its witness. The Church solemnly confirmed it with the act of beatification performed by Benedict XVI on 1st May 2011, on Divine Mercy Sunday, and with the act of canonisation. John Paul II was declared a saint by Pope Francis also on Divine Mercy Sunday, 27th April 2014.

In view of the wide scope, significance and originality of St John Paul II’s doctrine and his unquestionable contribution to the preservation of peace and Christian order in Europe, it is now to be expected that he will soon be proclaimed a Doctor of the Church and Patron of Europe.

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Jan Paweł II – papież świętości

Streszczenie: Wśród wielu tytułów Jan Paweł II w pełni zasługuje na miano „Papieża Świętości” ze względu na rekordową liczbę beatyfikacji i kanonizacji, których dokonał oraz oryginalną naukę o świętości. Chciał wprowadzić w życie soborową naukę o powszechnym powołaniu chrześcijan do świętości. W papieskiej teologii świętości nacisk kładzie się na Trójcę Świętą jako źródło wszelkiej świętości. Ponadto mówi o przejawach, wzorach i środkach prowadzących do świętości, a więc o swoistej „pedagogice świętości”. Doktryna świętości Jana Pawła II jest ściśle związana z jego stylem życia, co potwierdził Kościół jego beatyfikacją (1 maja 2011 r.) i kanonizacją (27 kwietnia 2014 r.). Biorąc pod uwagę jego doktrynę, życie i troskę o chrześcijański kształt Europy, słuszne jest oczekiwanie na to, że wkrótce zostanie ogłoszony Doktorem Kościoła i Patronem Europy.

Słowa kluczowe: Jan Paweł II, świętość, święci, beatyfikacja, kanonizacja.

Abbreviations

- ChL – John Paul II, *Post-synodal Apostolic exhortation “Christifideles laici” on the vocation and the mission of the lay faithful in the Church and in the world.*
- DC – John Paul II, *Apostolic letter “Dominicae cenae” on the mystery and cult of the Eucharist.*
- DeV – John Paul II, *Encyclical “Dominum et Vivificantem” on the Holy Spirit in the life of the Church and the world.*
- DiM – John Paul II, *Encyclical “Dives in misericordia” on Divine Mercy.*
- EdE – John Paul II, *Encyclical “Ecclesia de Eucharistia” on the Eucharist in the life of the Church.*
- EiAf – John Paul II, *Post-synodal Apostolic exhortation “Ecclesia in Africa” on the Church in Africa and its evangelizing mission towards the year 2000.*

- EiAm – John Paul II, *Post-synodal Apostolic exhortation “Ecclesia in America” on the encounter with the living Jesus Christ: the way to conversion, communion and solidarity in America.*
- EiE – John Paul II, *Apostolic exhortation “Ecclesia in Europa” on Jesus Christ alive in his Church, the source of hope for Europe.*
- EiO – John Paul II, *Post-synodal Apostolic exhortation “Ecclesia in Oceania” on Jesus Christ and the peoples of Oceania: walking his way, telling his truth, living his life.*
- FC – John Paul II, *Apostolic exhortation “Familiaris consortio” on the role of the Christian family in the modern world.*
- GtS – John Paul II, *Letter to Families “Gratissimam sane” on the occasion of the Year of the Family 1994.*
- LE – John Paul II, *Encyclical “Laborem exercens” on human labour.*
- LK – John Paul II, *Letter for Holy Thursday [Year].*
- MD – John Paul II, *Apostolic letter “Mulieris dignitatem” on the dignity and vocation of woman.*
- MMf – John Paul II, *Pontifical letter to the Montfortian families “Mariology of St. Luis Maria Grignion de Montfort”*
- NMI – John Paul II, *Apostolic letter “Novo millennio ineunte” at the close of the great Jubilee of the Year 2000.*
- OL – John Paul II, *Apostolic letter “Orientale lumen” to mark the centenary of ‘Orientalium dignitas’ of Pope Leo XIII.*
- PDV – John Paul II, *Post-synodal Apostolic exhortation “Pastores dabo vobis” on the formation of priests in the circumstances of the present day.*
- PG – John Paul II, *Post-synodal Apostolic exhortation “Pastores gregis” on the bishop, servant of the Gospel of Jesus Christ for the hope of the world.*
- PS – John Paul II, *Apostolic letter “Parati semper” to the youth of the whole world on the occasion of the International Year of the Youth.*
- RC – John Paul II, *Apostolic exhortation “Redemptoris Custos” on the person and mission of Saint Joseph in the life of Christ and of the Church.*
- RH – John Paul II, *Encyclical “Redemptor hominis”.*
- RM – John Paul II, *Encyclical “Redemptoris Mater” on the Blessed Virgin Mary in the life of the Pilgrim Church.*
- RMs – John Paul II, *Encyclical “Redemptoris missio” on the permanent validity of the Church’s missionary mandate.*
- RP – John Paul II, *Apostolic exhortation “Reconciliatio et paenitentia” on reconciliation and penance in the mission of the Church today.*
- RVM – John Paul II, *Apostolic letter “Rosarium Virginis Mariae” on the Holy Rosary.*
- SA – John Paul II, *Encyclical “Slavorum Apostoli” on the millennium of the evangelising work of St. Cyril and Methodius.*
- SD – John Paul II, *Apostolic letter “Salvifici doloris” on the Christian meaning of human suffering.*
- TMA – John Paul II, *Apostolic letter “Tertio millennio adveniente” on the preparation for the Jubilee of the Year 2000.*
- UUS – John Paul II, *Encyclical “Ut unum sint” on commitment to Ecumenism.*
- VC – John Paul II, *Post-synodal Apostolic exhortation “Vita consecrata” on the consecrated life and its mission in the Church and in the world.*
- VS – John Paul II, *Encyclical “Veritatis splendor” on some fundamental problems of the moral teaching of the Church.*